



LEADING THE CRUSADE FOR ETHICS IN BUSINESS

## **Are You Making a Sale or Making a Client for the Long Haul?**

**By Frank C. Bucaro**

Let's face it, a major challenge to the sales process is that it is often difficult to put the time and energy that goes into developing quality, long-standing relationships with every potential customer. More often, it is much easier to service the customer, make the sale, or accept their rejection and move on. Achieving and surpassing your goals determine success, not the 'warm and fuzzies' of building a relationship with prospects and clients, right? Wrong!

If you continually strive to build a relationship with potential or current clients, you'll find that even the toughest objections may not be the end of the relationship. Today's marketplace presents aggressive quotas and almost impossible deadlines. In that environment, the average salesperson often focuses on numbers of prospective clients rather than focusing on the quality of each relationship. For many sales professionals, thinking long term on a customer-to-customer basis does not seem to be worth the time. It can often be more difficult to think of what the customer could potentially purchase, who the customer could refer in the future or how long the customer may stay with the company.

The trick is, the sales strategy does not have to be an either-or plan. It is a decision to make in having this long-term mindset before any prospective clients walk in. To clarify this sales position, the following questions are imperative to ask:

### **1. Are you making a sale or making a customer?**

Sara, a pharmaceutical sales representative knew that her weekly visits to the same doctor's office would eventually pay off. She had only spent 9 months working on establishing a relationship with this doctor. Many of her counterparts in the industry had no such luck. They gave up because they focused on the short term. They faced resistance when the gate keeper refused to let them see the doctor. However, Sara knew better, she had a long term goal of creating a solid relationship with this specific doctor and would not give up. She stood in the



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waiting room, week after week for 9 months, before she was proven right. The doctor finally invited her into his office to discuss her products. He appreciated her persistence. Her counterparts gave up months ago. She was able to establish a solid relationship for the long term, thus her sales efforts helped to make a customer for many years.

**2. Is making the sale more important than creating a quality relationship with a client?**

A local coffee shop opens up in a busy, populated and diverse city. There are many coffee shops to choose from in this city, however, this one is different. All employees, from owner, to management to dish washers know that every customer has great potential to be repeat customers for the long haul. They know that their customers have choices to make their coffee at home or go elsewhere for a \$2 cup of coffee. So, from the first day of their opening, every single employee is encouraged and empowered to create conversation with each customer, which is not easy at this fast paced business. What they found in a short amount of time, is these customers came back regularly, referred their friends and family and even wrote editorials in the local newspaper about the new “gem” they found in this city populated with many trendy coffee shops.

Obviously, the coffee shop employees could have filled the coffee cup, collected the money, handed the change back to the customer and moved on. However, the atmosphere in this shop was to establish relationships for ongoing business. They employees soon called their customer by name and knew their drink before they ordered. The customers would drive out of their way to buy their coffee here. Rather than seeing each customer as a \$2 sale, they saw each customer as lifetime sale.



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**3. Are clients' needs your top priority or do you "work" the client to sell what you want?**

Beth was in the market for a patio for her new home. She kept negotiating with the salesperson, so he would come down on the price. She did her research and knew how much she'd pay per square foot. They were now negotiating a \$500 difference. The salesperson kept saying "We can't go down another \$500 but we'll throw in a fire pit." The only problem was that Beth did not want a fire pit. Never did she mention a desire for this feature. However, the salesperson was not listening to her and kept advising what a great benefit this is to her, since so many of his other clients wanted a fire pit. Finally, out of frustration, my daughter decided to wait on the patio. She then found someone else who listened to her needs and matched the price she desire with the features she desired.

Focusing on developing a long-standing customer is the foundation of building relationships. This commitment to a solid foundation of a relationship demonstrates higher standards of ethics, which in turn will lead to long-term business success as well as personal fulfillment.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Frank Bucaro is an author, speaker and consultant who specializes in the benefits of ethics for business growth and personal success. Using a distinctive blend of humor and enthusiasm, Frank works to integrate ethical standards with solid business practices. His clients range from Fortune 500 companies to associations to small businesses. Frank's latest book, "Trust Me! Insights Into Ethical Leadership," highlights the unique role of ethics in leadership today. For more information about his speaking and consulting, please visit [www.frankbucaro.com](http://www.frankbucaro.com) or call 800-784-4476.

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