

The Sales Consultant

I was recently involved in a consultative service with an investment firm concerning the state of the food service industry. I explained to my client my concerns are that the industry needs to prepare itself for a new time and age of doing business. Product costs and fuel prices are up. Everything is causing us to be in a reactive mode. The “Negative News” is discouraging people from spending money and adding influence to the weakening dollar. Foreclosures are at an all time high, but the mortgage crisis is something that should have been avoided because unqualified buyers should have never received these loans. We need to not just prepare ourselves for new times and experiences, but our customers need to be ready for change through our encouragement and experience in consulting. This goes for your business and personal life as well.

How do you protect your business and consult with your clients? Are you in a selling mode or educative & consultative mode? If you are continuing to sell, you will soon find that a new breed of consultants is out taking the approach of educating your customers. They are quickly earning the trust and business through a value proposition that you are not offering. If you are the consultant and not the sales person, kudos’ to you. Keep it up! A value proposition of teaching and showing concern to the needs of your clients will go a longer way than just accepting that business is on a down swing and staying stagnant in your selling approach. Remember, you are there to focus on the needs of the client, show them new and innovative ideas to make them successful, and make them gain market share in the market they serve. You are not there to bring them down or discuss discouraging news. Yes, it may not be the greatest time for business, but it is time that we are in business and we must act like successful entrepreneurs for our clients. Your positive influence will rub off on them and make you more prosperous and valuable.

It is your job as a consultant to help and assist your partners to be on the cutting edge of their business. Whether they need help in budgeting, advertising, training, or new ideas; you have the ability and tools in your arsenal to impact their bottom line. In most cases “The Sales Consultant” is an additional member of the management team. Yes, you do get paid for what you offer through your commissions! But it is a cost that is not applied after purchasing. Become an expert in certain parts of your clients business and you will become a valuable addition to their team.

I was recently preparing myself for another consultative service for an upcoming discussion on my industry. I did some research on my client and their interests. I looked at their strengths and what I believe are some weaknesses that I want to help them with. I will highlight their strengths when I meet with them, but focus on how to overcome their weaknesses. Not all clients are the same and not all clients need the same repetitive consultative service. Adjust your strengths to meet the needs of the client and you will see success in this field. Otherwise, you will lose your market share to the sales consultant that is offering services above and beyond the sell of product. Really, anyone can sell what you sell. It’s what you offer, your value proposition that makes the real difference. Become a sales consultant and you will see success.

Great Selling!

Mike Popella