

The Salesperson Who Gets No Respect



I am sure that most of you remember Rodney Dangerfield, the American stand-up comedian, actor, producer, screenwriter and author. He became known for this self-deprecating one liner humor. He became famous for his humor about "I don't get no respect." A couple of his lines were pretty good. "My wife and I were happy for twenty years, then we met." "I get no respect. The way my luck is running, if I was a politician, I would be honest," "My psychiatrist told me I was crazy, and I said I want a second opinion. He said okay, you're ugly too."

How does this relate to a salesperson? When the salespeople are occasionally treated with overt disrespect and indignity, they should be thankful that they option of eliminating the lead or discontinuing active marketing. I call it the big "D" for delete. Yes, delete, delink, defriend. Poof! they no longer exist in my world. This should only be done when the salesperson is absolutely someone that they have no interest in working with this person in the future. A few prospective and budding relationships are not worth the abuse.

The salesperson has 3 kinds of lead interfaces:

- The salesperson works diligently over a period to develop many relationships where the person(s) becomes mutually familiar and appears pleased to hear from you. Familiarity, mutual trust, concern, and kindred values help grow the relationships. Periodic personal contact is a must.

The business motive is to develop ongoing friendships and mutual respect where you have a high probability of referring business back and forth.

- The salesperson may follow up leads where the person on the receiving end will take the calls and be pleasant, willing to develop the familiar part and the friendship part, but somehow never find him or herself in a position to deliver business nor reciprocal referrals. The salesperson's awareness of this type of lead will be proven out over time by multiple calls without result. But if you are soliciting or communicating with someone who may or may not have an interest or have other clients who can benefit from your services, the business motive should be understood. This type of lead should be marketed digitally, such as email, direct mail, online presence such as LinkedIn, Facebook and similar mediums or but should be eliminated as a personal contact. The time spent following up personally is limited and should be coveted.
- The salesperson may follow up leads by direct contact, which is short, disrespectful, or condescending. When this occurs, the salesperson should give them another chance in case they just had a bad day. It is best to send them an email which says something like this. "Thank you for taking my call this morning. In our very short conversation, it appeared that you had little interest in hearing from me. Would it be appropriate that I do not contact you personally in the future?" Based upon the response, you have the option of continuing to call them with a periodic direct call, keeping them in your marketing database for email, LinkedIn, Facebook and other mediums that do not require personal contact. Of course, the last option is the big "D"?

The first element of handling rejection and occasional disrespect is realizing that a few prospects will treat you badly. The second is learning how the salesperson should handle both rejection and occasional disrespect. A difficult learning curve in any salesperson's career is to understand that a negative response from a prospective buyer or lead may not be intended to be a personal disrespect, but merely rejecting the request. The rejection was not intended to be personal. Effective salespersons will always have an action plan to follow up and locate someone who wants to purchase their products, goods or services. Handling rejection and an occasional disrespectful response just come with the job.

Many failed sales requests, or disrespectful rejections each day can be exhausting for some salespersons and can easily affect one's self-worth. Overtime if the salesperson cannot learn not to take the rejection and occasional disrespectful comments personally then that person may be better suited to functioning in a support role engaging rather than out on the front lines of the sales effort.

Listening as a skill is very important in the sales effort. If the salesperson listens to the subliminal reasoning for a disrespectful rejection one might find that the person being solicited has multiple personal problems outside the conversation. The person may be projecting their problems on to the solicitor. As difficult as it may seem the master salesperson will treat the solicited party with kindness and respect even while receiving a disrespectful comment. Any decision about altering the marketing approach and follow up of the person can be done later.

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