

Objections and objection handling

Introduction

This article is part of our [sales guide for contractors](#).

In this article we discuss objections and objection handling.

As a contractor, you will need to recognise and handle objections raised by both agents and clients during the contract search [sales process](#).

What Are Objections?

Just like it sounds, this is the point in a sale when the customer raises an objection and the sales person must handle the objection put forward.

This is a well known and well studied area of sales. Anyone who has ever worked in sales will have had to pay attention to the typical objections found when selling their product or solution. A skilled sales professional will not only know how to handle objections, they may actually welcome them as buying signals. For someone to be able to sell a product, they must engage the customer.

For a customer to raise an objection, this demonstrates that they are considering the product for themselves.

Some common objections that you will be faced with as a contractor trying to secure a contract are:

- o "Send me your CV and I'll get back to you"
- o "I do not think you have the right skills for the role"
- o "You are asking for too much money and the client will not pay that"
- o "The client needs someone to start sooner"
- o "Your experience does not seem to be enough"

“ an objection is the point in a sale when the customer raises an objection which the sales person must handle ”

Types of Objections - Real and Unreal

There are essentially two types of objection, real objections and unreal objections.

Unreal Objections

Unreal objections are when the customer raises an objection that they may not necessarily feel, but they think the objection may get rid of the sales person. This is the case when you have received three sales calls in a row and you just don't want to listen to another sales pitch (and we are surely all familiar with this feeling)! You might say: 'send me some literature in the post, I'll read it and get back to you'. Sales people know that in most cases the customer is not going to read the literature, they just don't want to speak with you at that time.

As a contractor you will be faced with unreal objections when you are chasing positions with agents who give you the brush off and just ask you to send your CV and they will get back to you.

Real Objections

The other type of objection – the real objection, actually is an objection that needs to be overcome. An example might be: 'I have recently read that this car is extremely poor on fuel consumption, my fuel costs are already too high'. This is a fact that the customer has stated. Be aware that for the car salesman, this may be a good objection to be raised. The salesman will now have a clearer picture of what their customer is looking for and can present a more suitable product. This is however a problem for the salesman if they only have one car to sell you. Here, they must find a way of demonstrating that the product is still the right product for the customer and make the sale.

As a contractor, you will be presented with many objections to overcome by both the agent and client. Typically these will involve your skills, experience, availability and rate.

Handling Unreal Objections

Handling the unreal objection is reasonably straight forward. All sales people are aware that they are often considered to be a pest.

They know that you are not likely to read literature they send you, but out of courtesy, will send it through to you anyway.

Indeed, it is well known by sales people that is often not until the second, third or fourth telephone conversation that they actually get to speak to their customer properly. Sales people are forced to develop quite thick skins and must employ a degree of patience when first speaking with customers. The answer to an unreal objection is to be polite, do as asked, but to attempt to gain some kind of commitment to the next stage of the sales process.

For example, a sales person might say: 'of course I will send you literature in the post – can we agree to speak again on Friday afternoon once you have received it, and then have a better chat?' Often the customer will recall they have agreed to a follow up call and will feel in some way obliged to at least listen to what the sales person has to say.

As a contractor, you are the sales person, so you will need to be patient, do as asked, and ensure you get a commitment to the next part of your [sales process](#). This might involve sending a CV, then arranging to call them later that week.

Handling Real Objections

The real objection must be handled differently. On this occasion, this is a real objection that must be handled appropriately. Be aware however, that real objections are not always seen as the enemy to sales people. Indeed, this may be the first time that the customer is revealing what they truly feel. The sales person cannot sell effectively if they have no idea as to what the customer is thinking.

A good sales person will have pre-rehearsed answers to all objections that arise and will not be caught by surprise (they might appear as having the gift of the gab!).

Your preparation before applying for positions and attending interviews should involve considering all the objections that could be raised and preparing answers for them in advance. As you gain more experience it is advisable to keep a document containing all these objections and how they are handled, as part of your sales process.

“ A good sales person will have pre rehearsed answers to all objections that arise ”

A problem does develop however if the product that is being sold is flawed and the objection raised by the customer has identified the flaw. On this occasion the sales person may have been found out and there is no 'sales magic wand' available that can help other than providing you with false information. So, as ever, be wary of disreputable sales people, and beware of being one yourself!

Summary

Objections are actually a very useful tool for customers and sales people alike.

As a customer, you must raise objections until you are satisfied that you understand the product you are considering sufficiently to make the purchase.

From the sales perspective, objections reveal who the customer really is and what they are really thinking. As long as you have a good product, the sales person should welcome objections in any form.

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