



Target Selling Insights Being Polite and Courteous

Being Polite and Courteous

These skills are related to remembering common courtesy, even in the midst of an aggressive sales push.

Why is this skill important?

One of the paradoxes of sales is that the more aggressive we are, the easier it is to run the risk of forgetting common courtesy. Words like please, thank you, sir, ma'am, would you mind, may I have your permission to, is it okay if... All of those are awfully easy to let go by the wayside as we become more aggressive, and if two other things happen:

1. If we tend to call on the same prospects a great deal. We tend to become a little more friendly than we should in those cases, and perhaps forget business protocol or general courtesy.
2. If we find ourselves in positions where we are making a lot of sales aggressively. We don't stop and take the time to use the polite and courteous manners we should.

Things like gentility, civility, and the old air of a cavalier are not outdated. The sales profession is one of the few remaining where we DO have the opportunity to show grace under pressure and to use our courtesy and politeness.

As you interact with a prospect, four basic questions go through their minds:

1. Who are you?
2. Whom do you represent?
3. What do you want?
4. What's in it for me?

YOU have to ANSWER those four big questions and build trust with your prospect as you do it. By the same token, you need to ask yourself several questions during your first interaction with a prospect:

1. How do they feel about my being here?
2. How do they view the business at hand?
3. What is it that they are looking for from me?
4. What do I have to do in order to earn a positive acceptance from this particular person?

Remember, we are selling first trust, and secondly, value. One of the best ways to build trust is to be in a position where we are polite and courteous, and the prospect does not see us as someone who is forging ahead, trying to notch one more sale, increasing personal income, exceeding quotas, earning more commission, or conquering one more account.

Prospects want and need to buy, but they don't want to be sold. What they want is a quality buying experience. A quality buying experience means buying from someone who has a sincere interest in them and who is going to be professional, businesslike, and make them feel important.

The role of etiquette will always be essential to sales success. Whether it is things like style, manners, image, protocol, or positive human interaction... all of these are absolutely critical to your sales success.

What are skills associated with Being Polite and Courteous?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Being Polite and Courteous:

- Remembers the importance of presenting himself or herself well, from clothing to hair and nails.
- Has strongly developed listening skills.
- Uses polite and courteous behaviors as a regular part of his or her life—it isn't a "put on" for customers.
- Has a strong sense of social skills and social appropriateness—doesn't use crude humor or share inappropriate anecdotes.
- Treats all people the same, without bias.

How do you develop your own skills in Being Polite and Courteous?

- Whenever in doubt, go the extra mile. Stand when others enter the room, ask permission to lay a coat down, accept when offered coffee but don't ask on your own.
- Don't greet someone by presenting them with a business card. Give it later after you have developed a positive rapport and relationship with someone.
- Help prospects relax by being relaxed yourself.
- Use gentle, socially appropriate humor.
- Treat every prospect with respect and dignity (even if you don't feel like it!!).
- As you enter a room, stand tall and smile. It tends to warm up the entire room.
- Don't schedule appointments so tightly that halfway through your appointment you are worried about how you are going to make it to the next one. It will make you tense and your prospect will sense it.

- Never "talk down" to your prospect. Answer any questions they may have patiently and politely.
- Have good hygiene! Don't eat an onion-y sandwich right before you meet with your customer. Have well-groomed hair and nails. Dress neatly.
- Think about small things. Small things really can matter—for example, let's say you are a smoker, and you approach the prospect's building, which has a big sign that says, "Thank you for not smoking." Walking in after finishing off a cigarette, smelling strongly of smoke, sends a message...
- Don't get too friendly and comfortable immediately.
- Don't forget the cardinal rule of sales—LISTENING! Listen to your customer, and spend at least as much time listening as you do talking.
- Remember that you are a guest of your prospect.
- Remember that you never get a second chance to make a first impression.
- Don't get so aggressive that you commit the fatal flaw in selling—getting so focused on what you WANT to have happen that you forget what the PROSPECT WANTS to have happen.

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Activities

Activity 1: Practice Makes Perfect

The goal of this activity is to get you to incorporate polite and courteous behaviors into your daily life, not just with your prospective customers.

Make a list of ten polite behaviors you think might be important below. Then, make a point of "practicing" those behaviors every day. Eventually, they will become habits.

1. Saying "please" and "thank you"

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Activity 2: Etiquette

A lot of times, we think of etiquette as being something outdated or far too formal for daily use. But etiquette is really part of polite and courteous living—not just instructions on which fork and knife to use when.

Go to your local library and check out a few books on etiquette. If you have trouble finding them, ask for help at the reference desk. Take the books home with you, and make a point of reading them. Concentrate specifically on thinking about WHY each behavior described is valuable or would be respectful and polite.

Activity 3: Rudeness/Politeness

Part 1

Think about a time in recent memory when someone was rude to you. Was it a service person? Waiter? Your child or spouse?

1. What did the person do that was rude?
2. Why do you think he or she was rude?
3. How did it make you feel?
4. How do you think the person SHOULD have handled the situation?

Part 2

Think about a time in recent memory when someone was especially polite to you, or went out of his or her way to assist you. Was it a service person? Waiter? Your child or spouse?

1. What did the person do that was so nice?
2. Why do you think he or she did it?
3. How did it make you feel?
4. Why do you think doing things like the person did is important?

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