

## ARTICLE REPRINT

### **Negotiate Now!**

How many times have you established an excellent rapport with a prospect, built credibility and trust, and reached an agreement on moving the sale forward, thinking it was a “done deal?” Then, from out of nowhere, the “done deal” bursts into flames during acrimonious negotiations over price, contract terms and other conditions, costs and fees.

Unfortunately, this happens all the time, but you can do something to prevent it from happening again. You can negotiate now, instead of later.

Most selling organizations follow a traditional, and flawed, sales roadmap that positions “selling” early in customer interactions and leaves the negotiation of difficult issues, as well as T’s and C’s, to the technical “experts.” This approach, unfortunately, renders many potential sales vulnerable to surprise failure late in the game.

In most selling situations, negotiating and selling are inseparable - they occur simultaneously. Even minor decisions, like when and where to meet next, or who will attend future meetings, are made by negotiating. Selling and negotiating exist side by side and cannot be artificially separated, which is exactly what happens in many selling situations.

Because of their penchant for avoiding bad news at almost any cost, some salespeople avoid negotiating tough issues with customers. They fear that negotiating difficult issues early in the sales cycle can cause them to lose the sale. Perhaps they don’t understand that there is no sale until everyone agrees on how to resolve the tough issues.

Some salespeople rely on their sales managers or even a customer support person to negotiate “issues” such as installation charges, training fees, warranty extension costs and payment terms. The salesperson might even leave it up to a support person to break the news to a customer that a hefty deposit may be required to initiate an order.

A good many salespeople have told me that they don’t consider themselves to be good negotiators. Somehow they’ve bought into the notion that negotiating is a special skill that is best employed by technical “experts” who are paid to negotiate with customers and to “tell it like it is.”

Understanding the symbiotic relationship between selling and negotiating will help you to better qualify selling opportunities and to facilitate and close more sales. Salespeople who are willing to negotiate the small issues as well as the tough issues early in the sales

cycle increase the potential for smoother, quicker and more predictable back-end negotiations.

It just doesn't make sense to spend time, money and talent building goodwill with prospects and customers only to watch from the sidelines as that goodwill evaporates during tense negotiations over important issues. As the goodwill evaporates, so does the potential of repeat business from the customer.

Copyright © 2008 Selling Up™. All Rights Reserved.

About the author: Steve Chriest is the founder of Selling Up™ ([www.selling-up.com](http://www.selling-up.com)), a sales consulting firm specializing in sales revenue improvement for organizations of all types and sizes in a variety of industries. He is also the author of *Selling The E-Suite*, *The Proven System For Reaching and Selling Senior Executives* and *Profits and Cash – The Game of Business*. You can reach Steve at [schriest@selling-up.com](mailto:schriest@selling-up.com).