

Ask Questions to Make a More Powerful Presentation.

SMART STRATEGIES IN REMODELING & RENOVATION SALES

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Brian McCauley is director of sales training for Atrium and Simonton Windows and Doors, both part of the Cornerstone Building Brands family. He has trained thousands of people nationwide and speaks from coast to coast. Contact him at brian.mccauley@cornerstone-bb.com or 502-409-1816.

A salesperson's ability to ask well thought out questions is a key skill needed for a long-term career in sales. Having a list of "go to" questions you can ask most homeowners and creating a situation in which asking questions feels like a normal progression for the customer is ideal. That got me thinking about a "best practice" I heard about years ago, and a series of key questions that could help in nearly any sales call.

Many years ago, I met an in-home salesperson who told me how he approached an issue he had been having, how he solved it, and how it helped him conduct better sales calls. Like a lot of salespeople, one of his goals when in the home working with a potential customer was to have the person follow him around the home as he was taking the measurements needed to price out the project. When showing up at the front door, he only carried three things with him, an ink pen, a pad of paper, and a tape measure. After building some rapport with the homeowner and asking a few questions about the project (see questions below), he would hold the ink pen and paper out towards the homeowner and ask them "Would you mind writing down the measurements I take for your windows – the process will go faster, and the measurements tend to be more accurate?" He always let the homeowner know what was in it for them by helping him out this way. He indicated it was an impulse thing with people... if you hand them something, they will usually reach out and take it. Once the homeowner grabbed the notepad and ink pen, he had them committed to writing down the sizes. He then used this to begin pointing out issues he saw with the existing products or situation. Let's stick with windows as an example. "Mrs. Smith, this window is 34" wide and 63" tall. Did you know this lock was broke? How long has it been that way? Write down broken lock if you don't mind."

As they go through the house, he asks them to continue noting any potential issues he may find, like missing screen, cracked glass, seal failure, water damage etc. At the end of the measuring, he has a laundry list of issues in which to tie-back to during the product presentation, and the homeowner knows, beyond a shadow of a doubt that they have some real issues to deal with. This increases his chances of presenting solutions that directly solve the issues of the homeowner and increase the level of urgency the homeowner feels to fix the issues.

Speaking of questions, try these six questions during the need identification portion of your next sales call. What problems are you experiencing with _____? How long have you been dealing with these issues? What has prevented you from doing something about it until now? Why did you choose my company as a potential solution for you? What do you fear most about this project? What's the most important thing to you in handling this project? Answers to these questions will give you a good understanding of the issues, the homeowner's motivation for wanting to fix the issues, what's worrying them, and what they might know about you, and your company. The answer to one of these questions will even help you later in the call if you get some hesitancy from the homeowner when you ask for the order. I believe you should always ask the question "How long have you been considering this project?" Write down the answer and move on to your next question. If, later in the call, when you ask them for the sale, they respond "We need to think it over". With a smile on your face and a lighthearted tone, you can respond, "Ma'am, you all have been thinking this for 13 months. You can quit thinking today, and we can start this project." Then just be quiet and let the silence work for you.