

My Compliments!

A compliment, it is a powerful tool that is so simple to use in the sales process. So, why do so many sales people fail to offer them? Are we mentally lazy? Or, is it easier for some to pay a compliment than others? What I hope to accomplish through this article is for you to recognize how simple it is to know when to use the tool. If used correctly, you'll see your sales begin to improve. You'll even feel better about yourself. What better compliment than being confident in yourself and proud of what you stand for as a person.

Let's start with a compliment: *You've made a great decision to look at my products.* This is a simple compliment that pays respect, reinforces the decision that has been made by your customer or prospect. By doing so, it creates more interest in the next things that I, the salesman, have to say. I have shown interest in your decision. Here is another one that I've used recently: *I saw an article about your company's sales performance last week. They are showing positive trends, I'd like to stop out next week and learn more about what you folks are doing and discuss how my company can help you continue this path.* Simple, but got me in the door for a meeting. I showed that I'm following the customer's headlines and that I want to know more about them. The battle in sales is getting in the door, paying a compliment will help you with an opportunity to set up a meeting in many cases.

Compliments can be paid in many ways. Be careful that you are not coming across as patronizing or sounding phony to the person or company that you are paying it to. I like to pay compliments on what interests I have in common with the person I'm meeting with. I do not want to act as though I'm showing an interest in something that I may know nothing about. I may want to learn more about it, that's okay, but I certainly do not want to have a conversation that could get me in trouble about the subject. I have a friend and customer that when I met with him for the first time many years ago, I found out he was a huge NASCAR fan. I know very little about NASCAR. In his office, he had NASCAR memorabilia everywhere. I could not start our first meeting without making a comment about his love for NASCAR, so I went for it. I said, *"I can tell you have a great love for NASCAR. Have you always been a fan and what is your favorite thing about it?"* I never lead on that I knew so little about it and one thing I do know about NASCAR is the passion a fan has for his favorite driver. So I knew I could get in a lot of trouble dropping names that I've heard on the news. That was a good decision. This was my compliment to the prospect. I let him talk about his sport and of course his driver. I learned a lot about what drives him and how I could use that passion to help me make the sell. By the way, his favorite driver was one, at the time, I never heard of and the few drivers that I knew of were drivers he despised.

Please don't get yourself in trouble with paying compliments that are unwelcomed in the professional workplace. Compliments must be professional at all times and respectful. A person once said to me: *"In business, everything you do must be legal, respectful, ethical and morally correct."* If what you do does not meet these tests, then don't cross that

bridge or pay the compliment. You may find yourself facing a legal battle that could put you or your company out of business.

Paying compliments should not just be limited to the professional workplace. Try it with your immediate family, friends, or to a complete stranger. Kim and I were very busy getting ready for meetings a few weeks back. When we were both leaving for our day, I noticed that Kim looked great that morning. She had a glow about her that caught my eye. But I chose not to say anything because we were both busy. However, about 1 hour into my drive for the meeting I was heading to, I realized how I failed to pay a compliment to the most important person in my life. I immediately called her to tell her that I was sorry I didn't say anything but wanted to tell her she looked great today. I don't know if that changed her day or not, but I do know that I felt a smile come through the phone. That is what is important.

Make Me Smile, was one of the titles I thought about for this article before settling on "My Compliments". I like to see people smile and by complimenting them, you'll see them smile. You've showed an interest in them, as a person. I challenge all of you to make others smile during the next 30 days. For many, it has been a tough year. A compliment paid could end this year on a positive note and set someone up for a great 2010. Please try it. It will make you feel great as well.

Great Selling!

Mike Popella