Transcript – GET to YES Podcast

E7: B2B Handling Sales Objections 'The Rule of 3' – Personal

In this episode we're continuing to unpack the most common question I get asked by B2B salespeople, regardless of what type of salon or clinic you're selling to… "How do I handle objections?"

Let's pick up from the last episode… I challenged you to practice moving from a telling style to a questioning style. How did you go with the challenge? Did you get tongue tied? Did you persevere and try again? I'd love to hear from you, so please shoot an email to neil@thesalescatalyst.com.au to share your experiences or comment on one of my posts on LinkedIn.

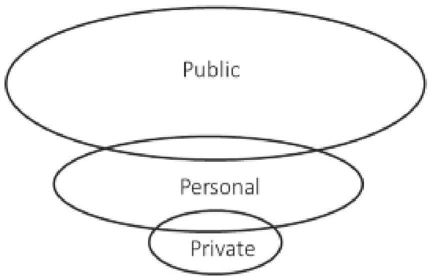
For those of you who are still building their portfolio of questions, I'd like to share something that's worked for several sales people I've trained. What I've found, is that most sales people leave a call or a sales appointment and spend time reflecting and focusing on what didn't work. I'd like to encourage you to create a different habit. My suggestion pivots around one of Anthony Robbins famous sayings: "SUCCESS LEAVES CLUES" Instead of reflecting on the negative, my question is, what worked in that last call? What do you say that got a good response? What question did you ask that really opened the conversation? What question did you ask that helped you secure the sale?

Take a moment to remember what worked and what was successful, then grab your phone, select record and dictate the questions that you successfully used. Then, before the next important sales meeting you have, listen to and remind yourself about the successful questions you've used – what a great way to improve your sales conversation!

Let's now move to the second layer of handling objections – the PERSONAL level.

As you may recall, you drew three ovals – stacked on top of one another in descending size. The top oval was PUBLIC (which we discussed in the last episode), the second oval was PERSONAL and the third smaller oval, was PRIVATE.

THE RULE OF THREE



The sales objection we discussed, was "We have heaps of retail and we don't need anymore."
The process we defined, was:

1. Listen to the client – and I mean really listen
2. Demonstrate empathy, and consider their response from their perspective
3. Realise that what you were being offered was a PUBLIC objection
4. Respond with "That's not a problem"
5. Pause
6. Then ask a question "Can you tell me a little bit more about that"
7. Actively listen to the client, using some aha, ok, a huh, yeah, which encourage the client to keep talking and tell us more.

And the sample response was, "Well my girls aren't good at retail, Jenny never sells anything, Sue is Ok but only if they ask first, as for Mary, well don't get me started!"

What do you notice about this statement? Is it a PUBLIC comment, or is it a PERSONAL comment? Is it the sort of thing that she would normally share, publicly? Generally, no she wouldn't, therefore we've transitioned to the PERSONAL level of the objection.

It's interesting to note that you got to the 'personal' level not by challenging the buyer (by being in FIGHT mode), nor retreating in FLIGHT mode, but rather by asking good questions that open the conversation and then listening for some of the real reasons behind that initial 'public' (or first level) objection. More importantly, by listening with the intent to understand their perspective (rather than with the intent to interrupt), we got the buyer to open up and share more information. WOW

Now that we've reached this level, we need to tread carefully. Why? Well… sew sales people reach this level of conversation because the unskilled are still off trying to solve that first 'public' objection. Once you're here, at the 'personal' level, you need to ask a few more open-ended questions to gather more information about their situation.

BTW, if they offer up a problem and you have the perfect answer THIS IS NOT, THE TIME TO PITCH. Instead, this is the time to listen and collect information, demonstrate your empathy and your industry experience. You are now in the process of building TRUST.

Trust is built slowly but can be lost very quickly, so think and pre-prepare your questions. Some suitable questions could be:

- Tell me a bit more about Jenny…
    - How long has she been with you?
    - What is her area of strength?
    - What is it that clients like most about her?
    - How would describe her level of product knowledge?
    - What sort of retail skill programs has Jenny attended in the past?

I would also recommend that as you probe and gather information, it's a good to take some notes.

The purpose of this stage is to understand some of the positive skill levels of the staff member and more importantly, some of the things that the owner has tried before – there's no benefit to pitching your solution too early, only to discover that they've tried that previously and it didn't work.

At this stage you can also start to explore what the impact of low retail sales is having on the overall performance of the business, client retention etc. However, be careful asking leading questions, because they could push your buyer in a single direction, which is not good and may break the trust you've established. Examples of leading questions that I recommend you AVOID are:

- You'd have to be interested in making more money?
- Would you be interested in selling more retail?
- Surely your staff would benefit from more education?

These types of questions build sales pressure, by pressuring the buyer to give you the answer you want, which by the way they realise is a trap which forces them to flee from you. Remember that experienced business owners deal with lots of salespeople – not just from our industry – from all types of companies who target Hair, Beauty and Body salons.

My industry research has confirmed that salon and business owners know the difference between the good reps and the unskilled ones. They know the sales rep behaviours to avoid and the styles they like to work with. Your goal, as a professional salesperson, is to build respect and trust by avoiding some of those cheap lines that the unskilled and pushy styled salespeople use. Your ultimate goal is to demonstrate how well you know the industry – not by telling buyers how much you know, but rather by asking really good questions that get buyers thinking.

Let's recap… In this episode we discussed the concept of "Success Leave Clues" and acknowledging the value of focusing on what worked in your sales conversations, rather than what didn't. Also, remember to grab those great questions and record them to help you with your preparation for the next appointment. (BTW get used to listening to your own voice).

We also discussed the skill of moving past that superficial, first public objection. Can you remember the steps?

1. Listen to the client's objection "We have heaps of retail and we don't need anymore"
2. Demonstrate empathy, and consider their response from their perspective
3. Realise that what you're being offered is a PUBLIC objection
4. Respond with "That's not a problem"
5. Pause
6. Then ask a question "Can you tell me a little bit more about that?"
7. Actively listen to the client, using some aha, ok, a huh, yeah, which encourages the client to keep talking and tell you more.

We also discussed that when working at this level, it's not the right time to pitch, but rather the right time to listen.

Remember: YOU GET TO YES BY LISTENING, NOT TELLING