



By Carl Davidson

About the Author

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Can Your Presentation Ever Be Too Good

Most salespeople never consider that our offer or presentation can be *too good*. Most of us rarely think that the customer does not believe us. Strange but true, we mostly assume they believe every word we say and sometimes we make little effort to prove our case. One reason for this is that few customers have the courage to say, "Thanks for coming in you lying so and so. I would buy it if it was half as good a deal as you say."

Most customers want to avoid conflict. After all, they just met you and do not know and trust you. We may leave thinking we did a great presentation because they say, "That was great and we are definitely getting one next month." But in actuality, we may have missed the sale because they just did not believe us. Notice too that most sales training never talks about this point at all and also assumes the customer believes you. Ask yourself how often you do not believe a salesperson who is selling to you and you can assume your customers do not believe you the same percentage of the time. So what can we do about it?

Keep It In Mind

Just having it in mind is the first step toward improvement. Do you ever catch yourself saying things such as, "Believe me, this is the best model?" If you are telling the customer things and not asking their opinion you may be a victim of the belief curse. As soon as you become aware of the fact that your customer doesn't know you and tends to doubt your veracity, you are on your way to solving the problem. Watch their eyes as you talk and be aware of making statements without proof. Assume that whenever you make a statement without proof, the customer will assume you are lying.

Bring Up the Subject

One technique in truth presenting is to mention that one of the biggest problems in showing your products is that they are so good, some folks do not believe you. Ask them to tell you if they doubt anything you say and that it will not make you mad. Explain that you have proof for all your claims that you will be glad to show them if they ask you.

Be Prepared With Fall Backs

Be sure you have fall backs that help convince the timid. For example, you

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might say, "Bob, we are so certain our prices are the lowest, we give you this written guarantee that your investment will be the absolute lowest in this county, and we guarantee it for a full 90 days. Does that show you our sincerity?" Notice it ends with a direct question asking the customer if he believes you. What other fall backs are there? Plenty. You might show them test results from a consumer testing group such as NSF, give them three days to cancel in writing and many more. You have to plan and practice to have your proof ready.

Ask Them

If you run into resistance to a sale, ask if it is because they think you "may have exaggerated something." Explain that you have been honest with them and now you are going to ask them to be honest with you and tell you what they really doubt or have a problem with.

Pretend You Are Perry Mason

As you present, pretend you are a lawyer who is talking to a very skeptical jury. Never say what you cannot prove. Never just say it, offer proof. Make a list of all the things you say and do not prove and find proof you can offer. Remember it is not their job to believe but it is our job to prove our claims. Many sales are lost by doing half a job in this area.

Avoid 'We Must Do Lunch'

Many things come up in the course of a presentation that are polite ways for the customer to tell us to hit the road. These are things such as, "Thanks, we love your product and we are definitely getting it in three weeks or when we check with ___." Do not accept these delays. You will leave feeling good but with an empty wallet. Worst of all, your customer will still be drinking tap water and will never call

you again. We all know it, but these sayings make us all feel so darn good that we just want to believe them. Remember that you owe it to your clients to help them make the right decision and make it now.

Bring Props, Proof and Testimonials

What would you think if you attended a play and the cast had no props. When they went to use a phone or get in a car it was all make believe? You probably would think it was a terrible play and you would not believe it was a presentation of real life. You are in the same boat when you sell. Make sure you bring lots of props. Do not tell them hard water coats the heating elements of water heaters, show them one. Do not tell them sulfur eats pipes, show them a piece. In fact, do not tell them anything you can show them. Bring lots of props. In fact, see if you have a prop for third-party proof for every claim you make during your demo. If you do not, what makes you think your customers believe your claim?

Finally, bring real testimonials. Telling them you have happy customers is not believable. Bringing letters is better but still not great. Make a few second

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video of each of your customers saying how much they like the product and bring it on a CD to play on your computer or in their DVD player. Nothing works like actual footage. Look at ads on TV and you will see they use ordinary people saying the product is great—and that sells for them and it will for you too.

Remember that no one believes you but your mother and even she has doubts sometimes. We live in a world of lies, twisted facts and embellishments, and your customers are no more likely to believe you than you are to believe other salespeople who sell you. Try the techniques we discussed here and see how much it improves your totals. **WQP**

MARKETING

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positive view of themselves, others and relationships as they age and begin to think about retirement and their golden years. More so than any other markets, boomer women know precisely what they want when they see it. Whether it is a new healthcare or financial service, or a convenient food or household product, knowing what motivates boomer women to make purchases, and successfully communicating that understanding through mass marketing, is the challenge.

One of the most glaring mistakes a company can make is not taking the time to focus their marketing and advertising messages on baby boomer women. It is an oversight that costs companies millions in unrealized sales revenue every year. To reach baby boomer women, companies must shift their focus from the product or service itself to the person on the receiving end. The most effective way to do this is to emphasize the human element, particularly interpersonal relationships, over specific product features, statistics or pricing.

In general, women value how a product fits into their lives and its potential to enhance their lifestyles, health, relationships and sense of self. They also prefer to see women respectfully portrayed in advertising as empowered, confident and insightful versus passive, inexperienced or easy targets. Women at midlife are especially astute when it comes to how products and services are marketed to them. They do not necessarily want to see svelte 18-year-old models selling them clothing—they relate better to images that represent the average woman. And they tend to make purchasing decisions that reinforce the feelings of confidence, rejuvenation and adventure they experience at midlife. Once you tap into the excitement of those feelings, marketing success is bound to follow.

In the July issue, be sure to look for a related article about an emerging market segment called “bobos,” including the most effective ways to market to them. **WQP**

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This is not just another consumer study.

- What do consumers think about the water they drink and the water they use?
- What is the consumer's "hot button" to pique their interest to buy?
- What marketing message would help you increase your sales?
- What makes consumers purchase a home drinking water unit vs bottled water delivery vs drinking water from the tap?
- Who is more likely to buy a water softener?

Get answers to these questions and more by purchasing the 2004 WQA Consumer Marketing Study.

The research includes:

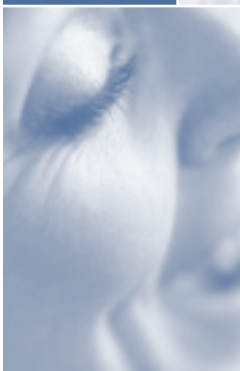
- Focus groups with household decision makers,
- In-depth, face-to-face interviews with rural well water consumers,
- Telephone surveys to quantify information gathered in the focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Subsamples and quotas were established to reflect, in a statistically valid manner, the opinions and interests of various subpopulations.

Quotas include:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| • Decision makers | • Households |
| - Caucasian | - Urban |
| - African-American | - Suburban |
| - Hispanic | - Rural well water |
| - Other | - From young families (18-30 years of age) |
| | - New home purchasers within the last year |
| | - Other |

Water Quality Association is a not-for-profit international trade organization representing the POU/POE household, commercial, industrial, and small system water treatment industry.



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