

Child's Play

The natural salesperson in you is child-like—ask directly for what you want, and you just may receive it this holiday season.



by Phil Sasso

Kids are rarely shy when it comes to asking for what they want for the holidays. I think we can learn something from them in this regard. We, as salespeople, need to be just as willing to ask for the sale as children are to ask for specific gifts this season.

Here's an example of my experience a few years back. I just came home from work, and my son, PJ, ran to the door to greet me with a huge smile and a warm welcome.

"Hi Dad!"

"Hi PJ!"

"Do you have time?" he asked. "I want to show you something."

"Sure," I said as I sat down. He pulled out a catalog and thumbed through the pages until he found the magical page he was looking for.

"Dad, do you know what this is?" he asked, pointing to an image on the page.

"It's a toy train set," I said.

"It's THOMAS the Train," he emphasized. "Isn't it cool?"

"Very cool. I like the snow-covered tunnels and the puffs of smoke," I replied.

"Can I get this for Christmas, Dad?"

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I was at once proud and trapped. I was proud my little salesperson asked for the sale. I was trapped by the fact that he already knew I liked it. I told him I liked it. I even told him what I liked best about it. What could I do? Nothing, I was committed now, like it or not.

We can all take a quick lesson from PJ. Let's dissect his sales method:

1. **As soon as you can, establish rapport and begin a dialog.** PJ welcomed me and quickly re-established our relationship. Then he got right down to business. Being friendly may be important to growing your sales, but spending as much time as possible showing tools is even more critical. Good salespeople are good with time management.
2. **Get feedback first.** PJ asked me if I liked the train set before he asked me to buy it. In sales, this is referred to as a "trial close." If I didn't like it, he still had a chance to work on persuading me before he actually asked for the sale. Since I was already sold, all he had to do was negotiate the terms of the deal. If you can get a customer to admire a tool before you ask him to buy it, you'd be able to close more deals—and more quickly at that.
3. **Ask for the sale.** PJ didn't beat around the bush. And he didn't get pushy. He just looked me in the eye and asked for the sale. Point-blank. He didn't give me an out. It was a simple yes or no question. To close a sale,

you need to ask for the order. And it's a simple mathematical fact that the more sales you ask for, the more sales you would achieve. Don't be afraid of "no." That's when the selling really begins.

4. **Avoid focusing on price.** PJ never actually told me the price. It wasn't because he was afraid to tell me: Kids don't know that kind of fear. And neither should you. Once a customer is emotionally committed to a tool, price becomes secondary. Too often we've taught ourselves to close with price. But try this a few times: Ask for the sale without mentioning the price. If the customer asks you the price, usually they're sold. You can pretty much get ready to write up the order. If they say "no" without asking the price, then they aren't really sold on the product no matter what the price. Your best bet is to start dealing with their objections of the product.

Did PJ get the train set he wanted for Christmas? No. He got a better one. And he asked for a lot of successful add-on sales over the years! (Talk about the rewards of good salesmanship ...) 

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