Why You Will Fail

Fortunately for you, there have already been thousands that have failed miserably at door-to-door sales. Meaning, if you learn what so many have done incorrectly, you will be less likely to repeat their mistakes.

Here are the top 5 reasons why door-to-door sales reps fail:

1. Sales reps fail if they do not set goals and are not driven by them. You will not succeed unless you have precise goals and are willing to make sacrifices to attain these goals. Keeping in mind, it’s not a crime to reevaluate and readjust goals that are too far out of reach or too easy to attain.

2. Sales reps that forget to ask the names of each person they contact and then fail to use those names on subsequent doors will not succeed. When a potential customer declines your offer, you should extend your hand for a handshake and say, “I appreciate your time…my name is Rob…what is your name?” This is almost a guaranteed way to get somebody to reveal their name. By gathering a name from each contact, you will never have a shortage of names to drop.

3. Sales reps that use the same initial approach despite its ineffectiveness. If it’s broke…fix it! Don’t be the sales rep who expects different results while saying the same thing door after door. Learn from each contact and adjust your approach appropriately. If you aren’t thinking about how to become better, you won’t.

4. Sales reps who blame their lack of success on their area will almost always fail. I would suspect 99% of the time it’s not the areas fault, it’s the sales rep. If you are confident and skilled, you can sell in any area you are assigned to work.

5. Sales reps who are mentally checked out during working hours will fail. When you are on the doors, you should be thinking about ways to increase your sales skills. You should adhere to the ‘Zero Distraction Policy.’ This policy is designed to help you maintain focus on the doors and eliminate all distractions such as personal phone calls, text messages, emails, or anything not related to your job. Be sure to let your family and friends know when you are available for personal time and when you are working.

All five of these reasons have something in common. They are 100% controllable by you. There will be plenty of situations when you are knocking doors that you have no control over…the weather, when people are at home, if your services fit into their budget, etc. However, you have total control over the leading reasons why door-to-door sales reps fail. If you make up your mind to look for ways to improve every day and at every door, sacrifice to reach your goals, and stay focused on the job, you will be successful!
Confidence, Confidence, Confidence

Confidence is the most important trait you should attain while selling door-to-door. In the course of one selling day you may encounter over 100 potential customers and if any of them take one thing from you it should be the confidence you have in yourself and the service you are selling.

There is a definitive line between being confident and being cocky. A confident sales rep will not slander people, become argumentative or spiteful. A confident sales rep gives people an honest, straight-forward explanation of what they are offering and why it is needed. The second a contact thinks you don’t know the first thing about what you’re selling and takes over the conversation, you can kiss that sale goodbye.

On the doors you are only successful when you are in control of the conversation. The idea is to gain and maintain control of the conversation from start to finish. That’s why you establish your presence on their doorstep by exuding confidence. Remember, you are in charge of the conversation and you are the one with the knowledge. Having confidence in yourself and what you are selling will make the potential customer more attracted to what you are saying and in the end help you to become more successful.

Confidence can only be attained by increasing your knowledge and practicing what you do. The more you know and the more you practice will help you feel more comfortable while conversing with potential customers on a daily basis. So practice…yes I’m talking about practice. Practice with a friend, a spouse or even in the mirror. Make sure you feel comfortable doing what you’ll be doing day in and day out.

Types of Communication

Non-verbal communication – most of what you communicate will be non-verbal or basically your body language. You send non-verbal messages by the way you stand, the way you use eye contact, the way you shuffle your feet, the way you make gestures with your hands and even in the way you look.

While selling door to door your words often say one thing and your non-verbal communication says another. For example, your words say, “We are the best pest control provider in the area, and with the discount I’m offering today, you won’t find a better service for a better price.” However, if you’re saying this while looking away, shuffling your feet or having timid facial expressions, there is no way the person will believe you. Poor non-verbal communication will result in you losing confidence in yourself and expecting to hear “no” at each door.
The following are examples of non-verbal communication:

**Body position** – standing with your shoulders squared up to a person’s door may give the impression of confrontation. Before a boxing match the two opponents stand toe to toe in the center of the ring and try to intimidate each other. You are not trying to sell by intimidation. Standing with your body turned slightly to the side in a relaxed manner appears more casual and you become easier to talk to.

**Eye contact** – there is no exact formula for how long you should maintain eye contact. A good rule of thumb is to hold a gaze for just a few seconds and then look away for about half that time. Winning a staring contest with your contact doesn’t mean they’ll sign up. On the other hand, avoiding eye contact shows a lack of confidence and will make you appear weak.

**Facial expressions** – never let potential customers see you look surprised. A confident sales rep will always have a smile unless the conversation turns serious. Even though your mind may be thinking about the next thing you’re going to say, always keep a smile on your face and show interest in what is being said to you. You will lose the sale if the potential customer thinks you’re not listening to them.

**Head nod** – when you want somebody to agree with you, shake your head up and down or back and forth. For example, “What your neighbors have liked so much about our group rate discount is you don’t have to sign up for two or three years (shaking your head back and forth). Instead, you can start with the 12 month service plan (nodding your head up and down) to see if you like the service. In fact, that’s what most of your neighbors have been choosing.”

**Hand movement** – using your hands effectively will take attention off of your face and make what you are saying more interesting. Move your hands as if they are pests while explaining how they move into a house. When talking about an egg sac hatching, hold your hand in a fist and open all your fingers outward as if the egg sac had just opened right in front of them. Also, use your hands to point out neighbors’ homes that are being serviced, how the B&G works, and when explaining how the technician will eliminate a spider web from their eaves.

**Mirroring** – this means to reflect the actions and illustrations of the person you are trying to sell. If the potential customer is leaning against their doorway, you should lean adjacent to them on the other side of the doorway. If they fold their arms, fold yours. Mirroring gives people the impression you are on the same page with them and will also help you gain their trust. Mirroring works both ways too. If a potential customer starts mirroring what you are doing, you are winning them over. Head nodding is a great example of mirroring.
Appearance – always look professional. If you have unkempt hair, an untucked shirt, distracting jewelry or tattoos, people will be less likely to trust what you are telling them. Over the years, successful sales reps have made it a point to look as professional as possible. Some reps have fastened flash lights, mirrors and other gadgets to their belt. Others comb their hair with a part knowing it’s alright to look “nerdy.” You’ll be surprised how the way you look can either help or hinder your sales production. As a side note, when attending work meetings, wear your knocking attire. Be prepared to start knocking doors the minute you leave the meeting.

Using pictures – sometimes it’s a lot easier to show somebody something than it is to try and explain it. If you have pictures or video of technicians performing services or other helpful information, be sure to show them to potential customers. You may also want to have pictures of common pests available. Pictures bring pests to life and make it easier for the potential customer to identify them.

Meta-verbal communication – how your voice sounds coming out of your mouth is another way you send messages when you speak. Meta-verbal communication includes voice characteristics such as volume, speed and pitch.

Volume – make sure to adjust the volume of your voice throughout the conversation. Speaking in a monotone voice will only bore the potential customer. Speaking too loudly will come off as a stereotypical salesperson. Alternate the volume of your voice to keep what you’re saying interesting and to emphasize certain points.

Speed – the stereotypical salesperson who speaks loudly also speaks very quickly. Don’t be in a rush to tell every person you talk to everything you know about what you are selling. Speaking at an even pace will allow you to think before you speak. Also remember that silence isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Pauses in your conversation will incite action from potential customers. Pauses will force them to make a decision and indicate when it’s time for them to respond. For example, “What type of pest activity do you normally notice in the summer (pause)?” Or, “Of those two times available, which one would work out best for you (pause)?” Pausing tells potential customers you aren’t afraid of your message and you’re not in a big hurry to make the sale and leave.

Pitch – the pitch of the words coming out of your mouth will draw an image in the mind of the potential customer. Without changing the words, say aloud the sentence, “What are you doing?” Use the pitch of your voice to communicate happiness, anger, sadness, etc. By altering the pitch of your voice you can say the same words with completely different meanings. In sales, you need to use the pitch of your voice to communicate you are confident and dependable. A common mistake many sales reps make is singing their approach. This means their voice starts low and ends on a high note at the conclusion of each sentence. This type of pitch is consistent with the pitch used to ask a question. Singing your approach tells the contact you are questioning yourself and aren’t knowledgeable or confident in what you are selling.
Verbal communication – this includes vocabulary, ownership and filler words.

**Vocabulary** – there are certain words you need to avoid when talking with potential customers. These words include: selling, signing up, contract, chemical and problem. First of all, people don’t like admitting they are being sold. If somebody asks you, “What are you selling?” you could say, “Actually we’re just letting everybody know that a few of your neighbors are having us service their homes and we’ve got room for a couple others that we are going to offer at half price.” People generally don’t like signing up for things either. Saying you are signing up the neighborhood can come across negatively. Substitutes for the words ‘selling’ and ‘signing up’ could be ‘setting up’ or ‘servicing.’

Most people will avoid contracts at all costs. Use the term ‘service agreement’ in place of contract. However, if a person asks if what they are signing is a contract, you’ll have to explain that it is, but remind them of any service guarantees offered. Service guarantees can help ease their concern with the obligation of the service agreement.

A substitute for the word ‘chemical’ is ‘product.’ The word chemical conjures up images of skulls and crossbones. If a potential customer feels threatened by the service the sale will be lost.

Finally, nobody likes to admit they have a problem. If you say, “Some of your neighbors are having problems with ants,” you will lose the sale immediately if that person doesn’t view their ant activity as a problem. Cut out the word ‘problem’ altogether and start using substitute words such as ‘situation’ or ‘issue.’

**Ownership** – once you put on the company shirt you are an official member of the team. Avoid using the words, ‘their’ and ‘they’ when speaking about the company you represent. You should always take ownership by using ‘we,’ ‘me,’ and ‘I.’ Speaking in this manner will reflect confidence to those you are trying to sell. For example, “…what they do is come in your house and they treat around the…” As opposed to, “…my technician will make sure to treat all of the…”

**Filler words** – words such as ‘um,’ ‘like,’ ‘but,’ and ‘cool,’ are commonly used as filler words. These words communicate nervousness and uncertainty in what you are saying. Filler words are typically used by sales reps that are afraid of silence or are talking too fast. You will sound more professional by eliminating filler words from your vocabulary.