

Attitude for Hire

You can't teach someone to be a hard worker



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Q: *Why is it so hard to find salespeople who are willing to prospect?*

—Scott King, Kendal King Group

A: I'd be a rich man if I had an easy answer for this question. There are a variety of reasons why salespeople don't prospect.

Three major reasons are: lack of technique, behavior and attitude (head trash). Of the three, technique is the easiest to change, and attitudes are the hardest to change. Behavior is the most important, whether you are changing technique or attitudes.

A Sandler rule is: There is no emotional growth when you're procrastinating. People who have experienced emotional growth tend to have high self-esteem, high ambition and drive, emotional objectivity, openness to change and little need for approval. If we don't hire toward those attitudes, we can give our salespeople all the technique in the world and they will become mediocre salespeople at best.

To use a golfing analogy, there are a lot more "hacks" in sales than selling professionals. As a selling professional, when I "hack" on the golf course that is one thing—because this is not how I make my living. But when I "hack" in sales, I have a problem, and so does anyone relying on my income—family, employer and employees.

Lastly, I can't (nor can anyone else) teach someone to be hard working (assuming they are an adult). You either are by now or you aren't. Those of you with multiple children, you know what I'm talking about. Prospecting and sales is hard work.

Q: *What are the best practices for getting a 'cold call' prospect to call you back if you have to leave a message?*

—Vicki McGuire, Interior Surface Enterprises LLC

A: First, I commend you on leaving a voice message. Many salespeople were taught years ago to never leave voice messages. Even today, it's a sure sign a telemarketer is calling you if they won't leave a voicemail.

I recommend you leave a voice message, but not more than 45 seconds long on a cold call. I suggest you be direct: Tell them who you are, why you are calling, and why people typically call you back to learn more.

Beyond being direct, focus on what potential clients are missing out on, rather than your features and benefits. This allows your prospect to feel the emotional aspects of your product/service.

In other words, when their current product is not working, cheap or underperforming, what are they angry, frustrated or overwhelmed about? What is the negative impact to their business? If they have any of the symptoms you describe in your voicemail, they are more likely to return your call. Remember the Sandler rule: You can't lose anything you don't have.

Q: *We are an independently owned staffing agency. We can choose our clients based on several criteria, and most Kansas City companies are top notch. However, there*

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Have a question for Dan?

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are times when we need to fire a client. What is the appropriate way to do it?

—Shelley Seibolt, Staffing Kansas City

A: I can tell you are an astute business owner by your willingness to fire a client who is misbehaving. I have said for years, "The only dilemma worse than not having a client is having the wrong client!" A Sandler rule to consider: You can't accomplish anything great by playing it safe.

When having tough conversations like this with a client, it is important that you share your disappointment with their role as your client, rather than with their identity as a person. Bad clients are not necessarily bad people.

So let's pretend they are slow payers. You might say, "I have a problem and I need your help. What I am about to share with you has to do with your role as my client and not you as a person. Are you okay having this conversation? For us to provide the service to which you are accustomed, we need to be paid on time. I know you are better than this, so how do you suggest we handle this?"

If you are not able to get things resolved, kindly let them know you respect them as a person, but are not able to continue working with them as a client. **KCB**