



SALES PEOPLE BEWARE

By Bob Urichuck

*Buyers have a buying system,
do you have a sales system?*

Gone are the traditional days of the slick, hit-and-run feature and benefit dumps. Why, because every buyer has been educated by salespeople in the past, and buyers have created their own system to maintain control over salespeople.



Bob Urichuck

Traditionally, salespeople have been taught a lot of sales techniques and tactics. Most of these worked for a while. However, over the years we have trained buyers on these techniques and tactics, as buyers see more salespeople in a day than salespeople see buyers. Buyers know salespeople have

received sales training, and when they meet with us, they usually see the same techniques and tactics being applied. As a result, salespeople have taught buyers everything they know, and buyers have developed a process to counteract the actions of salespeople. The worst part is, salespeople don't even realize they have lost control, leaving the buyer in control of the interaction when salespeople themselves should always remain in control of the sales process. It is the salesperson's responsibility to qualify the buyers. However, over the years, the buyers have taken control and end up qualifying the salespeople and their products and services.

Think about it, how do prospects respond to most of your methods and techniques? Are you in control of the process?

The time has come. Now, it is a clear-cut case of being professional and following a non-traditional proven sales results system. Doing the opposite of what you may have been trained to do—that is if we want to be different than most salespeople out there. The difference is that you will have your prospects buy from you, rather than being sold by you. You need a system to help establish rapport and build trust, to communicate effectively and to develop and maintain lasting relationships. A system that will put you in control to quickly qualify prospects on several levels, to determine next steps, to prescribe solutions, to let the prospect or customer buy while retaining and developing the client relationship for more business, referrals and introductions.

Without a sales results system, salespeople are working on a hit and miss basis, wasting time and not getting the results they could be getting. They become a slave to the Buyer's System. A professionally trained salesperson following a sales

results system is a very powerful tool in any organization. Remember, without sales, there are no transactions. That translates into no revenue. Without revenue jobs and organizations don't exist, no matter how good the product or service is.

The Buyer's System

Let's first take a look at how buyers initially react to a salesperson and why they react like they do. Then we can start to understand how, why and what the buyers have done to create their own buying system.

You are a consumer or a buyer and you meet up with a salesperson, or one with another title that he or she is hiding behind. What is your initial reaction? Do you tell them you are so happy to see them because you have money to spend today on their particular product or service? No, I don't think so. Your first reaction may be to establish control by asking the salesperson some questions about their products or services and not answer too many of their questions. Is this more like what you are used to doing as a consumer or buyer? Or, do you just ignore them or tell them you are just looking? If you agree with this, you are just like most consumers and professional buyers out there. Let me share a typical example with you.

Pretend for a moment that you want to buy an appliance or a piece of furniture for your home. You walk into a furniture store and a salesperson comes up to you and says what? Yes, you are right, "Can I help you." This seems to be the standard line everywhere. What is your response? Right again, "No, I am just looking." Now, why did you answer like that? You knew what you were looking for and you know the salesperson can help you.

Why do you think consumers and buyers act this way? Is it because we are bad people and we want to take advantage of salespeople? Or, is it because we don't trust salespeople and salespeople need to earn that trust first? Is it also fair to say that it is okay to mislead a salesperson, because consumers know salespeople may mislead them? As a consumer you feel you are still going to get to heaven, as it is normal to lie to salespeople because you know they will lie to you?

This is the first step in the buyer's system—the buyer will initially always mislead a salesperson. It is up to the salesperson to gain the buyer's trust first.

Quite often in my training sessions I play a game with the participants called Password. I place a word on the flip chart and ask them what words come to mind. Even with a very professional sales class, I get the same answers. I get the participants to pretend they are consumers, or the general public, and have absolutely nothing to do with sales. I then place the word "Salesperson" on the flip chart. What sort of words, or thoughts, come to your mind?

I hope some of those words and thoughts were positive and professional. Unfortunately, most of those words are not. I am still getting words like fast talker, smooth, slick, money hungry, used car sales, liar, Herb Tarlic, fancy dressers, etc. It is no wonder the general public has no respect for salespeople, and maybe that is why we don't raise our children to be in sales. Can you imagine putting your child to bed at night and telling him or her you want them to grow up and be just like you—a smooth, money hungry liar.

Yes, salespeople are regarded as the lowest form of profession there is by the general public. Yet, I think it is the most professional of all professions out there.

Why you ask? When was the last time you met up with a professional? Who set the time for the appointment? Was that professional on time, or did they make you wait? Did they provide you with a solution, within your budget and time constraints, or did they give you something you didn't want or over your budget? You know the so-called "professionals" I am speaking of. How can they get away with it and yet be called professionals—professionals our parents would have loved us to become. Yet, isn't it funny how times are changing and many of these so-called professionals are now suffering.

The world revolves around sales. As I mentioned earlier without a transaction, there is no revenue and no organization can survive no matter how great its product or service. Besides, what else can you do where you go out and get so much rejection in one day? Isn't that a great experience and a profession within itself to master! Stay tuned I'll share with you how to deal with rejection.

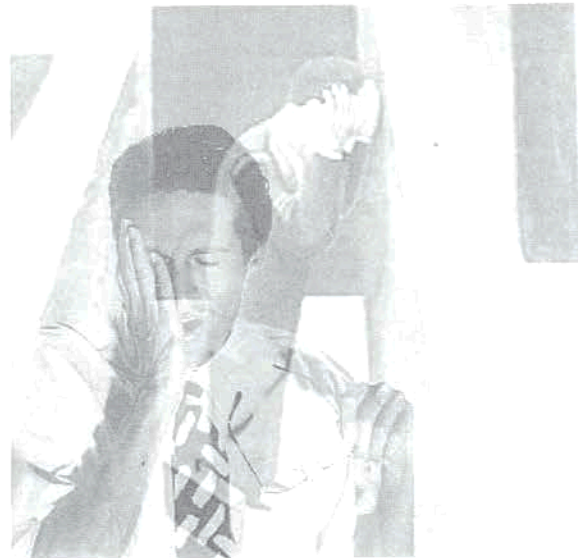
Back to the Password game. I am also getting a lot of words like confident, helpful, knowledgeable, resourceful, professional, courteous, polite, etc. Now that is more like it you say. Well, with the

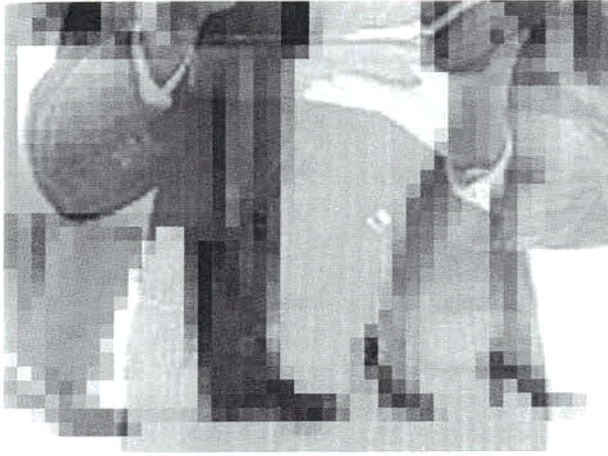
bad comes the good. There are many very good salespeople out there, and they do set themselves apart and are very successful because of what they are doing.

Most salespeople are on time and do provide solutions within your budget and time constraints. In addition, by following the ABC, 123 Sales Results System, salespeople learn how to quickly gain trust, eliminate surprises, uncover buying opportunities and either provide a solution within the prospect's budget and time constraints or tell the prospect "I'm sorry, I can't help you", making the salesperson even more professional, staying in control and still building a relationship while acquiring referrals and introductions.

One of the biggest problems in sales is that salespeople are so knowledgeable about their organization products and/or services they feel they have to give that information away, even if the client doesn't ask for it. I like to refer to this as free consulting. For some reason salespeople feel the more information they give the more sales they will get. Buyers like this about salespeople. It gives them a chance to stay in control. Think about it, do you freely share your knowledge with the prospect?

Let's face it, salespeople are by far the most knowledgeable people in every organization. They know the products and services well, their unique advantages and disadvantages, features and benefits, pricing, margins and discounts, production and delivery, organizational structure,





competition, market and company strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, mission, vision, etc. Salespeople deserved to be recognized for this, but at the same time they need to learn to dummy up, or still better, shut-up.

I provide a lot of organizations with sales and sales management consulting and coaching services. Where would my business be in three months if I were to give everything I knew away for free? Right, I would be down the hole in no time, and you will be soon too if you don't put a cap on the information you are giving away.

Why do think prospects want to know everything you know? Right, so they can make an informed decision. But is it not also because they want to compare you to the competition. They want to know everything you know, and they don't want to pay for it. I refer to this as free consulting. Think about it, what is the result of giving your expertise to the prospect?

Free consulting is the second step in the buyer's system. Buyers will use their questioning techniques to take control of the process. They will ask tons of questions which you normally have no hesitation in answering. You feel they are legitimate questions they are asking, so you respond. There is nothing wrong with that is there? Yes there is. The person answering the questions is not in control. It is your job as a

salesperson to qualify the prospect, not for the prospect to qualify you. Your job is to ask questions, not give information away, particularly for free.

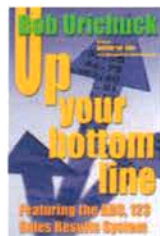
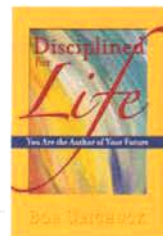
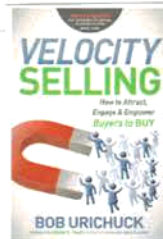
The funny part is most salespeople have not learned this yet. They give away tons of information and then what sort of an answer do they get most of the time from the prospect? "Thank you, I want to buy!" No, I don't think so. How about, "Thank you for all of the information, let me get back to you" or "I need to think it over, I'll get back to you" or "I will discuss it with the others and get back to you."

Come on, you have heard all of these lines before, haven't you? What happens? What do they really mean but don't say it? Is it fair to say the prospect is misleading us again? This is step three in the buyer's system. They really mean to say "no, I am not interested", but they didn't want to hurt your feelings, or figured they could never get rid of you if they did say no because you have been trained to only go for a yes. Don't worry, I will teach you the opposite-how to go for a no-stay tuned.

Now the prospect has misled us, gathered all the information they need for free and misleads us again giving us the impression that we got one. However, it is really only a "hope—a"-I think I got one.

Because you have been well trained, you have all the prospects' contact information, and you decide to follow up with them. What usually happens? Do they take your call? Do they return your voice or e-mail messages? If so, great! You have managed to gain some trust and started to develop a relationship. If not, you have fallen into the buyer's system once again.

The fourth step of the system is they hide; they don't return your calls or e-mail messages. Why? Maybe because they found a better deal, a better product or service, or maybe a better salesperson-one who asked questions, took the time to show he or she cared by listening to the prospects needs while helping the customer buy. You can tell and sell or you can do the opposite, ask and let them buy. Keep doing what you have always done and you will always get what you have gotten. ●



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