

Ask: Why Didn't I Close that Sale?



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This past spring, my wife and I were having problems with the new home we purchased a little over a year ago. Some of the siding installed by the previous homeowner started to fall off the house and birds in the neighborhood decided to use these parts of our house to nest in. We wanted the problem fixed immediately.

During the next several days I gathered as many estimates as possible from wildlife control contractors. After meeting with several different companies I finally made my decision on what company to hire.

Although I am typically price conscious when it comes to buying services or products, because of the circumstances I placed a higher value on how quickly a company could come out and solve the problem. I decided to hire a company that answered their phone live. This sent a message to me that this was a professional company with staffed salespeople and well-educated and reliable wildlife control techs. I also assumed the company could come out quickly and get rid of the nesting birds.

Read more: [Closing The Sale: The Art Of Adding Urgency](#)

As the days and weeks passed, I did not receive one return phone call from any of the companies that I requested a quote from. Toward the middle of the second passing week, I finally received one follow-up call from one of the companies that left me a quote. When I told the salesperson that I hired another company to do the job and that it was already completed, he said his company isn't always the lowest cost provider and then listed a few of their benefits.

If he had simply asked me first why I didn't hire his company he would have learned that his pricing was indeed competitive and that price was one of the least important factors in my buying decision for this specific service.

This buying experience got me thinking about my own business and industry.

Why didn't any of the companies that provided me with a quote call me to follow up on whether or not I wanted to hire them? Lastly, didn't they want to know the reason why I did not hire them so they could learn from the sale they didn't close?

Reflecting on my experience, I was astonished that out of the three or four quotes I requested, only one company followed up to ask me if I wanted to move forward with the work.



And these estimates that were performed along with the consultation regarding the work were not quick estimates. All the companies that quoted the job had to come to my home and spend time climbing up on to my roof in order to see the extent of the damage in order to formulate an estimate. They invested a tremendous amount of money into marketing their services to me, staffing their offices to answer the phone, scheduling the estimate and employing outside sales staff and vehicles to furnish the quotes. You would think that these companies would take two minutes to pick up the phone and follow up on the lead.

In our sales department, no sales lead is ever neglected or not followed up on because our team members are hungry for that sale. It is protocol that is enforced by our sales manager. Not only is a follow-up call critical in closing the sales loop, but it is also crucial for companies to learn their sales prospect's buying behavior. It is my opinion that before resolving a sales lead as "sold" or "not sold," companies need to be asking why a prospect bought from their company and why they did not buy. This information is gold when it comes to improving your sales process and, of course, increasing your close rate. In the event that we don't close the sale, it is our responsibility to follow up with these sales prospects to learn why they did not buy from us.

So let's review the process for closing your sales to learn more about the ones you closed and the ones that you did not close.

Follow up.

One of the most popular questions I am asked by my sales team is, "How many times do I call a sales prospect before resolving the lead as not sold?" My answer: "As many times as it takes to get a yes or a no from them. Remember, these prospects called you for an estimate that you promptly provided (for free in most cases).

I believe they owe you a simple answer of "yes" or "no," and I have been known to call a prospect a dozen times until I get them on the line and get an answer from them.

Read more: [Boost Sales by Following Up Immediately](#)

Probe for information.

Information is power, especially in the world of business. You will be surprised what you can learn by asking sales prospects why they bought your service or why they did not.

Was it because of price? Convenience? Something positive or negative about the sales process? Something positive or negative about the image you or your company projected? Were they not confident in the job you would do for them, or were they not educated enough about your company or service?

Just like you survey your existing customers, you can survey your sales leads. Even if they don't become a client today does not mean they won't become a client tomorrow.

Learn about your competitors.

If the client decided not to hire your company, who did he or she hire?

At our company, our sales team is trained to enter as much information about a sales prospect as possible. We also enter the name of the company they did hire if they divulge this information to us. If a sales lead did not hire your company, this information can be used in the future should you decide to market to them.

By asking these probing questions you can learn about all of your competitors in your market, and you can also learn about new ones that have started and what their pricing looks like.

Close with class.

Whether you close a sales lead or not you always want to end the conversation on a positive note.

If a sales prospect does not hire your company, it is best to thank them and express gratitude for giving your company an opportunity to provide them with a quote for your services. You never want to have sour grapes or reveal your frustration should they not hire your company.

Remember: these prospects who did not buy from you right now could still become new customers someday.

Share some examples of how you follow up with leads in the comments below.