

# Stop Selling to Happy People.

Give them reasons to chase you!

## Uncommon Value

Aug/Sept 2018

Entirely too much time is spent by salespeople trying to persuade, present, price, quote, negotiate etc. with happy prospects. If somebody is truly happy with their present supplier... what do you have to be in order to get them buying from you? – CHEAPER!! The next question then becomes, how much cheaper? The answer to that question is scarier, because I've yet to discover a price low enough. I'm sure it's happened to you... time and effort is spent working on a "Happy Prospect", you provide a price that is really close to what they are presently paying for a like product and they say "I'm not going to switch my business to buy a similar product from you for the same price." So you go back and work on your manager to get more competitive, and then go back to the happy prospect to present your more competitive price...still not low enough. I've even heard happy prospects explain that if the price can get to \$XXX.XX, they will buy. After more work with the manager, the requested price is presented, guess what? – Still no sales. I sometimes wonder if salespeople would be better off identifying and practicing negotiation strategies designed to help them instead of spending that time trying to talk their manager into chasing bad business.

Instead of this approach, try something different the next time you encounter a happy prospect. When a prospect says "I'm happy where I'm presently buying" or "I'm loyal to my present supplier", try some variance of the following; "I understand you're happy, I have 100's of happy, loyal customers myself. I believe that a loyal, satisfactory business relationship is good for both you, and the companies you buy products from. But I also know that things change from time to time – service levels

change, personnel changes, products change, prices change, etc. and you may decide to find an another supplier. I've found it's better to search out alternative suppliers before you actually need them. What I'd like to do, if you don't mind, is to visit with you from time to time and share some reasons why our customers choose to buy from us. I won't be pressing you for business, but instead sharing ways that we bring value to the market in order to be in a position to be an alternative supplier to you in case things ever go south with XXX. Does that sound OK to you?" From time to time you will get a negative response to the question, but I believe you will receive the affirmation you desire in most cases. Keep your promise during subsequent visits though, and don't ask for jobs to quote, don't talk price unless the prospect brings it up first, or apply pressure to purchase from you. Instead spend your time explaining how you, your company, and your products benefit your customers and would also benefit the prospect's business. This is accomplished over time and could include referrals, testimonials, and bringing the Happy Prospects leads they can use to close more business.

Happy and unhappy is not often so cut and dry - in reality, there are often layers of content, or discontent between contractors and their distribution vendors. Prospects may also think their happy, but don't know that other companies may have more to offer. There may be times where you need to chase a Happy Prospect due to their size or some other strategic reason. But by and large you will be better off not chasing Happy Prospects - instead work to give them reasons to chase you.



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