



## Are Objections Objectionable?

From "Sales Wise – a journey through Sales and Selling" by Martyn Lewis

*I don't have the time right now*

*We don't have the budget*

*I need to get others involved*

*This is a busy time of year*

*We'll have to think it over and get back to you*

**H**eaded that before? These, and seemingly countless others, are typical objections that are part of every sales professional's day. And we know all too well that such objections can potentially ruin an otherwise great sales effort. However, there are a number of interesting facts - six to be precise - that we should know about objections.

For many years now, usually as part of comprehensive sales training seminars, I've conducted workshops on how to handle objections. We start the workshop by asking the participants to break into small groups and list all – and I mean all – of the objections they have ever heard or are ever likely to hear. Almost invariably the moaning starts and I am asked how they could possibly list them all – to which we reply that they should then list as many as they can in the time available. We usually introduce this workshop right before lunch, as this allows everyone time to collect their thoughts, and the groups wander off to eat, anticipating that they will be working at coming up with literally hundreds of objections. After lunch we get down to work, and then a strange thing happens – which brings me to fact #1 about objections.



### **Fact #1**

#### **There are far fewer actual objections than we think**

On writing down the list of all likely objections, we first find that there are rarely more than twenty or so in total. We then take a closer look and see how many of those cited are in actual fact duplications, or near enough that we can cull the list further. And then we do a reality check to see if all the objections we have come across in real life are all there – and indeed they usually are. Not the hundreds anticipated – closer perhaps to a couple of dozen or so.

### **Fact #2**

#### **Most objections could be avoided by gaining a better understanding of the situation earlier in the sales cycle**

With the final list of objections posted, we work on what to do when we hear them. What we discover is that the majority could have been prevented if we had just thought to ask a few more questions and discover a bit more about our prospect earlier in the sales cycle:

Is there a budget for this project?

- Who will be involved in the decision-making process, and what will it be?
- Are you considering alternative approaches?
- What are the major factors that you will be considering?
- Who else should I be talking to?

If we asked these questions, and any others that are relevant, the majority of likely objections would melt away. Which is a lot better than the melting away of a lot of work that was invested in the sales effort only to discover key information gaps that surface as – you guessed it – objections.

### **Fact #3**

#### **Some objections are phantoms, inasmuch as they are simply convenient ways to block the truth**

When we study the remaining objections, we will often find that they are not real – what I choose to call “phantom” objections. It is far easier for a prospect to tell you that they would like to think about your proposal for a while than to admit that they do not have the budget, or they lack the authority to proceed, or any other genuine but internal, and therefore private, business matters. Phantoms can also arise for seemingly non-relevant issues; maybe they don’t like your style, or they’re going through some personal difficulties. These might seem tough to see through, but if Fact #2 has been dealt with, it’s a fair assumption that some phantoms are flying.

Now, let’s take a little time-out from the fact list. If we look at all of the objections, take away the ones that could have been prevented by better discovery, and take away the phantoms, we are left with a much smaller list to manage. From these – which invariably represent the real business objections to our proposals – we can take a far more positive view of the situation because we have a manageable, solvable, and informative list to deal with. Why informative? Read on.



#### **Fact #4**

### **Real objections are a buying signal**

If we've persevered and dispensed with the "unreal" objections, chances are that both of us – the sales professional and the purchaser – have invested a good deal of time and energy into the process. Most objections we hear at this stage should be representing the genuine needs and anxieties of our prospect, and they would not be shared if there weren't a serious interest in buying.

#### **Fact #5**

### **Often the real motivations (and fears) only come out through objections**

It is at this stage of the selling cycle that we often hear the real emotional needs of our prospect. Up to this point, the sales cycle may have been totally founded upon business needs involving clear and objective requirements. It is here when we may hear things such as, "But isn't your company likely to be acquired? What happens then?" Or, "I'm really not sure if we're ready to do business with a company that is still in its infancy." These are the real objections that are not raised earlier but often represent true issues that need to be dealt with.

So what have we learned?

#### **Fact #6**

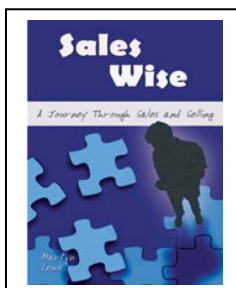
### **Most objections are predictable**

Objections really are wonderful things because they impart information. And when we look back with hindsight on both deals that we won or deals that went south, we find that virtually all of the objections were totally predictable. And if most objections are indeed predictable, we should be able to list them, be prepared and confident to deal with them, and learn from them.

### **Objections need not be objectionable.**

**Compile your own list of the objections you are likely to hear.**

**Look to see which could have been avoided, and then make sure that you can respond to the ones remaining – the real ones – with confidence and competence.**



The book "Sales Wise – a Journey through Sales and Selling" by Martyn Lewis

*is now available from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).*

With entertaining true stories, Sales Wise introduces its readers to new ways of thinking about sales – and shows you how to sell your products, services, and ideas more effectively.