

“What is the core value of your publication?”

By Bob Berting, Berting Communications

Your salespeople are telling your prospects and customers that you are the best newspaper in town or if you're the only newspaper, you're the best media choice in town. They go on to say you have the best customer service in town. But what is your core value? What is the value you bring to the marketplace that no one else can bring? What impact does that value have on the prospect, not intellectually, but emotionally? What value do you bring that will compel your prospect to ask you to fix their problems.

Principles of contemporary selling

Cut down on selling emphasis and begin using psychology and philosophy to translate your value. When you stop selling, your prospect will feel prone to open up and give you the reasons why he or she needs you to fix his or her problems. Isn't that what we want anyway? Salespeople who sell hard and relentlessly sometimes don't understand human nature—and it costs them. You still do your dog and pony show to sleepy eyes. Stop the show and ask questions about their problems and existing conditions. A key question is: **“Are there conditions or problems in your company that you think our publication can help you with?”** Let them talk.

Never underestimate the propensity to purchase

You have seen this happen. A prospective advertiser will balk at spending \$1500.00, then turn around and spend \$2500.00 with a competitor. Why? Because the belief was there. The energy was there. The money is always there. Money is conceptual. Many times, the danger is that salespeople will make decisions for the prospect before they do. Don't make the decision for the prospect before they do. Don't make the decision for the prospect about anything, especially money. Also, sometimes the more one pays for something, the more value they attach to it—providing the value is actually there. The world is full of buyers who have bought half a solution only because of the salesperson's fear to talk in larger terms that would have solved the entire problem of the prospect or customer.

Never let your fears affect your selling

Often, we won't ask the question because we're afraid of the answer. The prospect is telling you about a severe problem he has. You need to ask

“ What have you previously done to solve this problem?” By asking, you will be finding out an important part of his values—his own fear. From that, you can determine the best corrective action to take.

Don’t overwhelm your prospect

You have tremendous knowledge about your publication –type styles, printing press capability, demographic statistics, website benefits, etc. You feel good about what you know and you want to start spouting all this information to the prospect. Many times, the reaction to all this rhetoric is actually wearing the customer out. Never wear out the one with the check.

So you know everything there is to know about newspaper advertising. But many times you don’t know the customer’s compelling problems that need to be solved—and you need to know them.



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