



Strategies to bust objections before they stall sales

Dreaded 'O' word

Fear, it is said, is a negative kind of wish. And to the salesperson nightmare is a word that begins with an 'O'. Don't we all wish for smooth-as-breeze sales with no objections? But let's borrow the buyer's hat for a minute. Matt Abrahams and Burt Alper contributing to Stanford Business Insights explain it this way – "People will go to great lengths to avoid potential negative outcomes – much greater lengths than they will go to attain potential positive ones. This orientation toward the status quo often compels us to be suspicious of new things" The solution? Know how to handle a suspicious audience say Abrahams and Alper in their insight article *How to handle audience skepticism* (Stanford Business Insights, September 3, 2015)

Framing – A fail-safe objection buster

One fail-safe objection buster is 'framing'. How we position a topic often determines the way people see it. Use language that highlights the positives such as the potential benefits and successes. Classic example of framing is the description of 'used' cars as 'pre-owned'. A simple change in the word choice transforms the way those cars are seen, which in turn influences buyer attitudes and behavior

Two primary objection categories

To help understand which framing technique would work where, the article groups all objections into two categories –

- (i) Objections of the Heart - Subjective, emotional concerns
- (ii) Objections of the Mind - Objective, factual concerns

Objections of the Heart

Emotional objections are easy to spot. They lack data or are focused on what might happen in the future. They are expressed as knee-jerk, spontaneous concerns. Here are some techniques, the article suggests, to counter objections of the heart

1. Look for Cues

Phrases like the ones below:

- "I'm not sure why I just don't like it"
- "That doesn't feel right for me"

THE MERCURI VIEW

The skill of handling the price objection consists of 2 steps leading to justification of the **extra** price as perceived by Customer. It needs showing him or her the **extra** benefits. Handling the price objection is not to justify the total price but only the price difference with whatever Customer is comparing with.

Two approaches devised by Mercuri to think through the justification are:

1. Quantifying each of the benefits and stacking them up as value.
2. Pointing out the risk of not buying or not buying from you.

Both these approaches involve countering the **price** objection by 'reframing' the offer in **value** terms so that the Customer gets a wider perspective to compare the benefits against the investment he is making.

The price objection is the king of all objections. Rightly so, because he who learns to handle price objections well is verily the king among all sales champions.

For more reading, please access the Mercuri Insight Document titled – '[Are your sales people struggling to sell price?](#)'



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- “What if ...”
 - “That might lead to ...”

2. Douse emotional fire with logic

Fighting emotion with an emotional response drives the other side to take an even more entrenched position. The issue doesn't get resolved and your credibility takes a knock.

3. Use paraphrasing as a framing technique

“Paraphrasing” say the authors “is a listening tool where you reflect back what others say in your own words”. Effective paraphrasing brings a host of benefits with it. You can be sure that you heard and understood the other person right. The other person feels valued for her/his contribution. You get some time to think, when you can pivot your response to logic.

4. Reframe with a higher order concept

Consider the most feared objection – “Why are your prices outrageously high?” A reframed, paraphrase can be effective in such cases, recommends the article. “... you can reframe the issue to be about a topic you are better prepared to address. For example, ‘So you'd like to know about our product's value’.

This, however calls for, identifying a higher order concept that holds the key to an effective response. Objection on longer delivery time, for instance, could be pivoted to highlighting of quality. So, invest time ahead of the crucial sales call or presentation to anticipate objections and understand the connected higher order links. Then you can invoke the links seamlessly while paraphrasing

5. Try these lines to start your paraphrase

- “So, what you are saying/asking is ...”
- “What is important to you is”
- “You'd like to know more about ...”
- “The central idea of your question/comment is ...”

Objections of the Mind

Fact based objections are easier to both identify and manage, as they originate from some logical reasoning. These objections are usually the result of prior experience with the idea, product or service being discussed. The article suggests strategies to counter objections of the Mind, which are as follows:

1. Spot the cues

Phrases denoting fact based concerns, listed in the article, include:

- “We just don't have the resources”
- “We don't have enough time”
- “Your idea will cost too much”



2. Don't counter fact based objections with more facts

Presenting more facts that counter the other person's objections is not a smart thing to do. This approach leads to arguments on whose information is right. Neither side will win. Your credibility will be hurt

3. Use analogies to reframe and overcome fact based objections

When you use an analogy, you activate the listener's existing mental constructs. Information processing and understanding become quicker. You also introduce a fresh view point or perspective for discussion to continue. For example, while opening a bank account, the Customer objects to the number of papers required to be submitted. You could counter that with an analogy of a car passenger having to strap on for a safe ride. Enjoyable? May be not. But safe? Definitely yes. Work in advance, to anticipate fact based objections and keep some analogies ready to counter them

4. When it comes to analogies, clichés are fine

We are taught to avoid clichés, while writing. But when it comes to picking analogies to overcome objections, clichés are fine. Since clichés are trite analogies, they are universally understood and can put common wisdom on your side. A Customer objecting to a buying maintenance contract for an expensive equipment, is easier to convince when you tell him that it could be a penny-wise thing to refuse the maintenance cover. You should of course take care not to overuse clichés in a single interaction

Salespeople regard objections as stumbling blocks. Intelligent use of framing can help you transform them into stepping stones for sales success.

The Stanford Business Insights article on *How to handle audience skepticism* by Matt Abrahams and Burt Alper is [here](#)

Mercuri Insights

Champions of Selling follow a professional sales process right from the word go, so that Customers see the Value they are getting. Such Sales People sell price well, overcoming objections that come on the way.

How does one handle non-price objections? There are three kinds of objections: Objections we don't hear, Objections we hear and can answer and Objections we hear but cannot answer. The process and skill to handle each of these is key to selling well.

Key Words

Mercuri International
Objection handling
Handling Price Objections

Annotations
Value selling
Sales Training

Selling Price
Framing
Sales Performance Improvement



In Essence

Annotations

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