

ANSWERING THE SIX TOUGHEST SALES QUESTIONS

Objection!

Here’s another place that mental models get us in trouble. The very nature of the word “objections” is problematic—it evokes the usual paradigm of thrust and parry. So the very first step is to stop thinking of the things you hear in a sales conversation as “objections.”

Instead, think of what you hear as some variation of the client saying, “I’m still engaged. Some things aren’t adding up for me.”

Here are some new ways to respond to age-old client concerns:

Question	Common Pitfalls	Trust-Based Response
Why should we choose you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearing presumptuous/prematurely confident • Listing the reasons you are the best choice • Talking when your time is better spent listening • Being attached to a particular outcome 	<p>“I don’t know for sure—not yet anyway. I don’t want to be presumptuous. While we are the best choice for many clients, it really depends on your situation. In your case, it may depend on A, B, and C. Let’s talk about each of those. In the end, we’re committed to helping you figure out who is the best choice for you.”</p>
What makes you different from your competitors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regurgitating your “elevator speech”; listing all the reasons you are different • Thinking that, because they asked about you, that’s what they really want to hear 	<p>“Our customers tell us we’re different because XYZ. But these aren’t necessarily the reason you would choose us. Everyone buys for her own reasons. You’ve mentioned _____ as a key issue for you. Could we talk more about that? Then we’ll see if there are differences that are important to you in your business.”</p>
How much experience have you had doing XYZ in my business?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using words like “extremely,” “highly,” “truly” • Inadvertently inflating your experience, without speaking to your limitations • Taking too much “air time” to answer 	<p>“Let me try and answer specifically. XYZ is 23% of our biz, which is the third biggest product line, so we have depth on the product side. On the industry side, we’ve never worked with your company so we don’t have specific experience with you. We do understand your markets as a result of _____. Does that help answer your question?”</p>

Question	Common Pitfalls	Trust-Based Response
<p>We don't need what you're selling right now, so why should we spend time with you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listing the all reasons they should spend time with you (convincing) • Focusing on the sale rather than the relationship 	<p>“Thank you for your candor. In other words: no sale today. I hear you. <i>If</i> it makes sense, I'd still like to understand your situation better. You will, of course, buy XYZ in the future. When you do, I'd like to have something useful to offer you. Could we take a little time to continue talking?”</p>
<p>We're happy with our present supplier, so why should we change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking you can make a dent in an existing trust-based relationship • Listing the all reasons they should change (convincing) • Making the other supplier look bad • Talking when your time is better spent listening 	<p>“I appreciate knowing that. Most happy customers don't change because they don't have a good reason to. I don't know that you should, either. In my experience, 90% of people change for only one of four reasons: dissatisfaction with price, service, quality, or value. You probably have an opinion about how happy you are in each of these areas. If you're interested, I'd like to go through the areas where you see the greatest room for improvement. You may get some good ideas about how to improve your existing relationship. I don't mind taking that risk. Does it make sense to keep talking?”</p>
<p>Why are you so much more expensive?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defending your fees • Re-iterating the value proposition • Assuming you understand what is meant by the question 	<p>“I hear you on 'too expensive'. There could be a number of reasons for a disconnect here. Would you help me understand what you mean by that?”</p>