

It's More About the Customer, Less About the Product

By Scott O'Neill

For years I've been touting the benefits of our company and our products.

But in recent years, social media have proven the importance of catering to the *client's* needs. The successes of Facebook and Twitter are built on the idea that "It's all about the customer." As salespeople, we need to focus on the customer and find out what speaks to their needs and their emotions.

Notice how marketing works this way today—ads are about you, from your perspective. Many ads aren't even about the product. Rather, they are about what the consumer needs. Then somehow the product wiggles its way into the message before the end of the ad.

Selling garage doors works similarly today. So often now, it's no longer about our company and how great we are. Instead it's more about cutting to the chase to provide the best solution for the client.

Key: Google Their Home

That's why I often ask customers for their street address before beginning to recommend a particular garage door. I've always started with the question of longevity: How long do you plan on keeping the home? I still start with that, since garage doors should be long-term durable goods.

After looking up their home on Google Maps, I use the Street View to start discussing how the siding looks or how the windows are designed. This effectively sparks a relevant discussion about *their* needs.

It also helps customers see beyond the mere price of the product. After all, in today's economy, most prospective customers are focused on price from the start.

Putting Pam's Needs First

Take Pam T., who called me a month ago. She asked about an ad we had in the paper for an entry-level garage door.

"Is that for a two-car door?" she asked.

I said, "Yes, it's a standard size, installed."

I could tell that price was driving her motives. I then asked, "Is this for a home you'll keep long term?"

She abruptly answered, "No. I'm trying to fix it to sell."

Go to Google

That's when I asked for her address and pulled up her house on Google Maps. I commented about the dominance of the garage door on the house.

"I see brick at the bottom of your house, newer dual-pane double-hung windows, and a terracotta roof," I said. "Is that the right house?"

Pam: "Yes, that's pretty cool you can see all the detail. Actually, I've changed the paint to a more neutral tone; but otherwise everything's the same."

The Upsell That Meets Their Needs

Me: "Think about that door we advertised. What if we added a row of windows to match those on your house and add natural light to the garage space? It'll make the house feel much larger."

Pam: "Hmm. That's interesting. My realtor mentioned putting glass in the top of the garage door."

Me: "In my decades of experience, I've learned a lot from realtors. They're correct about windows. It's a modest jump in cost, but it's likely you'll get all the money back because it usually adds value to the sale price of the house."

It's All About the Client

I kept the conversation all about the client and her goals. I've found that's the best way to achieve success in selling garage doors, now more than ever.

Pam decided to do business with us. After we installed the door, she listed her house and soon sold it for the full asking price, easily recovering the cost of the



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garage door investment.

I thanked her for doing business with us.

She said, "No, thank *you* for listening to what mattered to me and simply advising me as to what was best for my needs. I'll certainly recommend your company in the future." ■

Scott O'Neill has been in the garage door business since 1986 and a sales manager since 1992 at Madden Door, Martinez, Calif.