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FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Susan-Says®

Wining at the game of sales.

By: Susan Wilson Solovic, CEO SBTV.com

“I think I’m successful when I can sell myself,” says Jane Ward, a promotional products representative.

For more than four years, Ward has been selling specialty advertising and promotional products. It’s a highly competitive business, but one Ward says she enjoys.

“I love what I do. Selling is very fun. It’s rewarding when you get an order – especially a large one,” she says.

Not all business owners share Ward’s enthusiasm for sales. Many entrepreneurs are passionate about their product or service, but when it comes closing deals, they fall short. Why? Often it’s the fear of rejection. But good sales people view “no” as a mere objection to overcome.

How do you face rejection and keep your confidence level high?

“You have to have very thick skin. You have to realize that if somebody says no, or says I’m sorry your price wasn’t as good as someone else’s or another company can produce this for us faster, you have to learn not to take it personally,” explains sales trainer, Sam Black.

Good preparation can enhance your ability to succeed. Before you make a sales call, take time to do your research. Know a little history about the company and your prospect. Visit their web site. Do an Internet search using one of the main search engines such as Yahoo or Google. Look for recent press releases or other pertinent information. Pay attention to the company’s advertisements and marketing strategies. And don’t forget to check out their competition.

During the sales call, take time to get to know your prospect. Look for common interests so you can build rapport. Listen carefully and customize your presentation. When it comes to selling, no two prospects are created equally. Make sure your presentation is directed to their particular needs.

“Most sales people don’t identify needs. They jump right in with their sales pitch because they are so excited to talk about their product or service,” explains sales trainer, Sam Black. “You have to ask questions that will get them to talk about their concerns, fears, or dissatisfactions. Find out what problems they are experiencing because they don’t have the particular product or service you are offering.”

When faced with objections don’t give up and race out the door. Handle them in a positive, professional manner. Make sure you clearly understand what’s being said, and if

you don't, ask for clarification. Find out what you could do to resolve the objection. Then, armed with that information, you can devise an appropriate solution and close the sale.

"I like to think that I can get an idea from what the person has told me that will help me know what they are looking for. Then, I can present the best ideas," Ward says.

Keep in mind, the sales game is a game of averages. The more calls you make, the more opportunities you'll have for success. With that in mind, every "no" you receive takes you one step closer to a "yes." And remember, every sales appointment is a new opportunity, so don't carry negativity from one into another. It's like my mother used to say, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."