

Earn Respect First, Friendship Later



Your customers are not looking for a new friend; they're looking for a new home. Some sales trainers get it out of order by saying that your first focus should be to get your clients to like you. While it is important that your customers ultimately like and feel comfortable with you, the very first step should be to build respect. From there, a trusting relationship is just a natural byproduct. You can earn respect by showing clients that you know more about the process than they do, by solving their problems and improving their lives, and by leading the process.

Teach Them Something They Don't Know

Home buyers spend hundreds of hours researching neighborhoods, prices, school districts, and mortgage rates. While some may relish that extra time in front of the computer, most find it exhausting and do it only because they feel they have to. Earn your keep by being an authority on the subject—one they respect and feel respected by.

Show that you are that authority by teaching your customers something new before even walking the first model. Educate them on your builder's selling message, the unique niche your

developer has created, or the architectural style of your homes.

Don't let it stop there. The fact is that you're trained to know all the things they come in wondering about. Don't be stingy with that knowledge. At the appropriate time, enlighten customers on the builder, the neighborhood, the school district, and what they can expect from the building process.

I told my financial advisor that if I ever know more than he does on the subject, I'll fire him. I want him to be the guru so I don't have to be. Be the expert, and make it your goal to provide service that is greater than or equal to the commission you will earn. Your customers will be relieved that they've found their human Google and that they can focus on finding the home that best suits their needs.

Improve their Lives

Above all else, people buy homes to improve their lives. This should be at the forefront of your presentation. Consider what features your home has that will accomplish that end. Does it have a better layout? Will the media room save them money on entertainment? Does your location provide a shorter commute, more convenient shopping and restaurants, or activities for the kids? Is your neighborhood safer?

One of the must-haves in my current quest for a new home is an office that is somewhat secluded. One model we looked at had an office in the traditional location in the front of the house, but because of my experience in the industry, I knew to ask if the builder could enclose the covered patio upstairs and make it into another room. You, as the knowledgeable salesperson, should be looking for these types of solutions for your clients. Find out how to conquer your customers' unique problems, and then lead them to solutions.

Ask questions to uncover why your clients need a change, and then find something that solves their problems. This earns their

respect by showing that, not only do you understand their needs, but you also know how to solve them.

Lead the Way

Before I had a tax accountant, I filed my taxes myself. I spent hours researching tax rules and trying to find ways to reduce my taxes. I just didn't see the value in paying someone else. I was a skeptic until my accountant proved that I could hand the whole process off to him and then get on with life. When he took the lead, the burden came off of me and I realized that he was worth every penny he charged.

People want to be led in the areas in which they lack expertise. You are not doing your customers any favors by holding back information, advice, and opinions. Have some courage, and facilitate the process that you know so much about.

Communicate. Make it as easy as possible on your buyers so they don't have to babysit the process. They, in turn, will feel safe. I don't want to pay someone to do my taxes and then still feel like I need to have my hands in the whole thing. You're the expert, you're the facilitator. Lead in this way, and you will earn their respect. When you earn their respect, you'll naturally earn their loyalty and friendship.

Add value to your customers' experience by being their guru. Find and guide them to the solutions to their problems. Remember that you are the leader in the experience, and take the initiative. By doing these things, you will earn respect. Chill out on building the relationship, and focus instead on quickly earning your customers' respect.

Earn their respect now. You can Facebook them later. **SMI**

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