

WHOSE JOB IS IT TO HANDLE OBJECTIONS?

By Mary Sullivan

Sales training classes generally include a segment on the handling of customer objections. We refer to the questions or hesitations that commonly arise at a certain point in the sales process as “objections,” and we assume that the prospective customer will raise them with the salesperson. But in reality, the objections surface first inside the customer’s organization, and the salesperson may or may not ever hear of them.

In a complex sale, multiple people in the customer organization are involved, and the closer the decision is, the more influencers and users there are who may have a say. People worry how “it” — whatever it is — may affect their own positions. Or they may worry about how “it” may disrupt existing systems or processes. Or somebody may just be skeptical that “it” will work at all in their environment.

A well-prepared sales person anticipates certain types of objections and addresses them if and when they are raised. Where do they get the information to be prepared? ***It is actually a job of marketers to anticipate objections and prepare ways to address them.*** Marketing can, and should, provide sales tools to the sales staff that help answer the types of objections that may arise. A section in [Sales Playbooks](#) should cover handling of objections.

But beyond the tools that are made available to the sales team, marketers can also forestall questions with relevant **content**. These days B2B customers have done a lot of research before talking with vendors and have probably narrowed down the field before meeting with sales reps. Most of their research happens online, so ***it is up to marketing to minimize objections by providing readily accessible content that will remove a great number of questions.***

B2B purchases are made to solve specific business problems, so marketers must do their own research to thoroughly understand their market’s typical business issues, and then dig deeper by talking with sales people and existing customers to understand what buyers may need to know during the sales cycle.

Taking the trouble to truly understand customers and to create the kind of online content that will help buyers move forward with their decisions is one of the best things Marketing can do for Sales. Some of the most compelling content includes:

Case Studies – Marketing case studies are sometimes referred to as Customer Stories. A good case study identifies a particular problem that faced a specific, named customer and explains how your product or service solves that problem. It goes on to underscore how the customer’s business has benefited as a result of their decision to go with what you offer. Quotes from the customer are especially persuasive. Case studies can be PDFs or HTML pages on your website, or even videos on YouTube.

Demos – Good old fashioned show-and-tell is the best way for buyers to truly understand how something functions and to visualize use of it in their environment. Watching a demo video can eliminate a lot of questions. Keep it short and to the point. Close with a way for viewers to learn more if they do have additional questions. You can even provide links to more in-depth demos for those who want to know more.

White Papers – For the prospect who is ready to go into depth and get answers to questions, a White Paper is a valuable source of information. A good White Paper addresses a particular problem and how what you offer solves that problem. It can be fairly technical, but remember that it is about solving a problem and should not just talk about a product. This can be an opportunity to differentiate your product from that of your competition.

Content is often used to develop leads, too, but these three types of content are most valuable to those who are already in your sales funnel.

Remember to make all your objection-handling content available online, and make it easy for people to share it with others in their organizations. If you limit requirements to register to view your content, it will be seen more broadly and will have a broader impact.

Read more on content marketing:

[Content: The Heart of Today's Integrated Marketing Process](#)

[Are You Marketing to the Customers' Buying Cycle](#)

[After Content, Where Does Your Prospect Go Next?](#)

[What Is Inbound Marketing?](#)

About the Author

Mary Sullivan, a co-founder of KickStart Alliance, delivers customer-focused product marketing to clients in a variety of technology sectors, including clean tech. Mary is an experienced content marketer who also understands the sales process and how marketing can support the sales effort. Want help planning your content marketing approach? [Contact Mary](#).