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November 2009

Positive Behaviors in Excess can Become Annoying

As salespeople we need to do whatever we can to develop long term, meaningful relationships with our prospects and clients. The relationship drives everything. As complicated as you can make the sales process, the reality is that most people make their decisions based on their relationships with their suppliers.

Yet positive behaviors in excess can work against us. That may sound strange so here are a few examples.

Of course we want to treat our clients with respect. We want to be gracious and sensitive. We all know the power of empathy. One HBR study suggested that empathy was the key behavior customers look for in salespeople. We want to be likeable, affable and fun. But let's not cross the line and become obsequious. Our dignity and self-respect are too important. Too many people think of salespeople as "back slappers" who will do anything for the sale. We need to be true to ourselves and proud of who we are. There is no need to resort to groveling.

Salespeople need to learn as much as they can about their clients. We continue to encourage our clients to ask questions to learn about needs, problems, opportunities, goals, objectives, aspirations and risks. Successful salespeople are curious and want to learn what they need to know to provide excellent solutions. But don't let that translate to being perceived as nosy or intrusive. There are questions that we can ask and questions that we can't. We need to know where the line is and not cross it. Turning the sales call into an interrogation rarely results in good feelings. Here is where your sensitivity can play a key role.

Enthusiasm and passion are wonderful behaviors to demonstrate. An enthusiastic salesperson usually has an enthusiastic client. When you demonstrate your belief in your company and what you offer, it can be contagious. Passion about what we do is what drives us every day and in many ways demonstrates our commitment to our work. But keep it in check. Please. How many times have you been turned off by the guy who doesn't know when to stop? When your enthusiasm affects your ability to be in the moment, you can miss opportunities. Don't forget that what excites and motivates you might not excite and motivate them.

So there you are. Do the things you do well...just don't cross the line. That positive behavior in excess may work against you.