

# The Five Biggest Lies You Have Ever Been Told About Sales And Growing Your Business

## 1. You don't have to close

In our experience the people who espouse this one are freaked out about closing. They do not see it as necessary because they are afraid to close a sales discussion. If you never close a sales discussion\* you are unlikely to secure much business, the best analogy is fishing with a bait-less hook. If you are in a small pond with lots of fish you might jag one but otherwise forget it.

I suppose closing sales has earned a bad rap over the years. There have been too many so called 'sales gurus' with jingoistic terminology for the process of closing sales. If you were the victim of this crap you might have heard cutesy terms like the 'puppy dog close,' the 'Benjamin Franklin close' among many others. Here is a little tip, these were lousy ideas and do not work in any market and especially Australia.

The fact is if you want to grow your business and approach sales professionally you must close the sales discussions you are having with prospective customers. And you know what? The easiest way to close a sale is to simply ask for the order. You must ask in your natural style and with a relaxed body language maintaining eye contact. It is no harder than this and if this sounds hard for you then start practicing.

If the thought of asking for an order or approval to proceed, remember all the times when you had to summon the courage to close other deals in life; your first dance at school, your first date, getting engaged and ultimately popping the biggest question of all, "what's for dinner." Just kidding, but you know what we mean.

\*[We call these sales discussions since they are two way interactive, information based communications. Sale is not about 'gift of the gab.']



## 2. People buy on price

Guess what many people do when they meet hesitation or a negative response when they try to close a deal? They drop the price! I have seen this happen without any discussion to identify why the prospect is hesitating or choosing not to proceed. In fact, we were told the story of a software consulting company that dropped their price from \$30,000 down to \$6,000 when they were asked for more detail about their proposal. Guess what? The prospect was prepared to pay \$30k but the salesperson freaked out and dropped \$24,000\*\*.

People do not buy based on price alone. Price is most definitely a factor in the decision making but not THE factor. In most surveys of purchasing officers, price comes in around 4 or 5 in ranking of importance. What are the top factors influencing the buying decision?

- Trust in the sales person and their organisation.
- Risk profile of doing business with the organisation.
- Quality of the products and services.
- References from other customers.
- Conforming to requirements.

There are others and there are differences based on what it is you are selling. If you are a trades person you may win or lose business based on your personal appearance, the quality of your quotation, your promptness and your communications style. If you are a consulting company you may win or lose business based on the interpersonal trust developed with the buyer, demonstrated experience, ability to reduce risks among others.

If you are inclined to compete on price you will surely win some business. You will miss out on so many more opportunities since most purchasers have an in-built suspicion detector for the lowest price presented. The organisation submitting the lowest price must overcome this suspicion and this can cost money.

And speaking of money, do you want to win business to win business or make money. How long can you survive on a lower margin by relying on the lowest common denominator in sales.....price competition.

\*\*[True story. Would you not be suspicious of a firm that dropped their price like this?]



### **3. Follow up is not appreciated**

At Sales Ecosystem we have found most folks who preach this lie from the soap box are often the same folks who claim you do not have to close. The common theme here is fear. People who do not follow up tend to be fearful of rejection or anger. In a kind of strange kind of paradox, prospects often get more irritated when there is NO follow up as opposed to a polite follow up phone call.

The key to follow up is timing. People like to interact with friendly professional people. If you have submitted a proposal and not followed up with a call to ensure the person received your proposal, what message does that convey? I will tell you bluntly, it tells the prospect you either don't give a crap about the business or you are so darned dis-organised that doing business with you is risky.

If you are networking and meet a person with whom you have shared business cards you should follow up no later than 48 hours. If you are a serious networker you should be in touch within 24 hours either by phone or by email. If you are sending an email you should add a piece of value add such as an article or other information your contact may find useful based on what you know about them. Ultimately to advance a relationship you need to either phone or schedule a face to face meeting if that is possible.

You should enjoy the follow up. It is all about mindset. We encourage a new mindset for people who struggle with closing and follow up. This mindset is based on servant leadership. You are providing a product and service of great value and it is in your prospects best interests to do business with you and not others. You are acting out of the best interests of your prospect not out of self interest. It is a bit 'out there' but it works miracles. Our coaching program helps adopt this mindset and the dividends are enormous.

### **4. You need to advertise to get new business**

If you feel like going retro you can go back a decade or make it really fun and go back to the 'golden age' of advertising during the '60s and '70s. Make sure you have lots of money and plenty of booze to drown your sorrows when you ultimately realise you could have used that all that money for a new car or a skiing holiday.

Advertising is one component within the marketing framework. Some business types use advertising effectively and these are typically 'fast moving consumer goods' (fmcg) and automobile companies. But you can achieve so much more and much more quickly by



using tools that are widely available and often free to promote your business and grow your sales.

We see marketing execution as focused on getting your prospects to *know, like and trust* you. This is a journey that you can undertake no matter how large or small your business is or the market in which you compete. Many of the tactics we use in our marketing strategies are simple processes that do not depend upon hours and hours of time and expertise that is hard to learn and apply. Of course you can also cost effectively out-source elements of your marketing strategy.

Make sure you understand this distinction. Advertising is one way communication unless you have clients that enjoy having a conversation with a magazine, newspaper, television or radio. In advertising you try your hardest to get people's attention and then hope they will decide to contact you sometime. I guess there is some art to doing this since most people have attention spans less than ten seconds.

Modern marketing is a 'conversation.' It is at least two way conversation and in many cases it even goes beyond this to include other third parties. You create a relationship when you have a conversation and marketing is no different. In modern marketing you are able to provide information to prospects. This information can include a huge range including your website, Linked In profile, white papers, articles, free seminars/webinars, among so many others.

Throughout the marketing conversation you are offering information and inviting your prospects to give you more information as well.

## **5. Social media replaces face to face sales**

Despite all the good news about modern conversational marketing there is still one common denominator that trounces all other forms of communication. No, it is not your Facebook page. As effective as social media is in connecting and communicating with people it has not yet trumped face to face interpersonal communication for building trust between people and businesses.

Most people interact with friends and acquaintances in an easy and relaxed fashion. When they are in a business meeting with a less familiar person they often become tense and nervous. Guess what? It shows. Being effective in one on one (or more) meetings is essential particularly if your business is dependent upon face to face interactions. For example if you are a trades person you must usually meet the prospect at some point



during the quoting/sales cycle. If you are selling consulting services and/or high end software system you need to meet personally with your prospect.

There are companies that refute this and insist upon selling their products and services via phone and web meetings. I still believe the most effective (and efficient) way to gain a trust based relationship with a prospect is face to face. I recall a meeting with a specialised software company based in Brisbane. These guys are successful in their target market and knocking off far bigger competitors in Australia, Asia and North America. I asked the Managing Director and the Sales Manager if they could distill their success to a few elements.

The responses to this question are a good lesson. The Managing Director mentioned 'great software and consulting expertise.' The Sales Manager said 'we go to the client and present in person.' This guy spends a lot of time in planes and sees this as a necessary fact of life to achieve the kind of success they are enjoying. This company could do online software demos and give their prospects free trials without ever leaving Brisbane. But do you really think they would have achieved their market dominance if their competitors met personally with prospects yet they did not?

We can show you more about how to grow your business in 2 hours than you will ever learn in a classroom or stack of books. Our **Launchpad** workshop is 2 hours of clear thinking and action plans to ignite growth in your business *fast.*

Book a complementary Launchpad now for your business.

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