
Engaging Prospects

You pick up the phone, the decision maker is on the line, countless letters and attempts have been made to get to this point, your great benefit line comes out—and the response—“not interested.”

Want to be able to engage customers without creating resistance? Here are two vital elements everyone needs to be influential and persuasive.

It does not matter if we are using the phone, walking in cold, or in a retail setting—we need to avoid adding any additional resistance in the other person’s mind. There is an avoidance of “sales people” in 80% of our population including other sales people. This is mainly because of product pushing creating an “I don’t want to be sold something” mentality.

Here is the key: Do I understand what the other person really wants? Do I have an idea of how to talk in their “language?” Can I ask a question that will drop resistance and engage them in conversation?

It has been proven time and time again that shoving your product in front of someone will create resistance to you and your product. Your customer buys the “results” of your product/service/idea because it fixes, fills, or satisfies their perceived needs or wants. This means your product/service/idea is just a means to an end, not the main issue.

1. **Take the time and determine just what it is that your product/service does for the other person.** Determine what the real results are from using your product/service.

Here are some examples:

- A business owner might be looking for more time, better productivity, reducing hassle in some area, and/or freeing up capital for something else.
- A young mother with three toddlers might be looking for best value, more time, better direction, safety, or even just a listening ear.
- A plant manager might be looking for ways to get better compliance, reduce down time, and get his numbers up while keeping his boss off his back.



Think of your past and current customers, what is it your product/service did for them? What did it reduce, take away, eliminate, or create? Also keep in mind that people have a tendency to avoid loss more than obtain gain. This means if you can provide a better “today,” it generally has more power than a better “tomorrow.”

2. **Engage your prospect or customer in a positive way.** The best way is to develop questions that can engage rather than repel. We have to understand what results your product can potentially provide for your customer.

Here are some examples:

- Office equipment: Reduce work load, eliminate paper, eliminate errors, streamline process, reduce labor expense, free up time, create in-house opportunities, and eliminate daily frustrations.
- Real estate agent: Eliminate wasted time, reduce the stress of selling/buying, assure legalities are covered, target the market, professional image, experienced input, negotiations services, and eliminate the hassles.
- I suggest you create at least twenty for your product. Here is a hint, list the facts about your product, then all the benefits related to that fact, and then ask, “What are the results to my customer/other party because of these benefits?”

Let’s now apply these to questions that engage our customers. We want to use “open” type questions that get people talking. If we do not have them talking, we only have partial engagement. Open questions use what, why, and how in their structure. For example:

“Mr. Jones, what effect would a reduced work load have on your staff?”

“If you could eliminate both paper and errors in your current procedures, what would happen for you?”

“Just suppose the frustrations you face on a daily basis were gone, how would it change things for you?”

Now put yourself in the customer’s shoes, how would you react to the previous questions versus this?

“We sell copiers and office machines of the highest quality with excellent service, when could we meet to determine your needs?”

How many words are in this question that create resistance or could be rejected by the customer? Compare that to the three questions above, which engages and which question repels?

Now if your customer is a “D-I” type on the DISC profile you usually can ask for appointments or get quickly to the point. If you have an “S-C” type they may want more info which you can give in the form of a quick example of another application you have done, not a litany of your product’s facts and benefits.

This has proven to be a much more viable way to engage customers and people in general than talking about your product or service. People are concerned about their issues and problems, not your product or you. Engage them by asking about what a “result” might do to their concerns and issues. You will find them much more open and willing to talk.