

Controlling the sale

I firmly believe we can say we are out of the recession. We can also say the industry is not the same as it was during the go-go times of 2004. The phone is ringing, but this is not necessarily an indication that prospects are ready to buy or want to buy from your remodeling firm.

During the recession, the prospects may have been nervous and wanted to scale back; but they were at least, for the most part, serious buyers. This could have been because of pent-up demand, lots of need, or they had money they wanted to invest into their home (rather than the stock market). Today, prospects are reaching out to you to explore, research, and test-drive. None of these reasons to call you are because they are ready to buy now.

Because of this change in the dynamic, you need to adjust your sales strategies and approaches. One of the changes requires you to become more masterful at controlling the sale. Being masterful means not only being good at it, but also not having the prospect feel uncomfortable with you controlling their buying process. While this may require reading numerous books or attend seminars on sales, the following are a few themes to focus on to become more masterful at controlling the sale.

All prospects are not created equal...Just like there are many different personalities, there are also many different buying processes. Some clients like to date for a while, and some like to dive in and get married right away. Some want you to drive and others want to drive the process themselves. There are others who are motivated by “keeping up with the Joneses,” and others don’t care about what others think about their remodeling decisions. Today, you need to become a people expert as much as a remodeling expert to be successful. You need to adjust your approach based on all these personalities—but not corrupt your basic process. If you can take some inventory on how these diverse personalities behave and how they buy, then mirror them to increase your close rates, reduce your stress, and increase

your sales volume. Ultimately, you will end up with more delighted clients.

Set the agenda...This may sound very tactical, but the person determining the agenda of a conversation such as a design meeting or contract closing is generally the one controlling the sale. This theme is interesting in that your clients are naturally inclined to control the agenda because you are the guest in their home and they are the host. Most hosts determine the flow of the visit, the refreshments, and the topics to discuss. As a remodeling sales person, you need to control the process to best help the client. Becoming a master at setting the agenda is important. For example, you might say up front, “Would it be helpful if I walked you through some topics that I would like to cover in our first meeting?”

By asking for permission, 99 percent of the time the prospect will find this respectful and will give you the license to set the agenda. Then you say, “Generally I like to first take a tour of the home. During this tour, I want you share not only what you would like to accomplish with this project, but also share other projects you have done. That way I can get a feel for your design style and priorities. After the tour we will sit down and I will tell you a little bit about our company, discuss the ideas and direction for your project, do a preliminary budgeting exercise, then if you are pleased with the process and the level of investment, we can move to the next step.” Being masterful at setting the agenda is like any other skill. You need to know it,



do it, then practice it to master it.

Control the fantasy...Many years ago you could follow the client’s fantasy and, most of the time as the project budget would creep up, you could get the sale. Today, you are going to lose more than you will win. Controlling the fantasy takes guts. Controlling that fantasy requires you to be not only the ideas person but also the voice of reason. Here is how you might understand it to begin to improve on it. You might say to the prospect toward the end of the first meeting, “Most of our clients have found that projects fall into three categories. First, the things you need to do. Second, the things you want to do. Third, the ideas you would like to consider in the future.

Regardless of the times, being masterful at controlling the sale is important to your business.

Today, I believe we should bundle the project with the things we need to do and you want to today, but also make sure we are planning for the future.” Controlling the sale today requires more discipline, and you are the person to provide this discipline.

Regardless of the times, being masterful at controlling the sale is important. However, it is the difference between being good (by working hard and being stressed out) and being great (saving time, less stress, high sales, and better close rate). The choice is yours, but be patient as you become a master at controlling the sale. **PR**

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