

Relationship marketing: how to ‘shut up and dance with me’ for salespeople

As a professional speaker, I get to attend a lot of conventions and learn a lot about what is going on in various industries. This is where the real learning comes as you see new tools, hear about new trends and get to meet important people.

At this particular convention, I wanted to visit the exhibit hall. This is where you find some of the latest cutting-edge ideas, products and services. People have put some serious money into being there, and it is a great place to learn what and who is happening in any given industry.

Put off by the salesperson’s approach

As I walked by the various exhibits, I saw a salesperson I knew from a long-time vendor. Although I had not done business with the vendor yet, I was interested in its latest tools and the possibility of beginning a new business relationship. Like any entrepreneur, I am willing to invest money to get a good return and improve my business; however, the approach of this salesperson turned me off.

Upon seeing me, he immediately launched his pitch about the vendor’s new mobile app and proceeded to show me the various features it has. Every time I casually mentioned something I was interested in, he avoided my question or comment and went back to his pre-designed sales pitch. Needless to say, I was not impressed.

He didn’t pause once to ask about me or what I was doing there. He knew me from several encounters in past years, yet he demonstrated a vivid lack of care about me and my needs. He only saw me as a sales opportunity, and must have thought that, by being obnoxiously persistent, he might win me over.

Engaging in relationship marketing

Being obnoxiously persistent doesn’t work; however, relationship marketing works. It is about caring for others, listening to them and “dancing” with them.

This reminded me of a popular song a couple of years ago by the group, Walk the Moon, “Shut Up and Dance With Me.”

Contrasting what happened to me at the convention with that song, too many salespeople are like my contact at the exhibit hall. They only want to sell their own stuff rather than engage in relationship marketing. They only want to blab on and on about their greatest new feature rather than ask questions and listen to their prospects.

Here are a few key points that could help salespeople engage in relationship marketing and to “shut up and dance” with their customers:

Listen to your customer. First, find out where your prospect is before you start blabbing away about your stuff.

Ask important questions. Instead of blabbing about yourself, ask important questions that are relevant to your customer. Like in dancing, place yourself where your customer is, not where you want to be.

Hold back on showing your own stuff. Oh, this one is tough! Everything inside you is screaming to tell your customer about your new whiz-bang, turbo-charged, mobile-responsive, whoopee-do (technical term). Don’t!

Customers don’t care about your stuff. They are concerned about their own issues. Keep dancing with them to find out more about them while you shut up about you. Yes, shut up and dance with them. This is what relationship marketing is all about.

Find their needs and wants. Don’t pivot into your offering until you can relate to their needs and wants. Only after you have discovered where they have pain or desires, do you direct them to your product and how it can help them. Yes, this is true even for your new whiz-bang, turbo-charged, mobile-responsive, whoopee-do.

Remember that dancing is not about dragging. You make music together. Dance with your customers, listen to them, be responsive to them and care for them. This is the essence of relationship marketing.

I think if we, as salespeople and entrepreneurs, can embrace these five suggestions, we can have a better dance with them — and do better business!



by Terry Brock

Terry Brock is a marketing coach who helps business owners market more effectively leveraging technology. He shows busy professionals how to squeeze more out of their busy days by using the right rules and tools.

You can reach Terry at 407-363-0505, by email at terry@terrybrock.com or through his website at terrybrock.com. Also, look for Terry on Twitter @TerryBrock.