

Sales Success: It's All About Emotion

by Alan Rigg

Do you have trouble convincing prospects to make the time to speak with you? Is your sales opportunity pipeline full of **stalled opportunities**? Do you find it difficult to **close** sales?

Each of these challenges can result from a single flaw in the sales process -- failure to engage your prospects' **emotions**.

Why is engaging your prospects' emotions so critical to sales success? Let's answer that question by looking at each challenge individually.

1. Difficulty Booking Appointments

Do you think your prospects sitting around thinking, "Gee, I hope some salespeople call me today?" Of course they aren't! Your prospects are very busy people. They have a lot of work to do, they have personal issues to deal with, and they are constantly being bombarded by marketing messages, e-mails, phone calls, cell phone calls, etc.

How can you break through what your prospect is focused on when they pick up the phone and grab his or her attention? Will droning a bland overview of your company and its capabilities do it? Will rattling off a list of features and benefits do it? Or, do you think it might be more effective to use **emotionally compelling words** that help your prospect **visualize** painful problems and actually **feel** the pain in their guts?

NOTE: Direct marketing campaign analyses have repeatedly shown response rates to be higher for campaigns where advertisements focus on **problems** rather than **solutions**.

2. Stalled Opportunities

Do you know what the #1 issue is that causes sales opportunities to stall? Most opportunities are never qualified properly in the first place!

Most salespeople enjoy managing sales cycles more than they enjoy prospecting. If a prospect expresses even the slightest interest in a product or service, these salespeople are delighted to jump through any number of hoops to try to turn the "opportunities" into sales.

What's the problem? The problem is there are only so many selling hours in each day. Plus, most companies have limited resources they can apply to supporting sales cycles. If a prospect does not have one or more **truly compelling business problems**, and key decision makers do not feel **significant pain** from those business problems, what are the chances they will decide to invest to solve the problems?

One of the most effective actions you can take to minimize stalled opportunities is to learn how to do an extraordinary job of opportunity qualification. How many business problems does each prospect have that you can help them solve? How compelling is each business problem? Do the key decision makers really care about the problems? Does the company have the financial wherewithal necessary to pay for solving the problems?

If you find that a prospect's business problems are not very compelling, or you find they may have trouble financing a solution to their problems, **don't waste your time!** Instead, apply your time to looking for better prospects! If you only invest time in **serious prospects who are emotionally engaged in the sales process**, you will minimize the number of stalled opportunities in your pipeline.

3. Opportunities That Don't Close

If a prospect's emotions are not invested in solving a problem, how likely is it that they will make solving that problem a **priority**?

Of course, if you do not also provide a sound financial justification to support a prospect's buying decision, you may run into another problem. **buyer's remorse**. Still, getting a prospect emotionally engaged is the critical first step in motivating them to take action.

Isn't Engaging a Prospect's Emotions Manipulative?

No, it isn't. If you are going to be a true sales professional, you need to choose carefully where and how you invest your time. **Who wins when you invest your time in prospects that don't have the kinds of problems you can solve? No one!** Who wins when you invest your time (and your company's resources) in helping prospects solve problems that are so **compelling** that both the prospect's company **and** your company are justified in investing time and resources to explore possible solutions? Everyone!

Conclusion

If you want to increase the number of appointments you book through your prospecting efforts, you need to come up with compelling answers to the following questions:

- What can I say to a prospect in 20-30 seconds that will engage his or her **emotions**?
- What are **the most painful problems** that I can help my prospects solve?
- How can I help my prospects **relieve the pain** that is caused by these problems?

If you want to minimize the number of stalled opportunities in your sales opportunity pipeline **and** maximize your close rate, put extra focus on the quality of your sales opportunity qualification by answering the following questions:

- How **many** business problems can you help each prospect solve?
- How **compelling** is each business problem?
- Do the problems elicit **emotional** responses from your prospects?

Remember, engaging your prospects' emotions is critical to the entire sales process, from sales prospecting through closing sales. Learn how to focus on engaging your prospects' emotions, and watch your sales production soar!