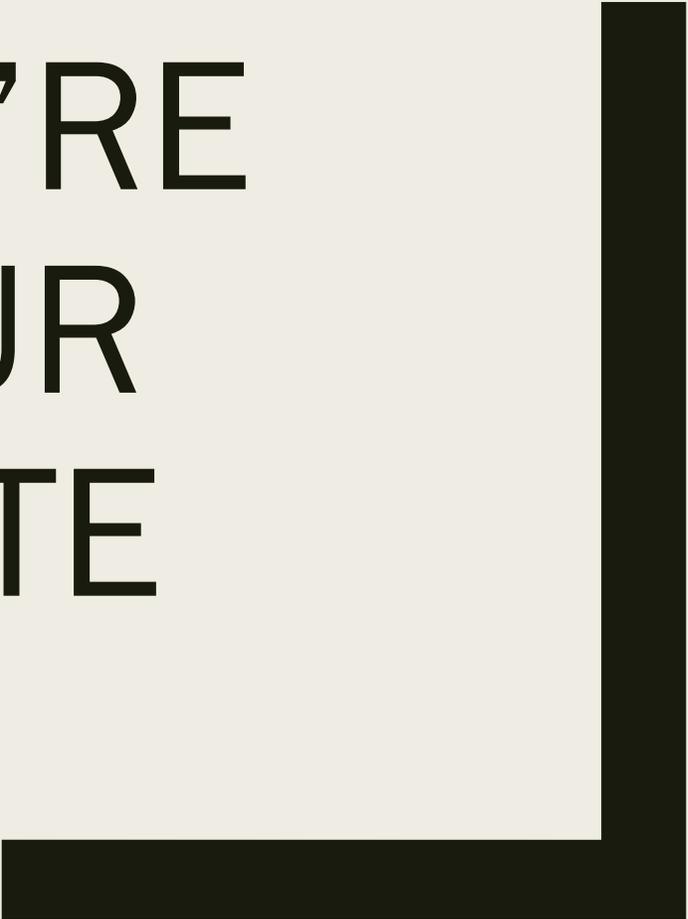




10 WAYS YOU'RE
KILLING YOUR
CLOSING RATE



1. Focusing on yourself.

You know just how important every sale is to your company—whether the next prospect means being able to make rent that month, or puts you over the top on a sales goal. But the hard truth is that your customer probably doesn't care about you or your company. If your sales pitch focuses on anything other than the customer's wants and needs, you're likely starting off on the wrong foot.



2. Talking too much.

You have two ears and one mouth for a reason—you should listen twice as much as you speak!

One of my favorite interview challenges when I'm looking for a sales rep is to place a pen on the table between us and tell the rep to sell me the pen. What happens most of the time is the rep blabs on and on about how great the pen is. The most effective strategy is so much simpler. Great salespeople ask, "Do you need a pen?" If you're talking about things that don't matter to your prospect, you may just be making noise.



3. Never asking questions.

Here's a secret: If you're asking the questions, you're likely in control of the conversation. If you ask the right questions and listen carefully, your prospects may tell you everything you need to do to land them as customers and absolutely wow them. Find out what your prospects want, and then give it to them.

4. Overselling.

Often, sales reps have a big presentation planned, and sooner than expected, the prospect agrees. The savvy sales rep would shut up and close the deal; however, many sales reps continue to make the pitch. Continuing to extol the virtues of your product can actually backfire, though, as consumers don't like to feel pressured or overwhelmed. You can actually lose a sale if you keep hammering a prospect with features and benefits after they've decided to buy. Know when to stop selling.



5. Pitching the wrong person.

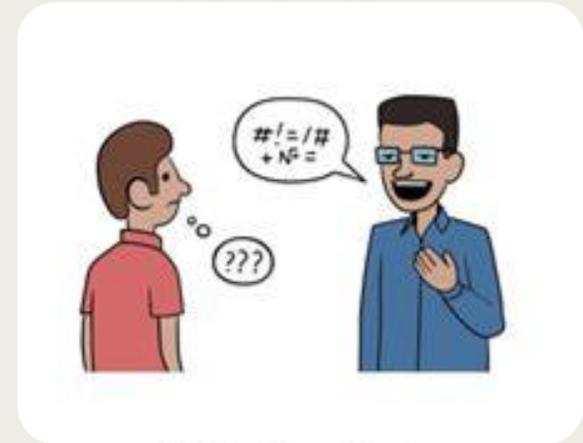
It may not matter how brilliant you are at sales or how great your service is ... if you're not in front of the decision-maker. Don't waste your time in hopes that the person you're pitching will go sell for you. It's unlikely to happen. Get to the person who matters.

6. Stating (rather than demonstrating) your credibility.

Whenever possible, you should show, rather than tell, and credibility is no exception. Rather than telling your prospect you have 1,000 satisfied customers, provide your client with 1,000 testimonials. Unless you provide evidence to support your claims, you can run the risk of appearing untrustworthy.

7. Failing to speak your customer's language.

Making a pitch to a general audience can be tough. A much better strategy may be to narrow your focus and learn the language and features that speak to your targeted audience. Using the lingo that matters to your prospects can make you stand out from the crowd and encourage prospects to accept you as one of them.



8. Making yourself unavailable.

Some mistakes are fixable, but if a prospective client reaches out to you to ask for an appointment or a quote and you fail to deliver, then you're probably sunk. Your responsibility is to be responsive and available when your client needs you.

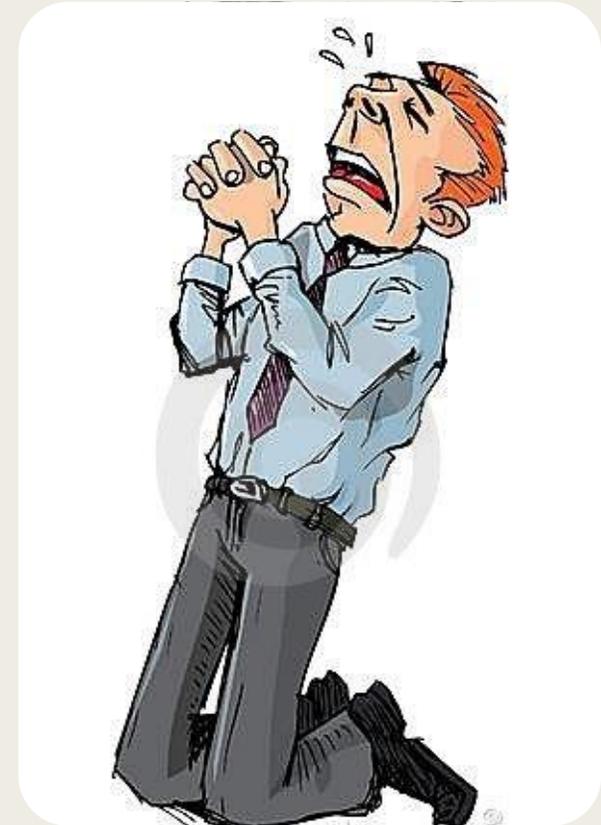
9. Failing to show respect.

Whether it's showing up on time for an appointment, dressing appropriately or simply saying "thank you," don't ever miss a chance to show your respect for your client's time and business. When you send a message that you don't respect your customers, you may soon discover just how many of your competitors will happily take those customers off your hands.



10. Being needy.

Perhaps the single biggest turnoff may be the salesperson who begs for the sale. Your salespeople should not be asking a customer to part with hard-earned money just so they can hit a quota or win salesperson of the year. Don't forget that success breeds success, and if you appear desperate, you are likely not making an effective sales pitch.



Summary:

If I had to sum up my very best sales advice in just a few words, it would be: Ask questions and take notes. If you focus your sales presentations on meeting (or exceeding) your prospects' needs you may be far more successful, and your customers may be far more satisfied.