

## How to hurdle the protests in your path.

# Overcoming Objections

Regardless of your profession or life circumstances, you're always selling something to others. You're urging your boss to implement your idea. You're pitching your product to a customer. You're convincing your spouse to go out to dinner. All these interactions are selling situations where you might come head to head with an objection. Maybe your boss doesn't think your idea will work; perhaps your customer only wants the product in red; your spouse says they're too tired to go out. In order to persuade the other person, you need to overcome their objections.

While many people shudder at the thought of having to deal with objections, if you handle them

Do you ever wonder why some people effortlessly sell their ideas or products while others flounder and never seem to make any headway? Chances are the person who sells easily is actually an astute objection-handler. Here are six techniques to help you excel in this area:

**1 Prepare for the objection.** In any sales situation, you will *bear* a series of objections. If you give up after the first one, you've lost, usually before the selling has even really started. But if you hang in there, you have a good chance of succeeding and getting the sale. Experienced salespeople know the most common objections they encounter, and they have prepared

encounter and prepare a response for each.

**2 Look forward to objections.** One of the keys to dealing with objections is to embrace them rather than fight them. If you spend all your time dreading the possibility of facing disagreements, then you won't be doing what you need to be doing, which is solving your customer's or listener's problem. Realize that an objection is simply your listener's way of saying, "I need to know more." It's actually a good sign, because the other person is still standing there; they didn't walk away. They want you to say more, and with the objection, they're guiding you to the information they need.

**3 See their point of view.** Always put yourself in your customer's or listener's shoes. Ask yourself, "Why is this an objection in her mind?" Many times complaints are based on problems people have had in the past with similar products, services or ideas. Your listener is simply trying to make sure they won't experience that same problem with you. Other times protests are nothing more than a stall tactic. The person is trying to delay the decision. That's why you need to find out if that objection is valid. If they say, "I can't do business with your

**"Realize that an objection is simply your listener's way of saying, 'I need to know more.'"**

properly they actually *help* you close the sale. Fortunately, in Toastmasters you often hear disagreement with your ideas. Maybe it's someone who protests some aspect of your speech. Or perhaps someone asks a question that contradicts your entire topic. These are prime opportunities to practice your objection-handling skills.

responses they have fine-tuned over the years. That way, when they hear the complaint, they simply state their prepared response and don't have to "wing it" or wonder what to say next. So whether you give the same presentation all the time or sell a new idea every day, take the time to think about what objections you're most likely to



company because you don't deliver on Saturday," you need to ask, "Is delivery on Saturday really important to you?" They may answer "yes" but more likely will say something like this: "Not really. I guess I could take the delivery late Friday afternoon." Now you've taken that objection and you've dismissed it.

**4 Keep the customer's needs first.**  
If you're doing your job properly,

you're looking out for the other person's best interests. If you're strictly trying to "make the sale," you'll lose in the long term. So frame every objection and response so that it keeps the other person's priorities first. After all, if your customers have good results with your product or service, they'll come back for more, they'll recommend you, and you'll receive spin-off business. Keep the other person's needs first,

no matter what the objection or your response to it.

**5 Propose your solution.** The final step is proposing a solution to the objection. If they say not having Saturday delivery is a real problem, you have to find other solutions. You may suggest setting up a late Friday or an early Monday delivery. Chances are you'll find some solution that works. Once the other person agrees to one of your solutions, you need to restate it, as in, "Great. Late Friday delivery will work for you." Then, without pausing, move on to your next point or to the close. Why? Because once you pause, you give the person a chance to think of another objection. Once you confirm the solution, you have to move the conversation forward.

**6 Make Objections Work for You.** Always remember that only you know what your organization's capabilities are. So if you're focused on what's best for the customer and you apply your knowledge of the product or service to their situation, you will come up with a solution to every objection. These objection-handling techniques will help you have greater success in all areas of your life. ■

**Sam Silverstein** is the past president of the National Speakers Association. An expert on organizational leadership and growth, he is the author of many books, including *No More Excuses*, and spoke on that topic in his keynote presentation at Toastmasters' 2009 International Convention in Connecticut. Reach him at [www.SamSilverstein.com](http://www.SamSilverstein.com).