

The **One** Sales Test You Are Guaranteed to Fail

BY DAN SEIDMAN



This is a test. It isn't a quiz – quizzes are easy.

This is a test. It is a true measure of your understanding about sales skills.

This is a test. The right answers can give you laser-guided focus that will improve your performance throughout the rest of your selling career.

Ready?

Answer these three questions.

Write down the first thought that hits you. Then think about whether the best answer is something other than what you initially believed.

1. Who are you **REALLY** competing with?
2. What is the No. 1 **PROBLEM** encountered by anyone who sells anything?
3. What is your **RESPONSIBILITY** on a sales call?

(Hint: Whether it's face-to-face or on phone calls, the answer has to be correct 100 percent of the time.)

Let's work our way through each of

these questions. You'll see the most common responses and end up with the gift of a great response that will help you discover some insights about yourself and your relationship with prospects.

QUESTION 1.

Who are you **really** competing with?

No, it's not you, though that might be the second smartest answer. In training sessions, I've had salespeople tell me it's the cheapest competitor; the rep with the best rapport; the most persistent rep; even the one who offers the best bribe. And you do compete with yourself, in that you can get in your own way. But here's the right answer:

You **REALLY** compete with the best sales professional your buyer has ever encountered.

Think on that. Someone before you set a standard by which you and all others are measured. This might include how professionally you dress, your skill with words, your ability to sell without pressuring, your questioning ability, your skill at reframing the issues, your ability to quantify a problem so that an investment in your solution becomes a worthy return on that purchase. Pack these together and you get the best of the best. That's the framework of the buyer.

This buyer is probably not consciously comparing you with that elevated standard. He or she somehow just remembers the experience of sitting down with that true selling pro.

So you'd better not be using old sales tactics that everyone's heard a hundred times. You'd better truly

distinguish yourself from others in order to gain consideration and commitment from buyers.

What do I like best about the truth of this answer? Outstanding and up-and-coming selling pros think, “Hey! I can be the one who sets the standard for all those other miserable reps out there. I can be the best.” And it gives them an incentive to work hard to outperform everyone they’re competing with.

QUESTION 2.

What is the No. 1 problem encountered by anyone who sells anything?

“No money” is the favorite response. I debunk this quickly in training by sharing a 12-page, single-spaced document showing responses to the price objection. I have even compressed this masterful montage of objections and responses onto one page (in a very tiny font!) so that reps can carry it around as a reminder that they can have the mental flexibility to deal with resistance related to money. Others point out that the No. 1 problem is lack of training, an inability to reach the real decision-maker, bad prospects or any of a laundry list of other objections.

The No. 1 PROBLEM you encounter is this: You chase poor prospects.

Mention that to a room full of sales managers. Their heads start nodding vigorously, like bobble-head dolls on a freeway full of cars during an L.A. earthquake.

We all do this – we look at the size of the sale or the prestige of the prospect or the smiling buyer and think, “YES! It’s a YES! They’re buying.” Wrong. People really do hate to hurt your feelings, even if you’re a stranger who

wrangled an appointment they didn’t want to offer. People acting nice then telling you that they’ll get back to you isn’t a good thing, it’s a disaster.

So if someone says, “I’ll think about it and let you know,” you know.

Chasing poor prospects is the biggest time-waster in the sales world. This problem is eliminated simply by identifying your perfect prospect and only courting people who fit that profile.

Who is your perfect prospect? Just look at some of your best existing clients and identify how you sold them, what their needs were, how fast they made a decision, how quickly you got to the real decision-makers and other factors. If you and your team can clearly identify a perfect prospect, you’ll stop chasing poor ones.

QUESTION 3.

What is your responsibility on a sales call?

Here are answers that are correct, but NOT 100% percent of the time. They include: selling the buyer, educating the buyer, discovering needs, handling objections, finding the decision-maker, identifying the time-frame for a decision, or gaining an idea of the available budget.

Your RESPONSIBILITY on a sales call is to GET A DECISION.

This is true 100 percent of the time. If your key focus is get a decision, that will drive all your activity and language choices.

Here are the hows and whys of decisions. You get a yes, that’s good – you sold them. You get a no, that’s good, move on. You get a next step, that’s good – set the appointment for that next step. You get a “think it over,” that’s bad. That’s not a decision, so preempt that problem by asking your buyer to

commit to yes, no or the next step.

This is the SINGLE most important concept any sales pro can learn and put into play.

A key to pulling this off is to draft a script that covers your rules of engagement (yes, no or next step) and run it by the buyer. On the phone, you can have the script in front of you. In person, you’ll want to have it memorized (while sounding spontaneous, of course). You might start with something like, “Mr./Ms. Prospect, our conversation today is to determine whether we can work together. So at the end of our time, let’s figure out if it’s yes or no, or whether we need to set up a next step ...” That’s a snapshot of how this works (a good script should be about three-quarters of a page long) – and work it does, quite well.

You’ve finished your test!

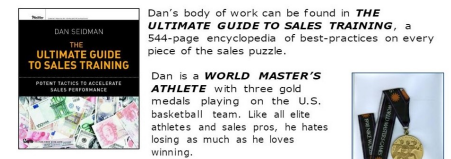
You have your three answers. How did you do? Did the responses here create a bit of an AHA! moment – or two or three? Perhaps they made you say, “Ouch, need a little work here.”

Remember, you must change behavior to improve performance, and each of these three best responses requires a behavioral change in order to be put into action. **INN**



INTERNATIONAL SALES TRAINING LEADER OF THE YEAR 2013 for his work designing and re-designing existing training, in order to significantly increase sales team performance.

DAN SEIDMAN of **GOT INFLUENCE?** has been recognized as *The Trainer to the World's Sales Trainers* (Willis Turner, CEO of Sales & Marketing Executives International). Dan is a globally-recognized speaker, consultant & sales trainer who has coached and consulted from Vietnam to Venezuela and across the US.



Dan's body of work can be found in **THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SALES TRAINING**, a 544-page encyclopedia of best-practices on every piece of the sales puzzle.

Dan is a **WORLD MASTER'S ATHLETE** with three gold medals playing on the U.S. basketball team. Like all elite athletes and sales pros, he hates losing as much as he loves winning.

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