

## Objections and customer resistance

A sale seldom goes through without the salesperson first having to negotiate a few red-light signals from the customer, whether they are objections or some other form of resistance.

**Objections are not necessarily anything to worry about, because they don't always indicate lack of interest. On the contrary, customers will often raise objections in order to get more information when they think they might be interested.**

What do typical objections look like? Whatever your industry, you are likely to encounter the same 25 objections over and over again. These may well be expressed in different ways but the content will be the same. Despite this, whenever they meet an objection, many salespeople look as if they have been struck by lightning .

The explanation for the similarity between objections is simple enough – all resistance is designed to ensure that the customer gets the right product or service. This is why the customer often raises objections that do not necessarily reflect what he or she is thinking.

The most frequent objections are:

- I'll have to think about it.
- I want a discount.
- You are too expensive.
- I don't understand the technology.
- I don't like the design.
- I have no room for it in the budget.
- My wife would never agree.

- We haven't decided yet.
- Let's wait and see.
- We aren't usually at the forefront of development.
- We don't need that in our industry, it's very specialized.

No doubt you recognize these objections from your own industry.

## How to deal with objections

You need a constructive, positive attitude to any objections you come across. If you don't like dealing with objections, you might as well be keying in special offers at a supermarket checkout, where you won't get any objections because the customers have already made their choices. But anyone working at different levels of sales knows that dealing with objections and customer resistance is a significant part of the job they are paid to do.

Remember the comparison with a car trip: green lights are the buying signals that you might come across sooner than you expect; red lights are objections that you will encounter, especially when you put the pressure on. If the sale seems to be going too quickly, the customer will quite naturally apply the brakes.

## Welcome objections

- Don't ignore objections.
- Don't contradict.
- Don't ask why.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't agree.
- Don't argue.

## Don't ignore objections

Welcome objections – they are a sign of interest. Take them all seriously, no matter how trivial they might seem. From the customer's point of view, they are quite serious. Show that you are taking the customer seriously and that the focus is on their needs.

## Don't contradict

No matter how tempted you are to contradict the customer (for example, when they raise the same objection time and again), never do it. For example:



### Customer says

I don't like the color.

We aren't usually at the forefront of development.

We don't have enough room in the budget.

I'll have to think it over.

I'll get back to you.

### Don't say

Everyone likes that color.

Any successful company needs to be a pioneer.

Of course you have enough money to buy it.

There's nothing to think about.

No, I'll get in touch with you.

If you contradict them, you will only turn the customer against you. Even if you do manage to convince them that the product is appropriate, they still have the right to say no. So listen to what the customer has to say and never contradict. As the Archimedes principle states, pressure begets counterpressure.

### Don't ask why

Some otherwise good salespeople have learned, possibly on sales courses, that they have to go into everything in depth, so when they meet objections, they ask the customer 'why'. This is not a good idea. If the customer says: 'I'll think it over' and you ask why, they might reply: 'Because we can't afford it'. If you ask why again, they are likely to cut you off with: 'We just can't'.

If you use the word ‘why’, you can quickly dig yourself into a hole you can’t get out of. Never use this word when the customer raises objections.

## Don’t interrupt

Because many objections resemble each other, a fast-moving salesperson often knows what the customer is about to say, and can’t resist the temptation to interrupt. Don’t interrupt people. No matter how slowly they talk, let them finish. Interrupting is bad-mannered and unforgivable. People are entitled to express their opinions of your product, your company and you. Remember that you have two ears and just one mouth. Listen, take notes, look at the customer, smile and be friendly. When the customer has said what they have to say, use the techniques you have learned for dealing with objections.

## Don’t agree with them

Although it is true that the customer is always right, it doesn’t mean you have to agree with everything they say. If a customer says: ‘You are too expensive,’ you can’t say: ‘You’re quite right, we are too expensive’. If they say: ‘Your product isn’t good enough,’ you can’t say: ‘Yes, a lot of people say that’. If you agree with everything the customer says, you might win the conversation only to lose the order.

## Don’t argue

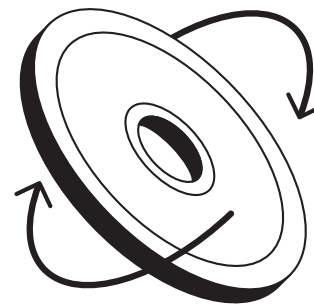
The most common technique for dealing with objections is to start arguing with the customer. But think of arguments in your private life, or those you’ve heard between politicians – they usually lead people to adopt a tougher stance than the one they started with. Some people might change their attitudes as a discussion develops, but in a sales situation, where objections do not always reflect strongly held opinions, arguing is a bad idea. So avoid any form of argument, and show empathy for the customer’s point of view.

## Dealing with objections

If you can’t ignore, contradict, ask why, interrupt, agree unconditionally or argue, what can you do? In a sales discussion, you and the customer are both looking at the same coin, just from different sides. Use this as the basis of your technique for dealing with objections, and always start by looking at the issue from the customer’s perspective.

Anglers know that if you want to land a big fish, you have to give the line some slack when the fish bites the hook. Without pushing the comparison too far, dealing with a customer is similar. The customer took the bait when you started the conversation. At this stage, the customer is interested but you haven’t yet landed the order, and they want to put up a bit of a struggle. So every time they fight, give them a little more line. When the line goes slack, reel it in again. That’s how to deal with objections.

The important thing is for you to see the opposite side of the coin to the one you are arguing. When the customer says: ‘I’d like to think about this,’ say: ‘I can understand that you want to think about it, James’. You are acknowledging that the customer is about to make a big decision. Then turn the coin round and say: ‘On the other hand, I’m quite sure you realize the advantages of making the decision now’.



### **Objections**

***Illustration 19:** Objections are good – they are a sign that the customer is interested. But you must learn to handle objections properly, or you might easily lose both the order and the customer.*