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TODAY'S FEED PROFESSIONAL

Wait, You Haven't Heard My Problem Yet!

Recognize and appreciate gender differences to build sales.

[Ed. While we found the following article somewhat controversial, our editorial staff found the discussion important to consider as gender differences exist between salespeople, calf raisers and herdspersons.]

Perhaps one of the biggest dilemmas for males selling to females is their own natural communication patterns. Men tend to interrupt the talker much more than women.

In fact, in most research, male-initiated interruption is 3-1 more than women.

The problem for male salespeople is that women prospects often are offended by interruptions. Men interfere in conversation to make a point. Women allow the other speaker to finish before they jump into the conversation. Often men think that women are in agreement because they allow the man to keep talking, when in fact they are just being polite.

When men communicate a problem, it is usually to gain advice. When women share a dilemma, they do it to be heard and gain empathy with sympathy. Perhaps the worst mistake a man can make is to listen to a woman's problem and then try to solve it. Women tend to state concerns and complaints not for solutions but to gain intimate interpersonal connections. When the solutions come, they lose the intimacy and the connection is lost. That is one of the reasons why women often empathize instead of solve when they hear problems. To fix it means to break the connection.

Men must be willing to wait for a woman to ask them for advice before they try to reach a solution. Women must be mindful of a man's need to solve problems as he communicates with her. To ignore this risks losing sales and trust.

One woman prospect was deeply offended when she asked a male salesperson a philosophical question. When he didn't in turn ask for her opinion about the same topic she felt slighted. His reasoning was that of males talking to other males, if she had something to say, she would have jumped into the conversation and said it.

Suggestion:

If your sales are influenced by women, you must first build a connection, not a solution. If you are selling to a man, you need to first solve the problem as you try to build a relationship. When men talk to women in sales and everyday life, they need to realize that they may jeopardize the relationship and sale unless they let the woman finish talking before they open their mouths to talk.

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