



# The Root Cause of Every Lost Sale

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In our June ("Mindfulness") and July ("Living in the Now") newsletters, we reviewed a number of esoteric and thought-provoking topics which are not normally discussed by sales professionals.

Since this newsletter has always focused on increasing sales performance, many of you were probably wondering what's this have to do with sales?

Today, I will answer that question. The simple truth is this:

***The root cause of virtually every lost sale is this:  
You were NOT fully present and therefore you failed to LISTEN.***

Think about this for a moment, reflect on your past selling history, and I think you'll agree with me. In today's article, we'll dig deeper into this subject, so let's all try and read this with interest and attention!

## LOST SALES



Here are some all-to-common cases taken from my personal sales coaching file that will amplify this basic truth:

1. The Sales Rookie is presenting the technical details of the latest product offering from his company, a computer storage manufacturer. After 15 minutes of presenting

technical details (and only 20% through his full presentation), the key executive in the room eagerly asks "What's the price for 10

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*"The surest sign of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results."*

Albert Einstein

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of these, and when can they be delivered?" The Sales Rookie (not having listened to the question fully) says "We'll cover pricing at the end of the full presentation." Fortunately, another sales rep in the room intervened, answered the question, and proceeded to close the sale. The rookie was disappointed he didn't get to finish his full presentation!!

2. The telesales representative is explaining the latest product offering, a leadership training video product. The prospect states "This sounds great, I'd like to move forward with it." The telesales person (who didn't even hear the buying sign) replies "Great, I'll send you a catalogue."

3. The newly-trained and eager beaver salesperson meets with a prospect for the first time. "I can't wait to tell you all about our latest product, and what it can do for you," she states with confident enthusiasm. She fails to find out anything about what the prospect needs, what their business is about, what their challenges might be. She just wasn't even aware of the other person!

4. The sales team has been working with a key prospective client for 6 months, and has scheduled a final presentation with the key executives. As soon as the presentation begins, the key decision maker leaves the room to take a call. He returns, visibly upset, and sits down silently. The sales team continues with the presentation, not observing or handling the obvious problem in front of them.

5. During the sales presentation, a number of charts and graphs are displayed and discussed. A couple people in the room have difficulty staying awake and are looking puzzled and confused. The presenter, oblivious to the problem, continues his presentation to the end and then wonders why everyone just gets up and leaves the room.

6. During the "fact finding" stage of the selling process, the sales person did not actually determine the real needs of the customer. The customer needed a hands free wireless phone for his car (it's the law), and was sold a cellular phone that didn't have a wireless interface. Result: upset customer, refund, no sale.

7. The prospect brings along his wife to the life insurance presentation. The sales team ignores her and focuses their attention on the husband. This was not only rude but it was sales suicide, ignoring the fact there were two decision makers in the room, not just one.

I could easily cite hundreds of more examples, but you get the idea. Failure to be fully present and listen is at the core of every lost sale!

## WHAT ABOUT THE SALES PROCESS?

I can already hear the naysayers.

What about the Sales Process?  
What if that isn't followed?

What about Target Markets?  
What if you try and sell to the wrong person?

What about wasting time on the wrong person?  
What about the salesperson that just "gives up" when times are tough?



Aren't these valid reasons for lost sales?

Yes, they are contributing factors. But wouldn't you agree that if you diligently spent time paying attention up front and listened to your prospect you would have heard that they weren't qualified in the first place? If you had systematically researched your target market and looked at it objectively and "in the now", you wouldn't have wasted time trying to sell to the wrong population.

If a salesperson is really focusing on their prospect and knows their core problems, the sales process will proceed like clockwork and they wouldn't dream of giving up. Part of being fully present is getting out of your own head and into the mind of your prospect. You need to listen to THEM, not your own inner voice. Sales can be exciting when done correctly.

By the way, when sales are lost because the salesperson did not fully pay attention, the excuses given for not making the sale are often pathetic if they weren't so hilarious:

- "they didn't need the product"
- no money
- not interested
- not qualified to begin with
- wouldn't return our calls
- cancelled the meeting
- went dark on us
- ran out of funding
- bought from another vendor
- didn't like our product

Each of these "reasons" appear plausible at first glance, but when examined closely will usually reveal that the REAL reason for sales failure can be traced to a failure to observe, ask questions, and listen. The basic problem with the sales process is often so simple that it escapes notice!

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Until next month,



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