

Sales Production Secrets™

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Never Try to Teach a Pig to Sing

When giving advice to real estate agents on how to improve their level of sales production, I often quote from a saying hung on the porch wall at my family's lakeside cabin in the mountains of the great Pacific Northwest:

*“Never try to teach a pig to sing;
it wastes your time and annoys the pig.”*

It is a fun-yet-practical, down-home kind of a saying that we all much enjoy, and I have adapted its core message to the real estate business. With that in mind (but no slur intended), I always make a point of telling the agents I train these following words of wisdom:

*“Never try to convince a client;
it wastes your time and annoys the client.”*

Although still a bit funny, yes, I have learned as a longtime sales coach that, in actual practice, just the opposite is true. Sadly, throughout the real estate industry a belief in the capture & conversion model of sales does in fact prevail. Indeed, both veteran agents and new licensees just about everywhere approach their respective businesses with that very aim in mind – trying to capture new clients and then convert them into sales.

Now I get it from the standpoint of pure logic; you would want to meet someone who is interested in buying or selling and then have them work with you. That could be considered capture, right? Then, of course, you would want them to open and close a deal. And that is clearly a form of conversion, true enough. However, there is more to it than that because, in its typical application, the capture & conversion model of production—typified by the act of grabbing on to people, so to speak, and attempting to get them to do what you want—will indeed squander your resources and, at the same time, effectively drive away many of the people you are trying to work with. For the record, I want you to know that, as a trusted advisor and success-in-sales coach, I definitely do not want you to be that kind of agent.

Rather than being the average, stereotypical kind of salesperson who tries to get people to do something, be the rare and enlightened professional who focuses on answering what I call The Big Question: Who is going to do what, why, where, when, with whom? In other words, instead of selling you are discovering.

Such a shift will change your core approach to the real estate business because it totally takes the pressure off of you from a sales standpoint and, through much

increased levels of comfort and trust, significantly reduces the pressure your potential clients feel, as well. Truly, when it comes to dealing with people, bringing a discovery & identification approach to sales is one of the very best things you can do to dramatically improve your individual practice of sales production.

Interestingly, I recently saw an example of the not so desirable capture & conversion model in actual practice... I happened to be with another agent who was meeting prospective clients at a property they were considering as a vacation home. As the conversation progressed I observed that he was trying to get them to commit to viewing a different property at a certain time the next day. He was insistently pushing them to adjust their schedule and telling them that, if they would just come see the property tomorrow, he was positive they would realize it is the one they ought to buy.

Certainly, I can understand his being enthusiastic. And I can also understand his desire to promote a specific property he believed in. But what this agent did not realize, or perhaps accept—yet something I had recognized while listening to that same potential-client conversation—was that the people in question were not ready to buy and simply did not want to meet him at the other property. But he would not relent, perhaps because he misunderstood the actual, fundamental job at hand... Again, not to capture and convert people but rather to discover and identify what is possible and (just as equally) not possible with them.

In truth, we had already found out that the people did not want to buy right now, that they were not ready to buy, anyway, and that they certainly were not willing to come back the next day to see yet another property. And there it was... Enough information to know that he should have let them go. Instead of trying to get the people to do what *he* wanted, he should have strived to better understand what *they* truly wanted to do (or did not want to do) and then worked within that framework.

So, remember this fundamental truth in real estate sales. Rather than attempting to capture and convert new clients, well trained agents practice a discovery & identification approach to the business. As I previously stated, the best agents simply try to find out who is going to do what, why, where, when, with whom...and then go in that direction. Which is why I often give the following career shaping advice to success seeking agents:

*“Work with the ones who will,
and avoid the ones who won’t.”*

Doing so will give you a real sense of sales freedom in your business – where getting to the truth is in fact the main objective. Whether it be a “yes” or a “no”, both are equally acceptable in terms of your process and, ultimately, your progress. At the same time, your clients will feel less pushed and pressured and, consequently, be more open and forthcoming as they interact with you. The upshot of which is that, if and when the timing is right, people will be much more likely to work with you.

In going forward, keep in mind that the result you want in the business—success in sales—is a byproduct of the process of getting to the truth with people, not the result of your ability to get people to do deals. I want you to think about this in relation to your own approach toward each potential client you happen to meet. And once again, keep the following advice clearly in mind:

*“Never try to convince a client;
it wastes your time and annoys the client.”*

If you truly take that message to heart, you will significantly upgrade your personal practice of sales production and, as a result, do more business more often!

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