



## **Rules of Value-Added Selling and Service** **By Bob "Idea Man Hooey," Author and Sales Success Coach** **Published in Software Sales Journal, February 2008**

*Selling is a tough game and not a game for the faint at heart. The more successful professional sales staff have learned to focus on value rather than price to gain a better result and begin a mutually profitable long term relationship with their clients. Here are a few of my thoughts and observations on the aspect of 'value-added selling and service.'*

### **Customer Satisfaction Is Relative to Your Actual or Perceived Performance and Their Expectations**

Customer satisfaction is a very subjective thing to measure. It really is a matter of perception and experience. If, you meet or exceed the 'unsaid – unwritten' expectations of your customers their perception will be a positive one. Fail to meet these expectations, and you will find them less than satisfied or happy with you.

One method to make sure you meet or beat these 'unsaid —unwritten' expectations is to do your homework or research. Often, within an industry there are certain 'unwritten, but still valid' expectations, which serve as the norm. Make sure you know what they are and use them as the bottom line in your service and performance. If you would succeed in gaining their repeat business and loyalty, make sure you go well past the 'normal' expectations.

### **There is Some Business You Don't Want, but You Do Want Every Opportunity to Explore the Potential to Doing Business**

When you first start in sales or start a business you want to deal with everyone. This works for the short-term, but not over the long-term. Hard as it seems, you need to fire some clients if the business they bring in is not profitable to you or your company. Studies have shown that on average, 80% of your business will be generated from 20% of your customers. And yet many sales staff invest their time in those clients, which will bring the lowest return on their investment.

Additionally, trying to be 'all things to all people' is a sure-fire way to go broke. You cannot effectively sell, service or supply everyone. You need to decide early on what business you are in, and what you can provide 'profitably' to your customers. You can't service them, if you're no longer in business. Sales and its built-in customer service is a long-term investment in your business.



## **Not All Customers Are Valid Targets for a Value-Added Effort**

As you develop your sales, decide which customers you can service profitably. **Profit is not a bad word – it is the lifeline of your business.** It is the differential between having a 'job' or hobby, and a sales career. It also allows you to be there when they need you the next time!

As you become increasingly clear on what business you are in, and what you can profitably provide in the market place, you will be able to better target and serve your customers.

Selling when you are not able to do so profitably or service in a cost-effective way will lead to a loss of potential to build your business. You can't invest your profits in expanding your business, if you haven't earned any.

**Price is less important when the relationship between the buyer and the seller is stronger. In fact, this can give you a 10 – 15% edge on the pricing.**

## **Think about Your Own Shopping or Buying Experiences**

Other than for convenience or disposable goods, where do you shop on a regular basis? Why? What is the difference?

Would you drive across town to save a few dollars?

How often would you continue to deal with that company or sales person, even if they are a bit higher in price? Why is that?

**When the value of the product and its support and service are evident, and there is a strong relationship built on understanding and trust, people tend to be loyal and continue dealing with you.**

## **Ask Yourself?**

Would you agree that often it is the way you are treated that makes a big difference?

Would you also agree that often it is the small details that make the difference?

How can you develop this type of relationship with your customers?

What would have to change to make it work in your situation?

## **One Final Question**

How can you apply the lessons learned from your own shopping experience in taking better care of your potential and existing customers? You leverage that experience for increased sales.



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*Bob Hooley's 'Ideas At Work!' have been successfully applied by thousands of sales professionals across North America. He is the prolific author of 10 books including "Creating Time to Sell, Lead or Manage" and his articles appear in North American consumer, on-line and trade journals. Bob is also the creator of Secret Selling Tips to equip and motivate sales professionals to grow and succeed in the selling game. For article feedback, contact Bob at [bob@secretsellingtips.com](mailto:bob@secretsellingtips.com)*

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