

## **The Power of Acknowledgement**

Acknowledging is an important skill. Some would call it a talent. Applying it during sales interactions can make you more effective, more likeable, more present, and as a result, more successful.

The most obvious time to acknowledge what the client says is when you encounter resistance. The first step in the objection resolution process that we teach in our *Consultative Selling Skills* sales training program is to *acknowledge* the objection. By acknowledging an objection you demonstrate empathy, confirm that you have been listening, and let the client know that you want to collaborate as opposed to argue.

Acknowledging sets the tone. It lets the client know that you want to hear what he or she has to say. It sets a climate for cooperation. And it lets the client know that you will not become defensive, aggressive or recalcitrant. It lets them know that you are ready to roll up your sleeves and get to work.

And all this can happen in a few seconds. By using the client's language, you don't come across as patronizing. It makes the acknowledgement more sincere. Coined phrases like "I know where you are coming from," or, "I can understand that," or, "that's a fair concern," don't mean much. The words are invisible. You need to relate the acknowledgement to the client's objection.

So when the client complains about fees, say something like "I know you are trying to keep costs down." If they complain about service, try something like "I understand how frustrating these service issues can be..." If they don't have time, try "I understand how busy you are..."

Of course, you will come up with your own phrases, but the key is to make sure that your acknowledgement statement is real and relates directly to what the client said. That is why we encourage you to *use the customer's language*.

Once the acknowledgement is done, you are ready to get the elaboration required to truly understand the need behind the objection so you can reframe it and address it. But acknowledgement is the critical first step in the process.

So think in terms of acknowledging what your client says when you encounter resistance. It will make you a more effective salesperson.