



## Order taker or sales person...which are you?

Not only am I a sales trainer who gets to see sales efforts across the country, I am a home shopper myself as I transition from a family home to an empty nest lifestyle. I am a real buyer with a willingness to act on the right property. And what I have found as I look for my new place astounds me. Despite the clear message that sales people must be more attentive to discovering wants and needs, and able to combat objections and stalls, I find most still showing the product and hoping it strikes the buyer's fancy. It is depressing.

Every sales process I have ever seen puts the presentation after Greeting, Bonding and Discovery/Qualifying. Yet, when I have walked into sales centers, the first thing I hear is about the "deal" the builder is offering. What do I care about the deal until I know if the home fits my wish list? Not one of the seven sales centers I visited last week even asked about what my wish list contained, I volunteered enough to get the "Presentation" and the "Deal" In five of the seven visits I wasn't even asked to register! (This is actually better than the 0 for 6 I experienced in Indianapolis)

Prospects are confused, fearful of making a mistake. As new home sales professionals, we have to help them get to the comfort zone about this very unsettled time to be buying a home. In the past few years across most of the country, we have had the luxury of motivated buyers who did most of the heavy lifting in the sales process. Now that the markets for most of us are softer but not bad, (really; just more balanced rather than the sellers market we have had except where overbuilding and investor sales were rampant), we must in fact go back to the basics of selling. This means understanding the concerns of buyers as well as their dreams. Then we must help them minimize the former and maximize the latter; in other words, help them buy.

How do we do that? Start by slowing down your heated rush to "sell" something. I'm betting traffic isn't nearly what it used to be so you certainly have the time. "Visit" as they say in the south, with your prospect. Let them vent about their frustrations and fears. Let them share their dreams of what the perfect home would be. Relax and listen! Wait until there is a real opportunity to share information then give only enough to get them talking again. This may mean thirty minutes or more. At some point, you will know the time is right to show them something... it's time for a presentation tailored specifically to their wish list. When you get a few "wow" comments, then it is time to ask them to buy. When they demur, it is time to truthfully discuss their reluctance and offer reasonable solutions to their concerns. In other words, just like you were taught before sales made themselves.

You will need an arsenal of well thought out and rehearsed responses to any objection you are likely to get so that you can respond comfortably and credibly. The NAHB has a .tool kit that is one great source of the information you need to craft these messages.



So then, how do we get comfortable transmitting these very real messages to our prospects? That's easy...we must practice them. There is no substitute for having a script that you and your sales team have created then practiced with role playing until these responses are second nature. Training on the right way to deal with the uncertainty your prospects display is a critical piece of being confident that you can deal with whatever the message may be that the media transmits today. If you want to convert prospects to buyers, you must role play until you are comfortable that you have a sensible response for whatever stall you hear.

While we must acknowledge the reality of the public's perception, and the way it colors their thinking, we must help those who are still out looking at new homes get past their fears with some rational reasons to proceed despite uncertainty; getting the uncertainty reduced and bringing the awareness that this may be their best time to make their housing purchase.

Sales people do this. Order takers don't. So I ask again; Order taker or sales person...which are you?