

Common reasons for sales reluctance

Almost anyone in sales has some form of sales reluctance, whether it is a total reluctance to have anything to do with sales, a reluctance to call on certain prospects, or even to sell certain products or services. Sales reluctance can become an obstacle to achieving higher sales performance and in most cases it can be overcome. Here are 10 common underlying reasons for sales reluctance and a brief overview of what to do about it. It is not an exhaustive list but most other areas are connected in some way to these.

Lack of motivation

Self motivation acts as a driving force in sales and also as an anaesthetic. It's common for sales people who have a success early in the day to show little signs of reluctance but if they have a bad start to the day their reluctance just increases. Having motivating goals and a plan to obtain them is one aspect of overcoming sales reluctance. The other is how to stay motivated and recover from disappointments and rejection. Success breeds success in sales and motivation fuels the activity needed to achieve success. If you focus on your motivation levels you will find that you are able to be more consistent. 'Take a check up from the neck up' as Zig Ziglar says.

Lack of clarity

You can be highly motivated but if you do not know what you are doing or the direction in which you should be focusing then that can lead to reluctance. Your energy will be sapped and you will not know why. It's because you are confused and need more clarity. The way to get more clarity is to seek it and ask better questions.

Lack of confidence

There are many areas of confidence that could impact sales performance including self confidence, confidence about your services, confidence about the market, even confidence in undertaking a new task. In sales, confidence becomes a 'chicken and egg' situation. The more you do something and the more you get it wrong, the more likely you are to start getting it right. Being able to control the feeling of confidence whilst developing competence is a learnable skill. **Incorrect Attitude/Mindset** Everything looks different depending on how you look at it. Preconceived notions about what selling is or isn't and what people may or may not be thinking all adds to the sales reluctance mix. Learning to see things the way sales people do will help to put things into perspective and can help with sales reluctance. Seek mentoring from someone who is already achieving the sales success you want and learn how they think. Over time and with proper application you will begin to think just like them and have the same levels of success.

Limiting Beliefs

There are certain beliefs that we will have developed as we grew up such as 'It's rude to talk about money' or 'People do not like me' or even 'All salespeople are crooks!'. These get experienced as self talk at a very subtle level whenever in situations that invoke them. Becoming aware of them is the first stage of overcoming them. Then you need to find counter examples and develop your own self talk and activities to develop new self talk.

Working with an NLP practitioner could help you accelerate the process.

Insufficient strategies
If you have only learnt one way to sell and you are selling in a different market or to different prospects you may find that your sales results begin to suffer and you begin to lose confidence and develop a level of sales reluctance. Find someone who is achieving success in your new situation so that you can learn and apply their strategies. Read books, attend seminars, listen to audio programmes. Just make sure you are looking at new answers.

Need for approval

This is a very common issue in sales and one of the harder to resolve quickly. It is a good thing in terms of relationship building but if the sales person does not have control over their need for approval then it can lead to extreme reluctance in certain sales situations. At the extremes it will lead to total sales avoidance of anything to do with sales or anything that risks damaging the relationship between the sales person and the client.

Conventional training will not resolve this. It takes a change in mindset in order to resolve or strategies to reinterpret rejection as something else. It is best to screen out people with an extreme need for approval at the recruitment stage. Personal mentoring and coaching can be effective and training that focuses on mindset rather than technique.

Poor self image

People live according to their self concept. If they do not see themselves as someone who can be successful in sales then they will feel uncomfortable with selling. Also they could not see themselves as someone who could talk confidently with a senior decision maker. It is possible to use visualisation and affirmations to help work on self image. NLP contains many techniques an individual can use to improve self image and working with an NLP practitioner can help accelerate the process.

Underdeveloped people skills

The individual may actually have a reluctance to something much more fundamental. They may feel uncomfortable in inter-personal situations such as meeting new people or even making eye contact. It is something you can screen for with sales people but business owners and partners, it needs attention. As relationships are at least 50% of any sale, it is better to begin with developing inter-personal skills before worrying about sales technique.

Lack of Activity

Just as success breeds an upward spiral of success, lack of activity can breed a downward spiral of lack of activity. Just like an electric fan that has been unplugged, the activity slowly slows. Even top sales people can fall into this trap. They may have a personal situation that takes their eye off the ball and slowly their performance diminishes. Before you know it they start becoming reluctant to do any activity. This is the easiest to fix. It takes getting the person focused back on all the things they were doing to make them successful in the first place.

About the Author

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