

Selling

From time to time CCCC has offered thoughts on selling in these newsletters. A recent book on selling and a 2016 Globe and Mail article on the same topic in 2017 prompted us to restate these concepts in the priority that we feel flows with sensible ideas. Your ability to make sales is best achieved if you can put yourself in the shoes of the buyer, the same shoes that you wear when you make purchases. There is no magic, just common sense.

You must be Excellent

When you buy, you expect perfection from the supplier, that is, no problems from the seller. You expect that the provider knows what they are doing in the selling process and can tell you about the process in a very clear way. As a seller, you have to make it easy for the buyer to buy. First class from the seller is the only standard that you, as a buyer, know. You do not want a broken light switch in a hotel room, a dirty floor in a rented car, a poor explanation, unclear pricing and so on. Being always good as a seller isn't enough; you have to be excellent all the time.

The Buyers' Pain

As a buyer you want the seller to understand your pain and to show you how their solution will, obviously, help remove that pain.

No Risk for the Buyer

And the buyer does not want to take too much risk. That starts by the seller providing a clear understanding of what is being offered, how to get it, and how much it will cost. The buyer does not have much time to invest in trying to understand the offering. Importantly, and always, there will be a balancing act between cost and value; the right balance must be achieved.

Delicate Trust

As a seller, you have the enormous task of building a delicate bridge of trust with the buyer. It starts by your exhibiting low self-interest and high client interest in what is good for the buyer. Besides being visibly presentable you have to speak honestly at all times.

Delicate Role of the Salesperson

Be aware that buyers buy the salesperson first, value second and brand last. This is good news if you have a not-well-known brand. That is the buyer is asking: do I trust this salesperson? Is this salesperson acting in my interest? Does this salesperson understand the product? Does the salesperson understand what I want?

Standing behind the Product

That trust ends with how well you, the seller, are willing to stand behind your product. How close can you come to offering a life-time guarantee? Some companies actually do. What is good for the buyer is for the seller to make that person's life smarter, faster, better, safer, more economical, or to achieve a new pinnacle. Every CCCC invoice, for example, offers the client the ability to cancel the contract, unilaterally, at any time.

No-man's Land

Although you must start with what you are good at, sometimes you may also enter a no-man's land where neither you nor the buyer know if your product will serve the purpose, but there is sufficient

promise that both parties want to explore the possibility. Understand that customers buy ideas. Now, can those ideas be turned into practical realities? Think of what such an exploration entails: trust at the outset, confidence in the seller, agility to the situation, analysis, hungry for ideas, intelligence, creativity, storytelling and the persistence to get to a workable answer.

Humble Seller

Yet, the seller must be humble and never over-promise. Ideally you, the seller, must be on the path to make the customer feel good about what has just been purchased.

Feedback is Key

After the sale, the seller has to check up on the buyer's satisfaction for two reasons.

(1) Besides endearing the client to you, besides providing invaluable feedback to you of what you are doing right and doing wrong, feedback creates the opportunity for a winning testimonial or reference. Word-of-mouth is the strongest sales tool, because, more than anything else, it removes the buyer's risk. Someone important to the buyer has certified your effectiveness. So, as a seller, arming yourself with the word-of-mouth tool is just plain common sense.

(2) If you are a successful seller this time, you may be leading to a life-long client. That is, it is not just one sale, but a life time buyer-seller relationship.

Now go out and sell. Or more correctly stated, go out and help somebody be better.

Bill