



ODA / TOPLINE "Building Sales Capacity"

A Note From Joel

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Last month I discussed how poor customer service diminishes our sales capacity. And I promised you some help in dealing with this situation.

Like so many things in business, poor customer service has many origins. And you will probably find the causes more complex and difficult than you think. I have found that the best way to address service problems is through systematic problem solving.

Right you say, I have the customer on my back, my own employees up in arms and you are recommending a systematic process. How much time do you think we have? If I don't address this issue right now both my customer's good will and my job are at stake. I must act quickly. I get that, been there.

But I have also been there when a fast answer made a bad situation worse. The answer is not a scholarly study but it is also a not a fire fight.

Systematic means the following:

In a timely manner, engage the correct people in your firm, brief them on the problem and ask both for a current action and a long term solution. You can act quickly and accurately, you can avoid making it worse.

This starts with effective communication, the first responder has the responsibility to ask the right questions of the right people on the customer side. Asking another question and digging deeper can save a lot of lost motion.

Problem solving questions should be part of your customer service and sales training. Getting the fix started before we know what's broke is expensive and magnifies the problem.

The first responder must know who in your firm to engage next, options for corrective action should be quickly but carefully explored. A critical point is keeping the customer informed. They must feel that you are addressing the problem, tell them what you are doing.

Remember that Customer Service is in the eye of the beholder.

Get them on your side and you are building up rather than tearing down Your Sales Capacity.

Good Selling,
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