

In Sales, The Gift of Gab is Far from a Gift

Bob Burg, The Co-Author of The Go-Giver

Yes, I heard it again, while a young child in line talked endlessly, a person nearby, with a wink in his voice, commented, "he'll be a good salesperson one day".

As I grow older and wiser (first one a definite; second one debatable) I find there are fewer and fewer phrases that elicit within me a visceral negative reaction. That statement always does, though. I mean, think of it...it is based on the premise that a person who just incessantly talks and talks and talks...is a good salesperson.



Bob Burg

I've asked countless people, "Do you tend to buy from salespeople who simply yap non-stop about their product?" They always – yes, always (and often emphatically) – tell me "no." Yet, I still hear it.

Recently, on my Facebook page, I posted the following:

"Those with the 'gift of gab' can be good salespeople...providing they are willing to lose their gift of gab and listen. Really listen."

One friend wrote, "Yes, so true! I had a sales manager once who said the challenge many potentially great salespeople have is knowing when to shut up."

It's More Than Just That Though

While that is indeed true, that wisdom is often given within the context of stopping one's talking after the presentation...in other words, to shut up and not "talk past the sale." That is certainly very valid advice.

The point of the quote, however, goes far beyond that. It's an attitude of focusing on and listening to the other person from the outset and throughout the sales process. As any professional salesperson knows, listening more than talking during the presentation typically results in a much better outcome, both for the salesperson and, of course, the prospect who will then get to enjoy the benefits of that which they purchased.

Talking isn't selling. Listening; focused, active, caring listening allows you to direct your attention on the prospect and understand their needs. Only then can you build value because, after all, it's the prospect who ultimately determines value.

So, can that young kid with the "gift of gab" grow up and become a top-notch, professional, value-creating, high-income earning salesperson? Sure he can, but only if he loses that "gift" along the way.