



Selling to the Old Brain – Two ways to increase sales results

Many salespeople have heard the phrase that selling is an art and a science. This phrase is moving beyond a cliché with the new research on the science of selling and persuasion. Sales professionals who desire a true competitive advantage know and apply the science behind how and why prospects make buying decisions.

The first step is studying the old brain, called the amygdala. It is a small almond shaped structure, located above the eyeballs. The amygdala is often referred to as the reptilian brain as it is the oldest part of the brain. It screens all stimuli coming into the brain and does so without logical thought. It's often referred to as the "fight or flight" portion of the brain. It is this part of the brain that salespeople must pay attention to and adapt their approach. Many untrained salespeople send prospects into "fight or flight" mode because of outdated selling techniques and how they show up to a sales meeting.

Here are two ways that salespeople can sell to the old brain and increase sales:

#1: Stop asking leading questions.

For some reason, salespeople change their language during a sales call. They ask leading questions such as, "So if we could show you how our product can save you thousands of dollars, would you want to move forward?" The old brain hears a close coming, defenses go up, and the prospect goes into "fight or flight" mode. The responses vary from objections (fight) to a "think it over" (flight).

Another place in the sales process where salespeople ask leading questions is after delivery of their value proposition. "We work with companies who are experiencing this, this and this. Are you having any of these issues?" This leading question makes a prospect feel cornered and he/she responds with a "not really" or simply holds the conversation card close to the chest. The result is a superficial conversation versus a transparent conversation.

Leading questions try to lead the prospect to the salesperson's desired outcome, not the prospect's. The old brain doesn't like leading questions because they are manipulative and inauthentic. A better thing to say is, "I'm not sure if you are having any of these issues...." It gives the prospect control of the call and eliminates "fight or flight" responses.

#2: Seek the truth, not the sale.

The old brain is always on the lookout for danger. When a salesperson shows up to meeting with the intent of closing the sales, the energy in the room changes and the old brain knows it. Guard goes up and level of conversation goes down. If you want to



close more business, change the intent of the sales meeting to seek the truth and do the right thing.

Great salespeople lose attachment to the outcome of the sales meeting. This is a mindset more than a selling skill. They are not focused on commissions; they are focused on uncovering the prospect's problem and figuring out if the prospect is committed to fixing it. When a salesperson seeks the truth versus a sale, he asks better questions, the right questions, and the tough questions. The result is a relaxed sales meeting where both parties have an open dialogue.

Sales is an art and science. Make sure your selling skills include the science of selling to the old brain.