Understanding The Customer Need

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Understanding Customer Need

Building trust in customer relationships is critical to a successful sales cycle. **To establish trust you must first understand your client's needs and always keep their welfare in mind.** Your ability to enter their world and understand it requires that you have a genuine rapport with them.

Listen

Listening is the fastest way to gain understanding of your customer's background. Here is a series of questions to ask that will help you understand your customer's background.

- How long have you worked here?
- What are your responsibilities?
- How long have you lived in this area?
- How do you get to work?

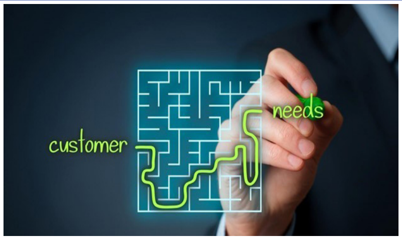
Note behavior

Another way to learn more about your customer is to note their behavioral mannerisms. You should mirror and match their body language, tonality, and words. Phrases like, "I see what you mean," "I hear what you are saying," or "How did that make you feel," let your client know that you are emotionally engaged.

To be better prepared to understand your customers' behavior, I recommend you take a DISC assessment. It will determine if you are a Dominant, Influencing, Steady, or Conscientious communicator. Along with learning your behavioral style, invest time in learning the characteristics of the other three styles. Your goal is to explore how to meet your customers halfway between your style and theirs.

Discover the need

Once you understand your customers' backgrounds and motivations, you can build trust. **Once a strong customer relationship is established, your new contact will begin to tell you how to fit his/her need into your product or service offering.**



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While people tend to make decisions intellectually, they are often emotional buyers. Consider these five emotional buying motives when gathering information on your customer's needs:

- Pain in the present (distraction)
- Pain in the future (fear)
- Gain in the present (stimulation)
- Gain in the future (security)
- Impulsive buy (arousal)

The Need Trail

Once a client has presented a need, be sure to follow the Need Trail with these inquiries:

1. Tell me more.
2. How long have you had this issue?
3. What have you tried?
4. How did that work for you?
5. How much is the issue costing/impacting you?
6. What other issues do you have?
7. Is it important to make a change?

There are some important things you should note when using the Need Trail. First, when asking, "What have you tried and how did it work?" you are preventing suggesting something that they have already tried with failed results. Second, the reason you are asking, "What other issues do you have?" is that normally the first issue a client brings up is not their biggest problem. This question primes the pump. Many times it is the second or third issue they disclose that is the most critical. Your objective is to try to collect the total cost/impact of all the customer's issues. Finally, don't ask, "Is it important to make a change?" until you have exhausted all the issues.

Be a closer

With a good understanding of your customer need and a relationship built on trust, you are in a good position in the sales cycle to begin to close that deal!

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. To establish trust you need to understand your client's needs
2. Listening is the fastest way to gain understanding of your customer's background
3. Note your customers' behavioral mannerisms
4. Once a strong customer relationship is established, you can establish the company's need
5. Once a client has presented a need, be sure to follow the *Need Trail*