

My Objections to Objections

Prevention ♦ Diagnosis ♦ Medicine

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“Your price is too high!”

When you’ve frequently had to sell your products or services it is very likely that you’ve heard this kind of statement before. It could be called the ‘king of objections’. Other frequent objections concern product/service details, commercial terms, and performance issues (like delivery time, warranty, etc.).

In the course of this article I will share with you my views on objections, how they can be minimized if not avoided, and how to deal with them when they show up despite our best efforts.

Before I get into the four types of objections, let’s see where objections come from and how they could be avoided in the first place.

Trust is Key

If you want to find a way to minimize or even completely avoid objections, it is imperative that you develop a deeply (!) trusting relationship with the potential buyer. No, it’s not good enough to just get along well with the buyer. Our own research has found that true trust requires three key elements:

- **Competence.** You know your product, services, the market environment, etc. and you are proficient in presentation, communication, etiquette, and so on.
- **Rapport.** You know how to make another person feel comfortable with you.

My Objections to Objections

- **Care.** You truly (!) care about the well-being of your counterpart and accept the possibility that your product/service might not be a very good fit for your prospect... in which case you will not sell it.

I found that many successful sales people are quite good in the first two factors. But what do most sales people care about? Well, they care about the sale (or the commission/bonus they might get). And what do buyers care about? Certainly not about the seller's commission.

The good news is that you can decide to care about your prospective buyer at any time, but genuinely caring about a good outcome for the buyer is key. We've come to call this the NATOO (Not Attached To Own Outcome) mindset.

When we manage to achieve deep levels of trust with the potential buyer, we reap some great benefits:

- We are much more likely to hear the truth from the buyer.
- If our product/service fits, we might be the preferred choice because chances are good that the buyer doesn't trust the other sellers that much.
- The buyer will allow us to assist in the buying decision making process.

I repeat: **Your care must be genuine.** If you fake it, chances are high that you'll get just the opposite of what you want.

Once we build trust, we can actually clarify all the decision-making criteria of the buyer. We can talk about the available budget, expected payment terms, etc. and negotiate terms that may lead to win-win outcomes. A proposal then becomes only a confirmation of the discussions we've had.

My Objections to Objections

In this 'ideal' scenario where trust is built, there won't be any objections at all because we won't offer anything that isn't asked for by the buyer. Objections can appear only when we offer information that isn't asked for or expected in the way we offer it. So, to minimize objections, it is of prime importance to:

- a) Build deep levels of trust with the buyer (there are techniques available to speed up this process);
- b) Stop offering information that isn't asked for; it is much more useful to clarify matters as much as possible through appropriate questioning; and
- c) Be sensitive to the slightest signs of resistance and to pull yourself back immediately.

When this approach is executed perfectly, you won't face any objections at all. That's one of the key aims of the **Stop Selling!** approach.

But let's be honest. We are not perfect and even very proficient users of the Stop Selling! approach sometimes fall into the trap of inducing objections.

So what's to do?

We've noticed that there are four types of objections:

- Buyer tactics
- Subjective objections
- Objective objections
- Excuses

Let's examine them individually, as a doctor would a patient.

My Objections to Objections

Buyer tactics

Diagnosis:

This is quite common when dealing with executives who make purchasing decisions. They tend to raise objections just to weaken your position and to gain more bargaining power.

Medicine:

Become aware of the tactics and remain cool. Acknowledge the objection while showing that you won't get emotionally affected by it. Try to reframe the conversation towards win-win outcomes. See how you can build more trust with the buyer.

Subjective objections

Diagnosis:

The objection is more like a feeling without profound basis. It might even be that there is something else disturbing the buyer and it's difficult for the person to clearly express that.

My Objections to Objections

Medicine:

Use questions that help the buyer to become clearly aware what actually doesn't match. Once this is discovered, deal with it in a collaborative manner with the buyer.

Objective objections

Diagnosis:

You find out that these objections are clearly based on facts that can't be denied.

Medicine:

In this case there are only two choices. You can either do something meaningful about it or you will need to be ready to accept that you aren't a sufficiently good match because the buyer may choose not to work with you.

Excuses

Diagnosis:

If you notice that objections seem just to be simply excuses to get rid of you, then you certainly haven't achieved a very trusting relationship. People who truly trust you won't make any excuses because they will feel comfortable enough to tell you the truth.

My Objections to Objections

Medicine:

Check if there is still a chance of deepening the trust between the buyer and you. You may also attempt to find out the truth by asking more questions... but chances are that you won't get anywhere in this situation.

Conclusion: Objections can be minimized if not completely avoided. The key is to build deeply trusting relationships with potential buyers. Trust is based on Competence, Rapport and Care (CRC). If you start caring for your buyers' outcomes and become proficient in the areas of competence and rapport, you are on the best way to build strong trust with your existing and potential buyers. If objections still appear despite your best efforts, then you may need to diagnose them first and then use the appropriate 'medicine' to deal with them.



Charlie Lang is an Executive Coach and Trainer who founded Progress-U Limited in 2002. His mission is to achieve a positive change of the image of sales. He is a passionate and professional Executive Coach, Mentor Coach, Trainer, Public Speaker and Author of articles related to leadership, change management and innovative sales.

In 2004, he initiated the Master Coach Alliance (see <http://www.master-coach-alliance.com>) in Hong Kong, a network of professional Life, Business and Corporate Coaches. End of 2004, he started authoring the book "The Groupness Factor" (see <http://www.progressu.com.hk/Groupness-book.htm>) which got published in August 2005. Charlie wrote over 100 articles since 2003 and over 20 of them got printed in publications like Human Resources, FZ Magazine, Banking Today, SCMP, Effective Executive and CareerTimes.

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