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**The TACTIC: Don't EVER answer unasked questions.**

**The STORY:** I'm reminded of a salesperson in a furniture store helping a young couple look for a dining room set. After the couple picked out the set that they loved, and the salesperson had checked and confirmed that it was in stock, and the order form had been written, the salesperson decided to show the young couple how easily the drawers opened and closed on the buffet.

He let them know that the smooth ride of the drawers was due to ball bearings. The wife lost all enthusiasm for the furniture. She then told her husband that she couldn't possibly have anything with ball bearings in their house because she had swallowed a ball bearing as a little girl and nearly died. She turned and left the store. The husband mumbled his apologies and followed her out.

Did either the wife or the husband ask *why* the drawers opened and closed so easily? No! The salesperson answered a question that neither of these buyers asked. Other buyers may have cared why; these buyers didn't.

**The RESULT:** Canceled order. Salesperson frustration. And the lesson this salesperson may learn is that you never say there are ball bearings. He may be convinced that the sale was lost because of those ball bearings. And if I come into the store specifically looking for a dining room set with ball bearings, what chance do you think there is that I'll ever be told about them? The sale was lost because an answer was given to a question that was never asked. Ball bearings had nothing to do with the sale being lost.

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**The TACTIC: Don't EVER answer unasked questions.**

**DISCUSSION:** Answering unasked questions is a trait that many salespeople have taken to heart as the way to get a prospect to buy. Knowing about your product/service and wanting to tell anyone who will listen is what drives the need to answer unasked questions. Unfortunately, many salespeople wind up giving answers that cause the prospect to further question whether or not he is doing the right thing by considering your product/service. Unwittingly you are giving the prospect more information upon which to raise objections. Why give the prospect the information to raise objections? This only makes closing that much harder.

Most answers to unasked questions occur when there is a lull in the conversation. The salesperson decides to fill in the lull by explaining more, hoping that some of what is said will “connect” with the prospect. This is a form of “Let’s throw it on the wall and see what sticks.” And if the prospect shows any signs of “connecting” to what has just been thrown on the wall, the typical salesperson’s response is to throw even faster.

**APPROACH:** Stop answering unasked questions. When the lull occurs, and it will with every prospect, ask him a question. Don’t make a statement! And once you ask the question, wait for a response.

Product/service knowledge is essential to determine if the prospect is the right one to buy what you are selling. This knowledge is NOT meant to be used to bury the prospect with facts and figures hoping that some of the facts and figures will convince him to buy.

Giving the prospect more information can lead to losing a sale. This only convinces the salesperson that even MORE explanation about the product/service is needed.

**THOUGHT:** Don’t give the prospect reasons to raise objections by answering his unasked questions. Your job is to ask the questions and then evaluate whether the answers the prospect gives qualify him for your product/service.

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