

How do I Get Prospects to Buy NOW!?

By: Shawn Greene

Every salesperson is magically empowered with the ability to make prospects buy—and we mean now! This power is limited to a number of uses equal to the number of times each salesperson has been made to buy something now. In other words: Fat Chance.

Well, actually... If you're selling something that people compare based on cost only, then you can often get people to buy now when you have a special price to offer, or if the price is about to go up. If you're *not* selling such a commodity, it's back to the magical powers thing.

But, let's say you do have the power to make someone buy now, before they are willing and ready. Let's say you have learned all kinds of manipulative techniques and one day you meet up with a prospect who is more malleable than most of us. Here's what happens when you make this mouse buy:

As soon as you leave, your manipulative powers fade into dust. The prospect regains his senses. He calls his financial institution, and puts a "stop" on the charge or check. He is so mad that he calls your boss to tell her what a jerk you are and you get into big trouble. He tells all his friends and relations not to buy from you or the company you represent. You see why making people buy now is not a good idea, grasshopper?

All you can—and should—do is ask questions and respond based on the answers:

- Find out what each prospect wants & needs, and offer your expert advice whether you expect to land the business or not
- Find out if prospects are interested in making a deal today, or if they are in the shopping process
- If they're shopping, ask how you can help them gather the information they need to decide

A Little Magic

Having duly admonished you to avoid trying to make prospects buy, I have to confess there are indeed ways you can increase their desire to buy. One way is that when prospects mention something your products or services fix, see if you can increase their perception of it as being a problem that needs fixing.

The trick is to encourage them to say the words; not you. As you ask questions about wants and needs, expand the conversation into areas your products and services address. In other words, don't leave the focus of the conversation entirely up to the prospect. As much as possible, ask questions that encourage prospects to delve into issues out-loud. For example, let's say your product makes a certain process more efficient:

Ask, "Walk me through the usual process for..." As the prospect mentions something in that process that your product fixes, poke at the issue or item to see if you can make it hurt. "Really? That takes 15 minutes? How does that impact...?" You may also find questions like, "What would Jill be doing if she wasn't...?" poke at potential issues enough to make them hurt.

Notice that the above questions are designed to encourage the prospect to talk through things. This is far more effective than you saying "Have you thought about..."

Now that you've got some magical powers, it's time to put your feet back on the ground. Sometimes you'll uncover issues a prospect didn't even know she wanted to fix, and sometimes you won't. Take each selling situation as it comes, and remember to use your powers only for good.



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