

How Inquisitive Are You?

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Expressions Of Excellence!™

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How Inquisitive Are You?

By Craig Harrison
The Voice of Customer Experience
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Three teenaged girls heading home from school entered the subway car in mid-conversation: "Is he in our school?" "Yes." "In our grade?" "Yes." "In our calculus class?" "Yes." "Is he fine?" "Yes!" "Steve?" "Noooo." "Seth?" "Phillip?" "It's Jeremy!" Indeed it was!!!

These girls were playing 20 Questions. They were playing to win. They were asking closed-ended questions to qualify/disqualify the field. They were expert at cutting to the chase.

Kids in fact are excellent question-masters. They are naturally inquisitive, constantly curious and regularly in learning mode. We can all take a lesson or two from Linda, Sara and Simone.

Q's are cues to customers

The questions you ask will uncover customers' needs and wants, their fears and frustrations. They'll tell you all you need to know to formulate your sales or service approach. My question to you: how good are the questions you are asking?

Recently I consulted the ultimate Question-master, Sales Trainer John Tenza (www.coaching2greatness.com) of Ann Arbor, Michigan. John coaches his sales students to greatness through the asking of powerful questions. John uses a combination of closed-ended, open-ended and even rhetorical questions to engage, qualify, isolate needs and objections, uncover hidden issues and close sales. Among his tips for us all:

- * Have your questions prepared and mastered before your conversation or presentation, as a great trial attorney would.
- * The questions should flow; you must have a verbal awareness about how you sound asking the questions.

- * In person: Eye contact is a must if you want people to take your questions seriously.
- * On the telephone: Smiling is key; in the absence of verbal cues listeners intuit your skill, confidence and trustworthiness based on the sound of your voice.
- * Ask questions with a mental and physical attitude that the prospect's answers deserve to be actively listened to validating them and making them feel important.

As for your motivation:

- * What is the purpose of your questions?
- * Are you interested in discovering something new?
- * Do you want to connect and build rapport?
- * Is it your goal to set an appointment? Close a service call? Build trust or express empathy?
- * Are you there to cause somebody to take action?
- * What do you already know about your caller or customer?
- * What is important to him/her? WHY is that important?
- * What benefits do you offer that would make his/her situation or life better?

John and I concur: the art of asking questions is not the same as opening your mouth and asking whatever comes to mind.

True professionals are sincerely interested in bridging the gap and delivering great results.

In closing, we ask, are you ready to kick some ASK?



Craig Harrison helps professionals express their excellence through stellar sales and service training. Contact him at www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com, e-mail Craig@ExpressionsOfExcellence.com or call him directly at (510) 547-0064.

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