

Transcript – GET to YES Podcast

E9: B2B Using Buying Signals to Shorten a Sales Close

In this episode, we're going to discuss something that every B2B salesperson experiences – whether selling to the hair, beauty or body industry. And if you read the signs correctly, they can significantly shorten your sales process and take you straight from a sales presentation to a close, in a comfortable and respectful way. (If you handle them the right way, that is...)

So... what am I referring to?

BUYING SIGNALS

How good are you at recognising and handling buying signals?

Can you identify them... when they come your way?

Can you stop your presentation (midway through) and answer them, or are you too busy talking and can't stop for anything or anyone?

Once you get to understand buying signals, you'll be surprised how much they can positively impact your sales process. However, many people I train aren't clear on what a buying signal is or even if they are clear, they're sometimes not too sure how to handle them. Most answers them with facts... and in the process, often wonder 'where did that come from?'

First off, to give some clarity to what we're talking about, here's a definition of a buying signal:

"It's a sign or indication, be it verbal or non-verbal, that tells a salesperson that the buyer is considering buy."

Buying signals mostly present themselves as a question, specifically around what you're selling. For example, it may be a question to do with your delivery process, where the buyer may ask: "How long does it take for delivery?" How would you respond if that question came up during the middle of your sales presentation? What would you say?

Here's two example scenarios:

The [Teller](#) Response –

An enthusiastic rep who has a '[TELLER Style](#)', may sense a degree of urgency from the buyer and respond by saying, "We pride ourselves in our speedy deliveries and can have it here in two days." The buyer goes "Hmm" and things go quiet. Then the rep, uncertain where to go next, goes back to their presentation and picks up where they left off...

The [Seller](#) Response –

Alternatively, the more pragmatic rep with a slightly more advanced '[SELLER Style](#)', may also sniff an opportunity and responds more directly with, "When do you want delivery?" The buyer then feels sales pressure mounting, starts to be defensive and responds with, "Oh, I was just

curious as to how long things would take to get here.” Then things go quiet. The slightly frustrated rep gets back to their presentation and continues to hunt for another opportunity to close.

Unfortunately, neither of these two examples have helped the sales person shorten the sale. In fact, all they’ve done is probably just added layers of frustration on both sides.

Is there another way? Yes.

First, let’s get even clearer on what constitutes a buying signal. It’s basically any question you get, about what it is you’re selling, so things like:

- What sizes does the product come in?
- How many products are in your range?
- Do you have professional sizes?
- What are your training programs?
- How many colours are there in the range?
- And yes, of course, how much is it?

So, any question that the client asks you about whatever you’re selling (be it a product, service or education), can be considered a buying signal and should be handled as such.

When a buying signal (question) comes your way, your goal is to find out the background to the question – where has it stemmed from, what are they thinking about?

How can you do that? My suggestion is to respond to the buying signal with a polite question. My preferred one, is “Can you tell me a little bit more about that?” And when you ask that question, you’ll find that they’ll expand on their thoughts.

How so? Re-using our previous example, they’ve asked “How long does it take for delivery” You respond with “Can you tell me a little bit more about that?”

They expand by saying something like, “Well the reason I was asking, is that I’m thinking of tying this in with a promotion we are planning.”

You would then ask some questions around the promotion, like:

- Tell me a bit more about the promotion
- When is it?

And by asking those questions, you’ve now found out their plans and their time line.

Next, you respond with an answer and at the end, attach a trial close.

It may go something like this:

- Our delivery cycle is two days
- Is that okay for you?
- Does that timetable look OK?
- How does that sound?

[Note: What’s a trial close? It’s an opened ended opinion-asking question.]

Using a trial close allows you to gather more information and progress to the next stage more comfortably and respectfully.

The only exception to this approach, is when the buying signal is centred around price. If you're asked, "How much is it?", never respond with "Can you tell me a little bit more about that?"

When asked about price, you only have one opportunity to justify it.

The way you do that, is by revisiting some of your key features or benefits, before you detail the price. However, if the buyer interrupts or asks you a second time, "What's the price?" you must stop and answer the question very directly, with retail price is \$X and your buy price is \$Y.

Let's reflect on some of the points from this episode.

1. You need to be having a balanced sales conversation, to allow you to hear the questions or buying signals as and when your client raises them.
2. When those questions come up, think of them as a buying signals – that means your buyer is genuinely thinking about buying your product and that they are simply working through their thoughts.
3. Your goal is to find out more about what's going on in their mind.
4. Remember, not everybody needs to know everything to buy.
5. Your goal is to find out what this client needs to know, for them to buy.
6. You respond to a buying signal with "Can you tell me a little bit more about that?"
7. You listen, answer their question and then add a trial close (an opened ended testing question), which might be:
 - How does that option sound?
 - Could that work for you?
 - Does that timetable look OK?
 - How does that solution feel?

Buying signals are quite often missed by sales people. But when you focus on learning about and understanding what's behind them, you'll discover that your sales conversations shorten, and you'll move to closing earlier... with less pressure and awkwardness.

And ultimately, that means you'll be helping more of your clients.

