

## Sales education

Recently I was involved in an on line discussion that involved the teaching and learning of sales education. The person leading the discussion I respect very much in the field of sales. There were statements made that bend the very foundation of sales and my beliefs. I found myself questioning and wanting to know more.

I do not believe that people who share their ideas and thoughts think of themselves as thought leaders or sales gurus. Many are just like me that have discovered a system that is highly successful, motivates clients and garners lifelong clients with repeat business. It is not a one year success story it is a lifetime of achievements that have proven beyond a reasonable doubt that it is highly successful.

The content of sales education is very poor and harmful to sales people and that is his contention and that there is way too much of this being taught. My belief is it is not the content as much as the inability of the one teaching to convey the message or thought. There are many of us in sales that cannot put into words on paper in a short forum piece what and how things are done. Throwing the idea out with the trash due to one or two words that is disagreeable too someone is plain crazy. Some of it must be accepted as a given and a broad paint brush is being used. Keep in mind there is no magic pill when taken guarantees a sale will be completed. Using strategies that work and are successful will help increase your ability.

Nobody is saying that we must blame the teacher for a student failing a test. When 25% of the students fail the test it is inadequate teaching that did not discover how the students learn or adapt to the different learning procedures of the student. The teacher did not have the ability to expand the horizons featuring different learning curves and that is left up to the individual to learn on his or her own. Some people are self motivators and will self educate different ways to learn. This is very difficult to do on your own and most people will need help.

I coach 6 different sales technicians. One has the ability to pick up what is being taught in a classroom setting. Another picked up some of the information in the classroom but needed to observe the system and then he had to do it himself before he bought into the system. Another is picking it up simply by doing the system one step at a time. One will never get it and the other two need proof that it will work the majority of time. To simply replace the entire staff with those who learn by a classroom setting would be irresponsible by me the teacher and coach, it is my responsibility to discover ways for each of them to learn and help guide each of them into a new comfort zone of learning.

In this on line discussion we have discussed mutual trust and respect. One thing that must be clear is a client will not have trust and respect for the sales person just because he or she walked into the door and is meeting with you. A sale can happen without mutual trust and respect however it will most likely be a onetime sale with little chance of doing business again in the future. However to have a long time repeat business relationship there must be mutual respect and trust between the client and sales person. Personally I do not care if we call it building a relationship, building trust and respect or mutual respect and trust. You do not automatically receive trust and respect and stuff must be done in order to receive and to give it back.

We used a question concerning advertising of; what would you say is the amount of business that is through word of mouth. This question is designed to get mutual trust and respect. I posed this scenario back to show this question is ineffective and will do the opposite with the trust and respect. A business owner has been in business for 6 years and is not in the yellow pages advertising or in the white pages for a telephone directory of his business. The business moves from one district to another forcing the business to get a different phone number than the one that was used. The phone company visits the business owner and asks the question of what would you say is the amount of business that is word of mouth to you. I as the business owner would immediately say what does this person know? How can he or she possibly help me? A simple check would have informed this sales person that all of my business is word of mouth. Remember I was not in the phone book. How could this person give me what I want or need? This person could not go back into their data base to discover that I was not in the phone book. How far will he or she go to help me? That one question has entered serious doubt whether this person can or could help me. Not all questions are good questions. We may discover in certain situations one question is better at that time than another question. Because of my doubt of the seriousness of the sales person I am disqualified as a potential client. This would be another wrong assumption. By the way this happened to me in the 80's. I ended up in the phone book however I worked with a different sales rep when I decided to move forward.

I believe that sales education, training and coaching is not the end all fix all issues. It is there to inspire and motivate people in sales to want to learn more. It is to drive the sales person sales will to higher heights. Sales education and training is designed to help guide the sales person to reach new heights and give new ideas and concepts to him or her that opens the mind to bigger and better strategies. Often the education is old concepts expressed in different terminology that is easily understood.

Another area of disagreement I believe that a person must put time and effort in order to improve. This alone guarantees nothing. A positive action to put an honest effort to learn must accompany the effort. Without time and effort very little can be accomplished. With any professional additional work must be

put to action to become better at their craft. Michael Jordan did not make his high school basketball team. Hard work and a commitment to get better has allowed him to be one of the greatest professional basketball players on the planet. How much do you think he would have accomplished if he went home and played video games instead of practicing and honing his craft?

Am I the best chance for sales service technicians and or others to improve their sales efforts? Who knows all I can do is put on paper and verbally shares the things that have allowed me to garner a high rate of success in the service trades industry. The success includes increased sales efforts, additional add on tasks, and rapport with clients. It enhances relationships that have become long-term repeat business that I enjoy with clients employing high integrity, honesty and ethics that build value with clients and my company. This also helps in all aspects of life.

During the exchange of ideas where statements were made and questions asked, the person that provoked the discussion automatically started to think that he was being attacked and debated. This immediately backs up my statements made in paragraph three that it is not the content that is being taught that is horrible however it is the inability to communicate the thought in ways that is understandable. Instead of becoming defensive it is essential to discover a different way to describe the action and it is necessary to convey the proper message. Presented as it is the information given is dangerous and will do more harm than good. I am sure the content and information is spot on once it is clearly presented in a more concise form.

People educating others in sales no matter how strong he or she is must have the ability to reach their audience and explain in terms that leaves no ambiguity in the student or audience mind. Please do not think the audience or student does not have responsibility in these events. It is a shared responsibility. I do believe it is the right of the student or audience to question based on their own experiences to try to understand what is being offered. It is much easier to relate our ability to learn to personal experiences and the educator must realize this as fact and work their magic to the experiences. Having the ability to compare experiences greatly enhances a person's ability to learn quickly.

At times the staff that I coach and train could frustrate me due to not getting the message. The thing that I realized a long time ago not everyone grabs concepts the same. Some need proof that is rock solid still others fear rejection and failure and will do everything he or she can do to try to circumvent new failure even if that action holds him or her back. The task is to reach each person in a way that he or she can be reached. Once that happens information is accepted and is no longer harmful. This is no way creates an atmosphere that all information is useful and can enhance the sales persons ability. Deciding what can help the sales persons is the responsibility of those coaching, training, and teaching

responsibility. Start today and receive the education that will enable you to reach new highs and deliver on your personal promises.