

## Conquering the “No”s

*By Ernie Chen*

Selling is perhaps the oldest profession in the world and we have come a long way in terms of finding new ways to sell to our customers. From the days of hard selling to what we practice today - relationship selling, the sales pitch is managed and marketed through the use of research and listening to the customer, the marketing plan, understanding the core brand’s personality clearly, defining the value of the brand, maximizing public relations, remembering the unique selling propositions and advertising.

With all these in place to ensure our sales pitch is solid, we are still constantly faced with challenging objections from our customers. There are many reasons why our customers object to our proposition and the most common are no need, no interest, no time and no money. These objections have become icons in the “hall of objections” in which customers make it a habit to object. We have become as numb as customers toward the sales pitch that may or may not meet our needs. Thus saying ‘NO’ seems like the right thing to do each time we are sold something.

Customers that say no to us may not necessarily mean a dead end objection. Many a times, we may have customers buy from us after many rounds of objections. The reason behind this is the psychology of the customers buying behavior. Customers have created this self defense mechanism to protect themselves from intruding sales professionals by saying no to test the persistency, consistency and sincerity of the sales professionals. Many organizations have created a perception that sales is just a numbers game. They believe that the more customers one speaks to, the more sales is achieved. This is today a myth and no longer holds true. In addition to increasing the number of sales pitch, we must continuously find ways to improve on the sales pitch.

There is a structured approach to handling objections successfully that all sales professionals must learn to practice. The approach is known as the Acknowledge, Defuse and Refocus (ADR) approach. Many sales professionals fail in their early attempts to make sales close because when they are provided with an objection, the sales professional immediately moves into a defensive mode. The sales professional will continuously find new reasons to convince the customer to purchase. When a customer says no, they do not mean never. They simply mean no and maybe sometime later. We as sales professionals must learn to Acknowledge the customers objection and Defuse their focus on the objection. Upon achieving that, we will then Refocus the customer once again on a possible opportunity to resell to them.

The ADR approach is a structured and systematic method, and when perfected will promise great success to any budding sales professional in this exciting profession. We just need to be consistent and persistent in our journey to conquer the “NO”s.