

Techniques and Tricks in detail

OBJECTION-HANDLING

DAWOOD FAMILY TAKAFUL LIMITED HAROONABAD

When a sales person demonstrates a feature, talks about a benefit or uses a sales closing technique, their customer may well respond in the negative sense, giving excuses or otherwise heading away from the sale. The response to this is to handle these objections. This is 'objection-handling'.

Articles about objection-handling

- Objection-handling process: The overall process for handling objections
- LACE: A four-part handling method.
- Tip the bucket: Ask for all remaining objections.
- Types of objection: Common categories of objection.

Objection-handling techniques and methods

- Boomerang: Bouncing back what they give you.
- Objection Chunking: Taking a higher or lower viewpoint.
- Conditional Close: Make closure a condition for resolving their objection.
- Curiosity: Don't be sad, be curious.
- Deflection: Avoid responding to objection, just letting it pass.
- Feel, felt, found: A classic way of moving them.
- Humor: Respond with humor rather than frustration.
- Justification: Say how reasonable the objection is.
- LAARC: Listen, Acknowledge, Assess, Respond, Confirm.
- LAIR: Listen, Acknowledge, Identify objection, Reverse it.
- Objection Writing: Write down and cross out objections.
- Pre-empting: Handle them before they happen.
- Pushback: Object to their objection.
- Reframing: Change their cognitive frame.
- Renaming: Change the words to change the meaning.
- Reprioritize: So ones you can't handle are lower.
- Writing: Write down objections then cross them off as you handle them.

.....Articles about objection-handling.....

Objection-handling process

This is an overall process to handle objections. See the objection-handling page for a list of methods for the detail of handling objections.

1. Listen

Stop! Do not try to jump in at the beginning - this may cause further objection. When you interrupt them, *you* are objecting to their objection. If you refuse to listen, then their next steps may well be towards the door.

Use active listening methods, nodding and physically showing interest.

They are trying to tell you something that will help you sell to them, which is a gift from them to you. If you do not listen, then their next step may well be towards the door.

2. Question

As appropriate, ask some questions. This not only shows you are interested in them, but it also gives you more information with which to make the sale. As you question them, watch carefully for body language that gives you more information about what they are thinking and feeling.

Remember that this is not an interrogation, and that giving them the 'third degree' will turn them off. So keep your questions light and relevant.

You might also tip the bucket at this time, asking them if there are any more concerns (=objections) that they have, and which, if you can resolve them, you might gain a close.

It is not always necessary to ask questions. Be deliberate about what you are doing if you do.

3. Think

Now before you dive into objection-handling, think! What methods will work best with them? Should you take a direct and confrontational approach or should you use the soft-soap to finesse the situation? Or maybe you should put it off to another day (but only if you can be sure that you can return to the selling situation).

Thinking is a good thing where you are adding a little pause into the proceedings, thus demonstrating how you are taking their objection seriously.

4. Handle

This stage may sometimes only be a few seconds after they object or it may require more time in the previous three steps. Now, when you are ready, use the objection-handling method that you believe will work best. Or make up your own. You are under no obligation to try and force-fit a method where it is unlikely to work.

5. Check

Finally, check to find out whether your objection-handling worked! Ask if you have answered their question. Ask if there are any more concerns. As necessary, handle outstanding objections. Then go for the close.

LACE

Objections happen. If you perform the sales or persuasion process well, you will succeed in seriously reducing the number of objections, but they may still happen.

Objections can be transformed into an opportunity. For example, you can increase understanding of the other person's circumstance and to get closer to them, building a more trusting relationship.

Listen

Before you can act on the objection, it helps a great deal if you can understand properly not only the objection but also the thought and emotion behind it.

Find the objection

First, listen some more. Ask questions that elicit the background and detail of the objection. Listen not only to the objection but to the emotion behind it. Seek to 'read between the lines'.

The objection as stated may well be a cover for the real objection. Probe for more detail. Ask 'what else' and 'how come'.

Find remaining objections

Find out whether there are any other objections. Ask 'Is there anything else'. Tip the bucket. This can cause you more work now and it may seem that it is better to let sleeping dogs lie. But if you do not do so, then when you get towards what you hope is closure, they may easily pop up to frustrate you once again.

Accept

Once you have discovered the objection, the next stage is to acknowledge not only the objection but the person, too.

Accept the person

First and throughout, accept the person. Accept that they have a right to object. Accept that you have not fully understood them.

You do not do this by saying 'I accept you' or anything like this. The simplest way is through your attitude. Objecting can be a scary act, and people can fear your reaction. By not reacting negatively, by accepting the objection, you also accept the person.

By accepting the person, you build both their trust and their sense of identity with you. You also set up an exchange dynamic where they feel a sense of obligation to repay your acceptance.

Accept the objection

Accepting the objection means understanding how it is reasonable, at least from their current viewpoint for them to object to what you may believe is an excellent offer.

It also means accepting the work that addressing the objection will require of you. Objections can be frustrating and if you object to the objection, you will have a mutual stalemate.

Commit

Now it is time to get serious. With the increased understanding and trust, you have an ideal opportunity for a trial close.

Get their commitment

Get a commitment from them such that if you can satisfactorily address their objections, they will agree with you and make the purchase.

This is also a good method of identifying further objections. If they say no, then loop back and elicit these. Eventually, they will run out of objections. If you can address these, it's in the bag.

Make your commitment

This is also the point where you may well be making a commitment to them, to resolve their objections. This may be difficult and cost you in various ways, from calling in favors from other people to putting in additional effort.

The decision you have here, is 'Is it worth it?' Persuasion is often an exchange, and you always at liberty to back out.

Explicit action

Now it is time to address the objections, to take explicit action on the commitments made.

There are two types of objection: real ones and accidental ones. Accidental objections are where the objection is due to a misunderstanding. Misunderstandings are usually easy to address, with an apology and an explanation.

Real objections take work, but if they can be resolved, you've got the sale!

Persuade your way through

Persuading your way through an objection means working to change the way they view the objections. You can wear them down such that they no longer view the objection as being worth pursuing. You can also change the way they view them more positively such that they have an 'aha' experience that leads them to perceive the objection as being no longer important.

Concede your way through

You can also concede your way through, giving in and effectively buying their commitment. If they object to the price, you can always lower it. If they don't want it now, you can come back next week. Concession can be both a useful approach, especially if you are in a hurry, and a threat. If you give them an inch, then they may want to take a mile. But this is not necessarily so, and a prepared concession strategy can pay dividends.

Tip the bucket

Technique

'Tipping the bucket' is a simple, but perhaps counter-intuitive thing to do when the other person objects.

What you do is to ask for *more* objections. In fact you ask for all the objections you can get, thus 'tipping the bucket' of objections that they have been thinking about.

The advantage of this is that you now know all the reasons they have for not buying and can decide what to do about them.

Examples

Are there any other reasons why you are not yet ready?

What else is stopping you from buying today?

It sounds like you have several problems here. What else is on your mind?

How it works

Tipping the bucket not only gives you the advantage of knowing their reasons not to buy, it also shows that you are interested in them personally and want to solve the problems that they have. This builds trust and may enable you to reframe the situation as joint-problem-solving rather than you trying to sell and them fending you off with objections.

Types of objection

There are many types of objection. Here are a few of the main ones. If you can classify how they object then you are on the first step to handling the objection.

Need

They say that they do not need your product or service for some reason or another, or perhaps have a need that you cannot satisfy.

Examples

I have one of those already.

My car works just fine thank you.

I have no space for any more.

Sorry, I just don't want it.

Price

The objections here are about the price of the product.

Examples

How much??

I have already spent my budget for the month.

Your competitors sell a better product for less money.

I could get it cheaper on the web.

I didn't realize that service was not included.

Features

They object to some element of what you are selling, whether it is aspects of a service or details of a product.

Examples

I don't like that style. It looks rather modern for me.

It does not have the latest gadgets.

The guarantee is only six months.

It is far too big.

It is not good enough quality.

Time

In this, the objection is around time, such as the person not being ready to buy.

Examples

I don't know. I need to think about it.

I won't have the money until next month.

I am moving next year, maybe then.

I need to talk to my manager first.

Source

They question the source of the product, often its credibility. This may include questions about you, too.

Examples

I do not know you from Adam. I prefer to buy from people I know.

I saw a report about how badly your company treated its workers.

How will I know if you are around to service this in five years?

.....Objection-handling techniques and methods.....

Boomerang method

Technique

When people object, turn them around by using what they say to prove that they are wrong. Use their own arguments like a boomerang, so they go around in a circle and come back to persuade them.

Examples

Yes, it is expensive, but I don't think you would want to buy your wife a cheap present.

Indeed, the house does need work, but as you said, you are very good at Do-It-Yourself work.

Certainly, if you do not have the money today then we can arrange it all for tomorrow.

How it works

By using what they say, you are saying that they are right. And when you attach what you want to what they say, then by association, what you want is right.

Objection Chunking

Technique

You can take more higher, more general viewpoint or a more detailed focus.

Chunking up (also called *Helicoptering*) lets you see more and understand the big picture. When you chunk up, specific issues seem small and insignificant. My worries about a scratch on a car is nothing in comparison with world peace.

You can expand the pie, showing them how they are getting not only the basic product, but other things as well. You can add widgets and warranties. You can add emotions like the added peace of mind they will have from your product.

Chunking down drills into the detail, highlighting and addressing significant concerns. It also distracts attention away from more difficult concerns in other areas.

You can reduce the apparent size of the objection, for example by changing a dislike of town into a dislike of a neighborhood or just a street.

Examples

Let's look at the big picture. What do you really want achieve by using this?

That's interesting. Tell me more about that...

How does your CEO think about this?

Tell you what. Let's get one of your engineers to consider the situation.

How it works

Taking a different perspective has a dual effect, first of reframing to create a different attention and a new understanding, and secondly of distracting from what might be a difficult issue to resolve.

Conditional Close

Technique

When the other person offers an objection, make it a condition of resolving their objection that they make the purchase.

You can also use this approach to make any trade - for example if you want them to watch a promotional video, offer a cup of coffee.

Always, by the way, phrase it in the form 'If I...will you...' rather than 'Will you...if I...'. This is because our brains work very quickly and starting with 'will you' causes them to begin thinking immediately about objections and they may miss the exchange. On the other hand, starting with 'If I...' will cause psychological closure on what you are offering thus drawing them in to the close.

Examples

You say you want a red one. If I can phone up and get you one, will you take it today?

If we can figure out the finance for you, will you choose this one?

If I get you a cup of coffee, would you like to sit down and look through the brochure?

How it works

The Conditional Close uses the Exchange principle to build a social agreement that if I solve your problem, you will buy the product in return.

Curiosity

Technique

When they declare that they do not want to buy from you, act curious.

Do not just ask 'Why??', but express a curious interest that says 'how interesting - I wonder why'. Getting the objection out before they leave then gives you one last shot to keep them there. Even if they still leave, it also lets you know why you failed to sell to them today and so improve your sales skills.

Examples

I know you don't want to buy this, but before you go, could you just let me know what your reason was?

I was just wondering what led to your decision not to buy this today.

Most people really go for this one. I am a little curious as to how you decided otherwise.

Did I not explain it clearly enough?

Was I a bit too enthusiastic? Sorry, but I just love these.

How it works

Being curious appeals in part to their child-self, whereby you say 'Wow, isn't that interesting!' and invite them to a game of exploration and discovery.

Curiosity also evokes their need for novelty in their life.

When you are non-threatening and not in 'closing mode' they may well relent and give you the information you need.

Deflection

Technique

Avoid handling an objection by deflecting it such that it does not hold up the proceedings.

Listen to it. Show understanding of the concerns. Then carry on as if nothing had happened.

Say that you will come back to it later. Maybe you won't have to. Give an excuse, such as not having information or having to talk to somebody else later.

Examples

Yes, I see what you mean...mmm...Now let me show you the range of finishes you can have...

Good point. Can I come back to that later?...thanks...Now what I was saying was...

Yes, I've got some information about that back at the office somewhere. Can we carry on now? ...

How it works

By accepting their objection you are accepting them as a person, and the additional harmony and rapport created may be enough to overcome the objection.

Refusing to answer their objections now may also be a power play, where you are demonstrating authority and control over the situation. If you can get away with it, they may cede more power to you.

Feel, felt, found

Technique

First empathize with them, telling them that you understand how they *feel*.

Then tell them about somebody who *felt* the same way.

Then tell them how that other person *found* that things were not so bad and that when they did what you want the buyer to do they found that it was actually a very good thing to do.

Examples

I understand you feel about that. Many others have felt the same way. And what they have found is that...

I know how you feel that it looks rough. I had a person in here yesterday who felt the same when they first looked at it. But when they tried it on they found that it was so comfortable.

You know I feel the same about products when I first see them. I felt the same recently when I bought a new car. But when I took it home for the weekend, I found that everyone I know was so envious.

How it works

By empathizing with how they *feel*, you are building harmony with them to create rapport. When you talk about how somebody else *felt*, you move the focus to a more objective place which they are likely to trust more. This also makes them a part of a group such that they do not feel alone. When they are attached to that group, then you move the whole group by telling how the person in the group changed their mind. The buyer, being attached to the group, should change their mind at the same time.

Handling objections with humor

Technique

When they object, do not respond with negative emotions such as anger or frustration.

Defuse the tension with gentle humor, maybe feigning shock or otherwise poking fun at yourself. Be careful about making them the object of humor. It can be done, but you need to be sure first that they will not be offended.

Examples

Oh no! What will we do! (smiling)

Well I think this car would be very sad to see you go home without it.

I think I've lost my touch. (looking at hands with puzzled expression)

How it works

When you receive objections it can be very frustrating and it is very easy for these emotions to leak out. By reframing the situation with gentle humor, you can show that you are not offended by their refusal.

Remember that they, too, may find objecting embarrassing and uncomfortable, with the result that they may well want to get away from you (and the embarrassment) as soon as possible.

Justification

Technique

Rather than fight the objection, justify why it is reasonable.

Tell them how you have deliberately made what you are selling this way for a particular reason.

If they complain about price, tell them the product is built for a superior market.

If they complain about quality, tell them that this is to allow you to charge a very low price.

Examples

Yes, the car is expensive, but it is a rare import and cost a lot to bring over here.

I know it is not new, but it will give your image depth, making you look more established.

It is large, which is why most people who buy it find that visitors notice it at once.

How it works

When people object, they often are saying that what you are offering is somehow unfair or wrong. If you can subsequently show that it is fair and reasonable, then they no longer have reason to object.

LAARC

This is another acronym to help you remember things to do when you are handling objections from your customer.

Listen

First listen to what they have to say. Avoid the temptation to jump in at the first moment you can.

Wait patiently for them to complete what they are saying.

Acknowledge

When you have heard them, acknowledge the person, their right to object, the validity of their objection. If you do not do this, they may take your response personally and the conversation will descend into a failing duel.

Assess

Having listened to and acknowledged the person, assess the situation. This may mean asking various questions to probe for further detail. You know when you have completed the assessment stage when you can fully empathize with the person's objection.

Respond

Only when you have a proper grasp of the objection should you start to respond. Structure this carefully, perhaps using one of the objection-handling techniques here.

Always be careful to ensure you respond fully and adequately to the objections given. Beware of straying off the path of responding to the objection or else you may end up creating more objections.

Confirm

Finally, check with the other person that they have understood your response and that it addresses their concerns.

If the other person still has the objection, repeat the loop. See if you have listened well enough in the first place. Check that you have assessed their situation correctly. Ensure that the response fully and adequately addresses their concerns.

LAIR

This is a simple objection-handling method for getting the sale.

Listen

First listen to them, hearing their concerns and objections. In doing this, listen closely to their real needs and how important things are to them.

Acknowledge

Echo back what you heard to show that you understand and to get the other person to elaborate further to give you the full details of their objection.

Identify the objection

Identify the objection and check that they agree that this is their only reason for not buying. Possibly set up a Concession Close so that if you can handle the objection you will get the sale.

Reverse the objection

Turn around the objection. Use 'yes, but' or other methods to show how the truth is in fact the reverse of what was being objected to.

Objection Writing

Technique

When they object, tip the bucket to get all remaining objections, writing these down as you go on a clean page of paper.

Then show it to the other person and verify that if you address these, then there are no reasons for them not to buy.

Then, as you handle each one, cross it out. You can ask the person before this ('So, we have addressed this. Can I cross this out now?')

A variant of this is to summarize the objections into one word or a short phrase. Thus you write down 'price', 'size' and so on. This allows you to reframe slightly what they are saying.

How it works

Writing things down is useful for a visual thinker. It also moved the problem onto the external, objective sheet of paper (from their subjective thinking). And then it allows you to cross it out. The act of crossing it out causes closure, on eliminating the objection.

Pre-empting objections

Technique

Tell them about a possible objection before they object. Then handle the objection so it cannot be brought up again.

Make the objection rather weak and the handling rather strong.

Tell them stories of other people who objected and then looked foolish.

Examples

I had one person didn't like the shade, but then they had not realized that this was the latest fashion.

You might find this expensive, but we can find the right deal.

How it works

If you answer the objection before they bring it out, then they are unable to voice the objection without appearing to not have heard you.

Pushback

Technique

Do not accept the objection. Push back assertively (not aggressively). Object to their objection. If they are wrong, tell them.

If you think they are not being truthful, show that you know this.

You can push back either directly, by telling them they are wrong, or indirectly, by showing them that they are mistaken. Indirect pushback is usually likely to reduce further objections, unless you have concluded that a 'short, sharp shock' is likely to be more effective.

Examples

That's not right. This product is the cheapest on the market.

I can see that you might think that. But the latest survey has shown that we are the lowest cost supplier.

Would you like to check those figures again. I think you'll find they are not accurate.

Good try. But I can see that you can afford more than that.

How it works

A direct response to an objection can be a shock that the other person will accept.

Exposure of a trick puts the other person on the defensive and may well make them want to compensate you for their deception

Objection Reframe

Technique

When they object, reframe their objection as something other than a 'no' so you can continue with your selling.

Reframing the objection as a misunderstanding (and take the blame for this yourself).

Reframing the objection by taking the subject and turning it around.

Reframe a small difference as being the critical difference.

Reframe 'required specific experience' to 'relevant experience'.

Examples

I can see that this is not making sense. Sorry - let me put it another way.

The cost may be high, but the cost of inaction may be higher.

Yes, blue is an unusual color. It will make you look really original.

How it works

Reframing uses what the other person has given you, which makes it more difficult for them to deny it.

Objection Renaming

Technique

A simple approach to handling objections is to change something in what you are presenting. Some examples are given below, but you can think of more, of course. Objections have names. It may be price, worry or something even more specific. Turn price into cost of ownership. Turn worry into reasonable concern. Words have very individual meaning, which means that changing 'heavy' into 'weighty' or 'strong' into 'powerful' can change the meaning of a whole sentence. Renaming the objection changes it. Or should I say 'putting the problem into new words creates a whole new world.'

Examples

You say you are worried and I can see you are concerned and that tells me you are interested in good quality products.

When you consider about how long it takes, you may also think about the free time it will give you.

You said you would talk to your partners. Could you think instead of discussing it with him?

How it works

Words are 'little packets of meaning' and can have complex schema associated with them, as the deeper aspects of linguistics show. Changing just a word changes the meaning of what is being discussed, looking at it in a different light.

Reprioritize objections

Technique

When they have a priority which is stopping them from buying from you, find ways of changing the priority.

Explore the criteria they are using to decide. Probe to find how important each criterion is.

Appeal to their values, which include a system of prioritization.

Reframe their arguments so they naturally change priority.

At the same time or alternatively, increase other priorities that will lead to them buying from you.

Examples

You are very loyal to your current supplier, but should you be more loyal to your family?

You are right, price is important. But how much more important is quality to you?

A big picture would look nice, but with smaller pictures you can show more of them.

How it works

When evaluating between different choices, we use different criteria and different weighting of those criteria. We also get fixated on particular solutions and forget about other criteria. If you can change criteria, change weights or remind the other person of forgotten criteria then you can get them to reprioritize.

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