

Early objections 1 - How to set up a meeting

In the last session, we learned that objections matter where they come up in the sales process and what your objective is when handling them. In this session, we're going to talk about how to minimize early objections when trying to set up a meeting. Let's say you call a prospect and you tell about your product. You think you're being polite. You say, Hi John, how you doing? Fantastic. I want to tell you about a new product that can save you lots of money. When can we meet, next Thursday? Or is Tuesday better? And they say, look, I'm not interested. I've got no budget, but you selling something, not my decision when it is, how much is it? And then when you tell them, they just put the phone down. You thought you were being polite but truly believed you had something for this customer. So why does this happen?

Because people are risk averse. We just don't like change. So the biggest competition you face is the fear of change because your prospect is afraid of change. So a customer's default reaction is, I don't want change. So the question is how do you go from the customer moving away from the status quo to seeing you about a new opportunity to potentially buying your product? Let me give you an example. I hate phone calls that start with, Hi John, I'm from the widget company. How are you today? Insincere. Look, unless you might doctor, all my friends get to the point, be polite, be fair, and let me like you. Robert Cialdini, a professor, Arizona University and he's excellent book on influence. The classic book on persuasion said, the key element you need to bring in at the start of the sale is likability. You need to be liked and you need to be fair.

So let's see this in practice. When I tried to set up meetings in order to sell, say a new photocopier, my phone call started with, Hi John. Look, I know you're probably busy so I'll be brief. My name is Bradley from Cannon PLC Copiers. I was at your company the other day and Joan, your reception, told me you're copying about 2000 documents a day without a manual document feeder. I want to run something past you quickly that may be potentially right for you. I promise it won't take more than a minute. Have you got a minute? And then what you do is you pitch your offering in a minute to see if you should set up another meeting. So let's go through this. There's likability. You're making yourself likable by telling the prospect you don't waste their time, which means you respect, they're busy, you respect, they're the decision maker and everyone wants to feel important.

So make them feel important. There's also the absence of the hard sell when you use the word potentially, right for you. Also, I'm now asking for your time because I've spent time researching and understand your company's problem and that may be potentially have a good solution for you that could help them. So that means I'm being considerate. One point to know I don't like it when people ring and go, have you got time to talk? It's almost inevitable. You'll hear back, I'm in a meeting. And why? Because the time you've asked for is undefined. What do you do when you're calling a customer who knows you or knows your product when you're trying to set up a meeting? Let me give you an example of what used to happen when I used to work for Yellow Pages. If you can't remember Yellow Pages, it was a bit like Google on paper.

So I had to go back to customers that advertised in last year's book. And I'd say, how did your Ad Work? Big Mistake. I only got a fraction of the meetings I was trying to get. Why? Because it was the wrong setup to get a meeting. So if you think about the possible answers I could've got, the customer says yes, which means the advert worked and they'd weaken their negotiating position if they said no, I was trying to get a meeting, we can mine negotiating position. So how did I change the opening to get more meetings? What I did was this, I said, hi, John. Remember me? It's Bradley from Yellow Pages. We met last year. Oh yeah, yeah, that's right. Are you a multimillionaire yet? And they'd laugh and say, not really. And I say, great. I need to see you when you're about next Tuesday. The reason this worked was because ultimately I understood their objective, and if you understand their objective and focus on the objective itself, you will get less objections. So this is how you can avoid objections and getting meetings. But what happens when customers actually do object? Well, we're going to discuss that in the next session.