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Strategic Communications for Business and Industry

Top 5 Five Dirty Tricks Prospects Play on Sales Professionals (or Try to)

DIRTY TRICK #1: The Free Consulting Request

- Explanation: A demand that you provide substantial up-front work without any commitment from them.
- Example: “We’ll consider you for the job if you write us a detailed, 50 page requirements document.”
- Their Hidden Agenda: They want the benefit of your experience and knowledge for free.
- Your Strategy: Before agreeing to do any up-front work, demand a significant concession that will help you close the business.
- What YOU Say: “We’ll be happy to work with you on that document, providing you give us regular access to your top management team.”
- What Will Happen: You’ll get the inside track on developing the opportunity.
- Warning: If you don’t demand something significant, the customer will know you’re a patsy.

DIRTY TRICK #2: The Unreasonable Requirement.

- Explanation: A requirement surfaces that makes no business sense.
- Example: “We’ll need you to stop doing business with our competitors if you’re doing business with us.”
- Their Hidden Agenda: They’re planning to concede the unreasonable point and then ask you, in return, to concede a reasonable point.
- Your Strategy: Treat the unreasonable requirement as if it’s a deal-breaker.
- What YOU Say: “Since that’s not going to happen, it sounds like you’re not really interested in buying. Is that the case?”
- What Will Happen: If the customer is serious about buying, the unreasonable requirement will “magically” disappear.
- Warning: The requirement may be a proxy for some other objection that the customer is reluctant to surface. Their Hidden Agenda: Same as #2. They’re trying to scare you into thinking you’ll lose the deal so that you’ll offer more concessions. Your Basic Strategy: Surface some negative consequences of delaying the sale.

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DIRTY TRICK #3: The Delayed Meeting

- Explanation: Long and unnecessary gaps suddenly open in the sales cycle.
- Example: "We can't meet on Friday to discuss this; how about next month?"
- What YOU Say: "Happy to meet then. However, I should let you know that our prices will be rising next month, so if you're at all interested in moving forward, we might want to meet a bit earlier."
- What Will Happen: If it's just a trick (and there are no budget problems), the key meetings will be moved forward.
- Warning: The customer may be having problems working internal budget issues.

DIRTY TRICK #4: False Cold Feet

- Explanation: During the final negotiations, the prospect pretends to question the wisdom of the deal.
- Example: "I realized we've been working on this for a long time, but we're not really sure that this is the right thing for us to do at this time."
- Their Hidden Agenda: They're trying to scare you into thinking you'll lose the deal so that you'll offer some concessions.
- Your Strategy: Determine whether there's a real problem. If so, roll back the sales cycle; if not, push through.
- What YOU Say: "Exactly what is making you question the deal?"
- What Will Happen: If (as is likely) the objection isn't real, the negotiation will proceed as before.
- Warning: If the objection IS real, you'll need to step back from the negotiation process and return to an earlier stage in your sales cycle.

DIRTY TRICK #5. The Last-Minute Discount.

- Explanation: The customer demands for a steep discount after the price has already been defined.
- Example: "There will be no deal unless you agree to drop the price 25 percent."
- Their Hidden Agenda: They're checking to confirm that you've given them the best deal.
- Your Strategy: Make it clear from the start that you are offering the best price possible.
- What YOU Say: "I don't play the games that some of my competitors play. You will always get the best price from me the first time around. If we need to remove something from the quote to meet your budget, we can certainly do that."
- What Will Happen: The prospect will back down from the demand, and you will get more respect from them in the future.
- Warning: You ABSOLUTELY must be willing to walk away from the deal.

Offered free by Geoffrey James, sales consultant, and BNET at: <http://blogs.bnet.com/salesmachine/?p=3114>