

Put More KIDding In Your Selling

I was reminded recently of a column I wrote for *Quick Printing* back in 1998. It was titled “IQDD — An Acronymic Approach To Successful Selling.” IQDD stands for Identification, Qualification, Discussion and Decision, and I still think that’s a solid formula. But, like anything else from 15 years ago, it’s probably due for an update.

So today I’m going to urge you to put more KIDding in your selling. KID = Knowledge, Interest, and then (and only then!) Discussion.

More To Sell

One of the foundations of this new acronymic strategy is that you have a lot more to sell today than you did in 1998. Back then, progressive quick printers were talking about digital printing and mailing services. Today, you can also be talking about large format printing, signage, promotional products, response enhancers like PURLs and QR Codes, and a wide range of Marketing Services including websites and social media. It’s been my experience that today’s typical printing salesperson has so much to sell that he or she can’t wait to tell everyone all about all of it. And that’s a mistake.

One of my themes over the years has been that most salespeople talk too much. That was true in 1998, and it’s true today. KID is about talking less, and talking *about* less.

Knowledge

The first stages of any conversation with a prospect should be about *knowledge*. And let me make it clear that every selling conversation involves a prospect. Another of my themes over the years has been that it’s important to differentiate between suspects, prospects and customers, because you face different challenges with each category. The challenge with suspects is to qualify them; in other words, to determine whether they really are qualified prospects. The challenge with prospects is to convince them to give you a chance; in other words, to place that first order. Once they do that, they become customers, but every customer is also a prospect to be a larger customer. And while the decision to continue to buy basic business printing from you may not require much “selling” on your part, the decision to have you build and maintain a sophisticated website probably will!

So let’s say that you want to sell me on building and maintaining your website. The first step is to make me aware that you have that capability. The wrong way to do that is to tell me that you’re into building websites now. The right way is to engage me with a question.

Think about that. If you make a statement, the ball is still in your court. If you ask a question, the ball is now in my court—and that’s where you want it! *Conversation* is far better selling strategy than *presentation*. (By the way, I heard a salesperson make that exact statement just a few weeks ago, and his prospect looked at him blankly for a few beats before saying “well, ah, congratulations?”)

Interest

Creating or confirming knowledge/awareness is a solid start, but now you have to consider my level of interest. And let’s make this simple. If I’m not interested, you won’t succeed! That means you’d be wise to create or confirm interest before going any further. So here’s one option: “We’re into building websites now. Any interest in talking about that?” Here’s another option: “I’d like to talk about your website today. Specifically, if you could change anything about it, what would it be?”

The first option is pretty direct, but that’s the only thing I like about it. The second option is much more likely to start the kind of conversation I think you really want to have. Either way, if there’s interest, you move on to discussion, and if there’s not, you don’t.

Remember, you have a lot to sell. If you don’t sell me a website today, you may still sell me on managing my social media presence next time we talk. On the other hand, you can alienate me today by pushing on about something I’m not interested in, or you can overload my circuits completely by trying to sell me everything you’ve got. Do either of those sound like the outcome you’re looking for?

PS: You can find all of my columns going back to about 2009 at www.myprintresource.com. The older stuff, including IQDD, is available in the article archives at www.davefellman.com.