

Are You a Doctor of Sales?

Sales are what you do for people, not to people

It's been drilled into you time and time again, sell to the pain. The idea is that if you find and "exaggerate" the buyer's issue or hurdle to getting what they want, you'll be well on your way to closing the deal.

Well, yes and no.

Imagine telling your doctor that you have a problem, your back hurts all over. They ask a couple of questions while poking you here and there. You're throbbing and are not in a good mood. You say, "Ouch! Please make the pain go away, just give me a pill."

Next thing you know, a prescription is shoved in your hand. You're told to go home after stopping at the drugstore and to take your medicine every six hours.

I'd call that irresponsible. A lawyer might say it's malpractice!

Why? Because the doctor never bothered to understand the root causes of your pain. Only the symptoms (the obvious – achy, fever, soreness) and the apparent problem (an infection), but not the cause.

Perhaps the cause is something more serious than an infection. It's well below the surface and not obvious. Poking around is not enough.

It's the same in selling. Don't treat the symptoms. Discover the root causes. Zero in on hot-button issues. Diagnose before you prescribe a solution.

Too many sales reps ask a few predictable surface-level questions and proceed to rattle off their canned pitch. There's a presumption of knowing what their prospect needs. There's no engaging the buyer in a real discussion – nothing that approaches a dialog about their business challenges.

There is always an underlying reason for a purchase, yet often the buyer will not bring to the surface the root cause of the pain they'd like to solve. No, they're not playing games with you – buyers seldom know themselves.

Shoddy diagnosis leads to poor sales results. Discover the real problem.

You are the doctor of sales.

Selling is Compelling. This is not to be confused with coercing or scaring your prospect into buying. It's simple; when others are certain that you have their best interest in mind they open up and are much easier to approach and sell. Make your case in a persuasive way with thoughtful engagement – great questions and in-depth discussion. That'll get people to open up and get to the root causes. Zig Ziglar, a master salesman, said, "Sales are what you do for people, not to people."

What's the real problem? Sure, you'll start with some standard questions about how your buyer operates and their challenges. Yet, they are individuals so you'll pivot the conversation to finding the source of the issue. This calls for a tailored approach. Questions will begin to center first on acknowledging there is something going on that needs to be fixed. Maybe more far-reaching than they thought. Figure out their motivation for moving their project forward, their why, and what's preventing that from happening, the diagnosis. Discover the Intensity of the concern and the worst consequences of not eliminating the pain. How? Just ask.

To connect the dots, have a starting point. Captain obvious here, you can't start the conversation by asking what their pain is. Things will go south fast! Instead have a series of rapport building open-ended questions ready to get under the surface and get to know your prospect. Think of this as a discovery or pain identification funnel. Start with questions like "tell me more about..." and then follow up with "can you be more specific?" and "how long has this been a problem". Then as you work you down the funnel, you'll get to "what have you tried to do about this?" and "how did that work?". Then it's time to discover the impact with "How much do you think this has cost you" and "How will it impact you and your company if you can't fix this issue soon?". Now ask "How do you feel about that?". This is the time to present your solution, beginning with "Our customers have found...".

Finding your prospect's motivation is key to the diagnosis. Upfront understand what needs to happen to make it worth your buyer' time to have a sales conversation. Then at the bottom of the discovery funnel ask the ultimate question: "What concerns do you have about making changes in this area?"

You and your buyer are now in a groove, fully engaged in a real conversation. it's not about what your customer says they want. It's about finding out what's motivating your customer to want that.

About Innovate To Win™

You see the future. Innovate To Win™ helps you get there faster.

The path to winning deals is full of twists and turns for emerging tech companies selling against more established organizations and solutions. Complex and inconsistent sales processes can clog the revenue pipeline.

Innovate To Win™ focuses on helping tech companies sell and scale. Working with entrepreneurs, CEOs, sales teams, and investors Innovate To Win™ is on a mission to make a positive and tangible impact for B2B software and technology companies by simplifying the way sales teams execute a repeatable sales process that is buyer-aligned.

Innovate To Win™ guides each client through a tailor-made sales performance improvement solution – a journey that excites, engages and wins customers for life.

Started by three technology industry business leaders with an extensive track record in sales and sales management in the tech industry, together they have generated nearly a half billion dollars in sales, individually and leading teams.