

The Differences Between Objections and Statements



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Too often in the sales process, customer statements can be misinterpreted as objections. If the business manager is not able to identify the difference between the two, it can create obstacles in closing the sale. Attempting to address the customer's statements as objections can lead to confusion and outright rejection to the offering. So, how do business managers determine if what they heard from the customer is an objection or just a thought?

Most often, customer's thoughts or statements are really a signal they need additional product information on how the features can benefit them. However, before a business manager can effectively provide this additional information, they need more input from the customer. Conducting a proper interview with the customer will expose the necessary facts to create impact points that match the product to the customers' needs. Everyone knows that the best advertising is word-of-mouth from customers. Therefore, business managers NEED to educate their customers so they fully understand the features and benefits of the products they chose. Additionally, business managers must have a clear understanding of what motivates the customer's decision to help them choose the right products for their vehicle and lifestyle. A customer that is educated and truly satisfied with their F&I products can become your personal spokesperson and a powerful sales tool! Below are tips for business managers to use to better identify objections versus statements, which can lead to more satisfied customer and potentially future referrals.

Objection handling techniques are probably the most requested topics in training. Business managers can learn rebuttals for a variety of objections. However, if the business manager is wrong in assuming where the objection is coming from, then they end up addressing what they think the problem is and miss an opportunity to learn what is really standing in the way. Of course, the best practice for objection handling is being able to present products that match the customer's needs. This is something all business managers strive for. If you present products based on what the customer has shared, you will have a bigger impact by attaching the features and benefits to how they WILL benefit. If the customer says something, do not be too quick to assume it is an objection. Again, it may only be a statement or question to get more clarity from you.

Every customer voluntarily provides information in the interview. However, business managers do not always ask the follow-up

questions needed to successfully match products to individual benefits. Begin to utilize trial close questions when interviewing and presenting the products. If your conversation with the customer during the discovery phase is forthright and your questions have been answered, then you should see affirmation from the customer during the product presentation that they see the same benefits you describe to them. So, why do customers make statements that indicate they have no interest?

The most common reason customers do not purchase F&I products is because they simply see no value in the offering. When we do not see value in something, we typically will not purchase it. If that is the case in the business office, the usual objections will arise such as:

- "Can I think about it?"
- "Do I have to decide now?"
- "My uncle is a mechanic."
- "I never buy those."
- "My insurance company has that."
- "I have the money to take care of repairs."
- "I'll take my chances."

When you do hear any of these statements, you first need to discover if these are really objections or just statements made because the customer needs more information.

Let's address, "I need to think about it." Most business managers will take this statement as an objection and assume the customer is not interested. Instead of quickly assuming the customer is objecting to the offer, repeat the statement back to the customer in order to get more clarity from them. You may be surprised to find out that the customer made the statement because they want to think about whether they want to finance or just write a check, not because they do not want to purchase products. You need to be clear on what the customer is saying so you can effectively respond. Otherwise, your quick assumptions may cause you to miss out on a lucrative sale.

After getting more clarity from the customer, you can then properly reshape the statement like this:

- "Of course you need to think about it, I wouldn't expect anything different. The fact that you are taking time to give it thought suggests you see value in what we discussed. Can you share with me the value you see in the product?"

This response to the customer's original statement can affirm that you and the customer are on the same page. Eliminate hunting for why the customer is resisting the offer by simply asking them upfront.

The above restatement is an example of what I call the Pirate Method, or "RRR" – Repeat it, Reshape it, Restate it. Repeating the statement gives the business manager an opportunity to get more input from the customer. Reshaping the statement allows the business manager to bring back the customer's own words gathered during the interview. Restating the statement confirms that the business manager understands exactly what is in the way of the customer making a decision. The conversation that develops when using the Pirate Method along with trial close questions, is what I refer to as logical conversational selling. This is the next step that the business manager moves to after using the Pirate Method to gain more insight and input from the customer. Logical conversational selling helps to ensure that the business manager did not miss a valuable point where they could have expanded on how the customer can benefit from the product. It also ensures that they answered all the customer's questions satisfactorily.

Here is another example on how to use the Pirate Method. When a customer says, "My uncle is a mechanic," restate it as a question to get more information out of them – "Your Uncle Joe is a mechanic?" In most cases, it is naturally assumed that the customer is indicating that their uncle does all the repair work on their vehicles and they are not interested in a vehicle service contract (VSC). However, what if the customer reveals their uncle actually recommends VSCs? Again,

that would be a surprise that may not have been discovered if the customer's statement was misinterpreted as an objection! Below are examples on how you can reshape this statement to gain further understanding from the customer:

- "I'm sure you trust your Uncle Joe with the responsibility of ensuring your vehicle is maintained and safe. Isn't that right?"
- "Do you think your uncle would object to being paid his earned hourly rate?"
- "Would you have any objection to having Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) parts used when repairing your vehicle?"
- "Can you share with me where you see the lack of value in the vehicle service contract?"

In all, misinterpreting why and how the customer says something can be counterproductive and cause missed sales opportunities for the business manager. Whatever the customer throws at you, you must get more input from them to effectively respond to the statement and not jump to handling it like an objection. What seems to be an objection from a customer may really be a call for more valuable information on the product and how they will personally benefit by adding it to their transaction.

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