

2006 Calendar of Events

January 27-28, 2006

AIIGMA 28th National Seminar of Industrial Gases
New Delhi, India
<http://www.aiigma.org/home.htm>

March 12-16, 2006

Hydrogen Expo USA - NHA Conf.
Long Beach, CA
www.hydrogenexpo.com

March 12- 17, 2006

PITTCOON 2006 - 57th Conference
Orlando, Florida
www.pittcon.org

March 19-21, 2006

CGA Annual Meeting
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
www.cganet.com

May 9-12, 2006

GAWDA Spring Management Conf.
Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL
www.gawda.org

May 15-19

ACHEMA 2006
Frankfurt/Main, Germany
www.achema.de

May 31-June 2, 2006

WeldMex 2006
Cintermex, Monterrey, Mexico
www.weldmex.com

July 10-14, 2006

SEMICON West
Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA
www.semi.org

October 14-18, 2006 (Tentative)

GAWDA 62nd Annual Convention
Walt Disney World Swan Dolphin,
Orlando, FL
www.gawda.org

October 30-3, 2006

GAWDA at FABTECH/ AWS
Atlanta, Georgia
www.gawda.org

October 31-Nov. 2, 2006

2006 FABTECH/ AWS
Atlanta, Georgia
www.aws.org

November 4- 8, 2006

International Oxygen Manufacturers Association (IOMA)
Los Cabos, Mexico
www.iomaweb.org

November 13-17, 2006

2006 Fuel Cell Seminar
Hawaii Convention Center
Honolulu, Hawaii
Web: www.fuelcellseminar.com



Art of Selling...

By Art Waskey

"FLIGHT" OR "FIGHT"... USING SKEPTICISM TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS

The scenario: one of our best customers faced a major decision on the purchase of a welding robot cell to improve his plant's production efficiencies. They considered the question of where to source the equipment ... from our rep, or from a local competitor? The customer was currently purchasing all their gas and welding supplies from us, and this new decision would not affect existing business. We went to visit with the purchasing agent, who was part of a management team that would make the vendor decision.

Question: How can you effectively influence the purchasing agent's final vendor recommendation?

In his training workbook, *Sales Mastery*[®], Garry Duncan defines the principle of "*skepticism*" — to get the customer to move "off center," ask a pertinent question that denies or takes away the "desired" solution. Simply put, be skeptical about what you're hearing. Then observe the customer's reaction: movement away from your solution, "*flight*", or the defending of your product/service, "*fight*."

Here's how the scenario played out with the purchasing agent. Our rep said, "So, it sounds to me like you really prefer the competitor's robot!" The customer briefly hesitated and then immediately started defending our product, citing a list of reasons *WHY* the decision team should favor us: they had an excellent working relationship with our rep, they were already purchasing several of our products, we provided local service, etc.

It was a powerful argument when the customer stated to us that we were *HIS* preferred vendor of choice. It was much more effective than anything *WE* could have stated trying to "sell" him.

On the other hand, if he had stated that he was leaning towards our competitor's product, we would have had a better understanding of *WHY* ... and we would also have had a second chance to influence him in the final selection of our product.

Mr. Duncan further advises, "The use of a negative, skeptical, question helps lower defenses, removes barriers, avoids stereotypes, and gains acknowledgement of the pain or vision." As a sales professional, you gain "additional control of the process, neutralize negative customers, influence the indecisive prospect, and receive more positive decisions."

When we realized that the purchasing agent was so vigorously "*fighting*" for our product, we recommended a conditional purchase order with a clause stipulating that our equipment must address the most critical reason why they were considering the competition.

We left the customer's premises that day feeling confident that the purchasing agent was indeed our advocate and would recommend us in the upcoming decision meeting.

The next time you have a customer who is "perilously straddling the fence," take Mr. Duncan's advice and ask a skeptical question. Understanding the customer's reaction to that question will typically result in more favorable purchasing decisions.

Art Waskey is currently vice president of sales and marketing for General Air Services and Supply Company in Denver, Colorado. He is also a sales consultant, motivational speaker, and Distinguished