

# The 55 Most Important Words in Sales

Solving customer problems doesn't take many words.

**A great sales phrase in 10 words: I want you to know we are working on it.** We don't always have an immediate solution for a customer that reaches out. Acknowledging their request in a way that makes them aware that we are working on one is a great habit, rather than leaving them to wonder if they have been heard.

**A great sales phrase in nine words: If you could change anything, what would it be?** How many times has a prospect responded to a pitch by saying, "We are happy where we are?" Asking what they would change if they could change anything often opens the door to address their wishes and win the deal.

**A great sales phrase in eight words: I don't know, but I can find out.** Admitting to a customer or prospect that you don't know the answer to a question beats getting caught in some big lie every time. When hit with a zinger, respond honestly that you are not sure of the answer, then do your homework and get them the right answer as soon as possible.

**A great sales phrase in seven words: I didn't come to sell you anything.** We don't sell; customers buy. I love telling a customer right up front that if I can't add value for them, they should throw me out. I then ask lots of questions in hopes of finding an opportunity to help them. If I can't add value, I shouldn't try to sell them anything. If I can help, then it becomes my job to show them how.

I have a personal rule of asking the customer at least five questions before proposing a solution.

**A great sales phrase in six words: I am responsible for the solution.** Nothing will turn a customer off faster than a salesperson who points fingers or shirks accountability. Blaming another—be it a co-worker, another supplier or worse, the customers themselves—may take the salesperson

off the hook, but it gets the customer no closer to a solution. Whatever happens, own the problem and take responsibility for solving it.

**A great sales phrase in five words: What are your biggest challenges?** The best salespeople are great problem-solvers. Inviting a customer to share the biggest hurdles facing their business—the things they wake up thinking about at 3 a.m.—leads us to hitting a home run for them. If you know your customer's biggest challenge, and your product or service can help address it, the sales process takes care of itself.

**A great sales phrase in four words: We're here for you.** Several years ago in this column, I recounted the time I walked up to the door of an Italian restaurant in the middle of a wicked Midwest snowstorm just as the restaurant manager

was about to lock the door and let his employees go home early. Upon realizing this, I offered to find another spot to dine. The manager wouldn't hear of it. "We're here for you," he said, making the point that it was his job to serve his customers, storm or no storm. I use this line frequently when a customer goes out of the way to thank us for something. It is we that should be grateful for the privilege of serving our customers. If we remind them of that, they'll keep coming back.

**A great sales phrase in three words: Tell me more.** All too often, a salesperson jumps to pitching a solution before fully understanding the scope of a customer's problem and its implications. I have a personal rule of asking the customer at least five questions before proposing a solution. It's amazing how many more opportunities this habit exposes and how appreciative the customer is that I took the time to understand fully.

**A great sales phrase in two words: I care.** Way more gratifying than a commission or a paycheck ought to be the satisfaction that goes with helping a customer solve a problem and improve or grow their business. If the customer knows we care about them first and foremost, the paychecks and commissions will come.

**A great sales phrase in one word: Yes.** At times, it's easy to say no to an off-the-wall or out-of-the-ordinary customer request. Suppliers who find a way to say yes to an expedited order, special favor or unique customer wish win customers for life. ■■



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