

BMKT 114: Psychology of Selling

Unit 3 Course Materials – Problem Analysis



In unit 1, we discussed the elements of trust. In unit 2 we identified both emotional and rational motives for buying. Now we will continue the process of *discovering* our prospects needs.

Problem Analysis (Brian Larson)

The skills we are going to discuss will help you in discovering whether or not you and your potential customer may have a basis to do business. At this point, it would be wise to point out that often, the customer isn't even aware that they have needs for your products. Not until you probe into their specific situation will you find out what their needs are. The questioning skill sets provided will assist you in doing this in an efficient manner. Let me give you an example. Imagine a medium sized company that currently leases a dependable copy machine with all of the features necessary to meet their needs. YOU sell copy machines. Hmmmm.....what is the point? Even their lease is binding for three more years and their service reps are always prompt to solve any problems they may have. The person who would make the buying decision doesn't see a problem. She is willing to meet with you since your approach was to get to know her rather than sell her a product. You meet with her, discovering that her needs are being fulfilled. At this point, the average salesperson would thank her for her time and may even request referrals to anyone she may know that would have needs for your products. But...lets take this a bit further. Suppose you asked for permission to simply observe the company's operations. Conclusions of you observation determined that the existing copy machine was located on the main floor of the two story office. It is also in high demand at peak times during the work day. Employees were forced to walk downstairs from their offices, typically stopping along the way to say hello to fellow co-workers, and finally spending from 4-9 minutes waiting for the person currently using the machine to complete their job. Sometimes, the job that precedes them is a long one, so they go back to their office needing to return at a later time, repeating the same process. The work gets done, but certainly not as efficiently as it could. Now you go back to the manager with your conclusions. The result is that the average employee uses approximately 40 minutes per day to go to...or to wait to use the copy machine. 40 minutes per day times 5 days per week, times 4.3 weeks per month times 12 months per year, affectively costing the company nearly \$1600.00 a year PER EMPLOYEE. The manager does the math and realizes that they indeed have a problem.....a significant one costing the company thousands of dollars....and it was a problem she didn't even realize she had prior to your analysis. Now.....do you have a basis for doing business? Absolutely. The moral of this story is often a problem perceptually may not exist until you *clarify* the situation. This makes the manager "*feel the fever*" and want to do something about it. That is your job. Imagine if you went to a routine doctor's appointment, had some tests run, to discover a medical issue you were not aware of. Maybe it was high blood pressure, maybe it was high cholesterol, it could be any number of things that didn't outwardly have symptoms...until they were pointed out. It is your job to point out the problem....even

BMKT 114: Psychology of Selling

Unit 3 Course Materials – Problem Analysis



when symptoms are unknown. That is the mark of a good salesperson. Please understand, I am not suggesting you attempt to sell anything to anyone they don't need...that would be dishonest...I am suggesting you become a “*Doctor of Sales*” who evaluates a persons overall health, run some tests and suggest some possible solutions. It is when you take this *counselor* approach to selling that it becomes honest, fun, profitable and truly a service to your clients. They will then think of you as a partner in their business rather than a salesperson who is using manipulation tactics to get at their money.

Next point....and think of this repeatedly.
“*People love to buy, but hate to be sold.*”

Do you agree? How many times have you heard someone say...”..*the salesperson didn't sell me, I sold myself.*”

Next point...and a related one.

Listening relates to buying ~ talking relates to being sold.”

Hmmm....so, a good salesperson needs to know how to *listen* people into buying. How do you do this?.....By asking questions. Strategic questions – not just random questions.

Questioning Strategies

Otherwise known as problem analysis. This is the time to formulate a set of questions designed to obtain relevant information that pertains to the problem. It also serves to get the prospect to recognize they have needs that they may or may not be aware.

What kinds of questions do you ask? Well.....ones that determine if they have a problem that needs to be solved. What is the definition of a problem?

Highlight this !

:

The difference between what you “have” and what you “want.”

Think of it this way. If you visit a doctor and you have a fever of 102 degrees – what do you want? Well....98.6 degrees of course.

Important points:

1. The *difference* is the problem.
2. The greater the distance, the greater the problem.
3. The greater the problem, the faster one wants to solve it ~**AND**~ the more they will spend to fix it.

Fact-Finding Vs. Feeling-Finding Questions

BMKT 114: Psychology of Selling

Unit 3 Course Materials – Problem Analysis



Fact-Finding Questions determine what someone has. (Yes this is poor English, but designed to help you remember the information)

Feeling-Finding Questions determine what someone wants.

When you use the discovery process to find out a prospects wants and/or needs, you need to pair fact-finding to feeling-finding questions.

Example if you were selling a car.

Fact-Finding Questions

What are you currently driving?

What features do you like and dislike about your current vehicle?

Feeling-Finding Questions

What would you like in your new car?

What kind of gas mileage would you want from your new car?

What safety features most interest you?

In your questioning strategies, keep the following points in mind.

1. Avoid “killer questions” early. If you have not fully established trust with the client, don’t ask questions like “How much can you afford?” First of all, you are not far enough in the sale to address this issue and secondly what they can afford may have nothing to do with how much are they willing to pay. Their reality may also be out of line with current costs.

**A quick note about price. Yes, what a customer makes, or is willing to pay for a vehicle is important. A piece of information necessary to solve the prospects problem within the parameters of their needs. But you need to approach like this. “Mr. Prospect, based on the information you have provided me, you need a vehicle with the following features..... We have vehicles with these features that start in price form \$\$\$\$ and go up to \$\$\$\$\$. Which price range would you like to select from?” The price is related to the solution – not necessarily what they WANT to pay. Everyone wants to pay less. Have you ever left a store saying you paid too little for a product? Probably not. So face it, the price is too high for everything – but that doesn’t stop us from buying.*

Finally,and this is my pet peeve....don’t ever use the word “cheap” to refer to price in a sale. “Cheap” refers to quality – NOT price. Speak in terms of investment rather than price. Price projects “cost” whereas “investment” projects a return.

BMKT 114: Psychology of Selling

Unit 3 Course Materials – Problem Analysis



2. Don't ask questions where the answers make assumptions. Let's say you are selling a car. What might seem like an obvious question would be: "*How many kids do you have?*" Seems appropriate, after all, the number of kids should relate to the number a people the car can seat.....right? Maybe....maybe not. Maybe the buyer wants a corvette for his mid-life crisis. Maybe his kids live with their mom in Seattle. Maybe his kids are grown and moved out of the house. If you want to know how many people he/she wants to fit into a new vehicle – ask that specific question. Be on target. Next we will discuss what are called "*discovery agreements*" that will help you conclude you are on the same page with your prospect prior to suggesting a solution.