



Are You a Sales Lobbyist?



Art Waskey

Art Waskey is a speaker who truly delivers. In addition to a 45 year career in sales and marketing, Art is the author of multiple books on selling and a monthly column *The Art of Sales*. He shares these insights as an in demand event and conference speaker as well as leadership coach.

As a successful salesperson, do you consider yourself a lobbyist? I do not mean someone who is trying to secure favors from a public official, but a sales lobbyist, someone who makes good use of his time while waiting in a customer's lobby.

Recently, I was on a call with a young and aggressive sales rep. As we were finishing up, he suggested we make one more call on a prospect he hadn't visited in a long time. Once there, we found the receptionist informative and helpful, but unable to get us an appointment with her suggested contact.

As we turned to leave, another vendor's sales person came in and was cordially greeted by the receptionist. Having overheard his name, I decided to introduce myself and discovered that he was familiar with our company. Furthermore, our account rep quickly realized that this person's father was a

customer of ours. As the conversation progressed, I took the liberty of asking, "So, if you were us, whom would you try to see?" He not only gave us the name of a contact, he agreed to get my young associate an introduction. More recently, this contact has given us several other very viable prospects.

Do you want to be a more effective sales lobbyist? **Here are some relationship building questions to use when meeting people by chance:**

- What products/services do you sell to this account?
- How long have you been selling?
- How long have you lived in the area?
- If you were in my position, whom would you try to see?
- Can you introduce me to anyone in the company?

Another account rep shared his "sales lobby" experience with me. While



Are You a Sales Lobbyist?

waiting in the hallway to call on a general contractor, he sat next to an individual holding a set of construction drawings. Ordinarily a subcontractor like that would be too busy to accept a sales call, but at that moment he was a captive audience. The rep started a conversation and learned that the general contractor was fabricating all the high purity gas stainless steel piping for a new electronics manufacturing facility. As a result of this chance encounter, the rep landed a great deal with that facility and was delivering more liquid argon cylinders and welding supplies than he could have ever have imagined.

When getting to know someone, remember to use specific questions targeted to that individual's business, such as:

- What type of construction work does your company do?
- How long have you been in the construction business?
- What projects are you doing for this account?
- Are you familiar with our company?

- Could I make an appointment to see you about doing business with us?

Another rep told the story of overhearing a conversation about a new startup company while waiting for a client. That information led to her next call, which became one of her top ten accounts.

Still another reminded me that it was in the lobby of one of his best accounts when he learned of their major internal reorganization. He was the first to be there to pick up resumes of key employees who were displaced. One of those individuals went to work for a major potential client, and that account now shows significant promise.

The next time you are in the waiting room, be a sales lobbyist. Take note of your fellow visitors and don't be shy about introducing yourself. It may be the best contact you make all day.

BIG SALES TAKEAWAYS

1. By "sales lobbyist," I mean a salesperson who makes good use of his time while waiting for a customer in their lobby.
2. Memorize these questions to bond with your prospective customer:
 - What type of product/service does your company provide?
 - How long have you been with the company?
 - What are your job responsibilities?
 - How long have you lived in (city, town)?
 - What route do you take to get to work?
3. The next time you are in the waiting room, take the time to become the consummate sales lobbyist.