

# Can You Hear Me Now?

One of the most powerful messages you can send a customer, co-worker, significant other, child, or any human being, is; "I am listening." Listening has a motivating effect on people, because it leaves the perception that we care and value their opinion. It is one of the top motivators of people, even more than money or other types of financial reward.

Long ago, someone came up with a great line of questioning that deals with listening, and I apologize for not knowing the source, but it goes like this:

If you want to sell your house, you talk about your house.

If you want to sell your car, you talk about your car.

If you want to sell yourself, you talk about . . . them.

The reason is, that people not only love to talk about themselves (or their kids, grandkids, and pets), but they love it when someone is willing to listen. I think it is amusing how you can meet someone for the first time, ask them a couple questions about themselves, let them talk for 15 minutes, and when you walk away, they will tell people; "What a great guy, I really liked him!"

God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason, because we should use them proportionately. We should listen far more than we speak, but most of us don't. This is especially true in a sales environment, where you want the customer to do most of the talking. There are a number of reasons we want the customer to be the primary speaker. One of those is that the only person that knows what they want is the customer. So the more information we can gain from them, the better we can help determine their needs. Asking superficial questions is not only useless in helping the customer, but it also sends the message that you truly don't care about the customer's needs.

There is a disease called "showing up and throwing up" that sometimes occurs in the sales world. The customer shows up and you throw up everything you know about your company and the products or services that you are selling. You not only don't get a chance to find out about the customer's needs, but you might also confuse them by overwhelming them with information. If a customer gets confused, their brain shuts down and they only have one objective -getting away from you without embarrassing themselves. A customer that is confused will not want to look dumb, so they are no longer listening to you, they are planning their escape. One of the signs of confusion can be, "Do you have a brochure that I can take with me so I can think about it?" They don't want a brochure. They want a quick escape from you.