

Half the Battle

It's often said that showing up is half the battle. In sales, there's some truth behind that statement. Being reliable, dependable, likeable, trustworthy, are all attributes that make up a good salesperson. An adage used in my former business world was "show your face and get the space." Basically, what that implied was the person who was consistently available and was constantly present in the customer's business usually was given the opportunity to get the sale.

In sales, we tend to get caught up in figuring out what the other half of the battle is, and we spend way too much time focusing on that. Our minds/egos tell us that we must always have this elaborate plan to impress/win over the customer. Too many times however, this elaborate plan (paralysis by over analysis) delays the opportunity to be in front of our customers, talking with them, but even more importantly.....**listening** to them.

Wow, what a novel concept...listening to our customers. Yes.... It's that simple: the better your listening skills, the better your conversations will be, and the more aligned you will be with the customer. Now, it's important to understand that there are two types of listening.... (1.) Listening to respond and (2.) Listening to understand. If most people had to guess, which one do salespeople use? You guessed it, winner-winner chicken dinner..... **#1.**

Because salespeople tend to be outgoing and talkative, we get caught up in using our mouths instead of our ears. Salespeople are problem solvers, instantaneously ready to present a solution once we hear the problem come out of our customers mouths. But did we truly "hear" what the problem was? Poor listening may contribute to a range of negative reactions that have real consequences.

Listening to understand is key, and when practiced consistently, can enhance relationships, and improve performance. Instead of thinking about what you want to say while the other person is talking, really **listen** to them. I will tell you that active listening is difficult to do. It takes a lot of practice, yes practice. The only way to practice is to be put in a situation where practice can take place, such as a meeting with a customer, fellow employee, or spouse. If I had a dollar for every time my wife told me I didn't listen to her, I might be a rich man.

To be clear, there is much more to sales than just showing up and listening... but performing just these two actions properly and consistently will always put you in a great position for long term success.

Being present and listening.... Sounds like a Dr. Phil special!

Respectfully,

Clark Willis