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ON SALES

# TALK AIN'T CHEAP

When you talk too much during a sales presentation, you pay a major price. / BY SHANE DECKER

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE? Find a friend, not a client.

One of the biggest problems I'm seeing recently is that there's too much talking to clients and not enough *listening*. In fact, I see a lot of salespeople talk right past the close!

When it comes to selling anything — but jewelry in particular — the presentation should be all about your customer. Your job is to romance the item and the reason they came in to buy. When you talk too much or you tell clients about your problems, that's a sale killer. On the other hand, the more you get clients to talk, the higher the closing ratio, and the more loyal they will be to you in the future.

Some salespeople think that by talking more, they can control the sale — but it's actually just the opposite. When you ask relationship-specific (about them) and selling-specific (about the item) questions, you control the conversation. You find out what they're celebrating and exactly what it is they want.

Equally as important, by making the conversation about your clients, you make them feel important. It builds trust in you — and the more

they trust you, the more they tell.

Meanwhile, you're gathering important information you can use later in your presentation to romance the item and the reason they're making the purchase. Heck, they will often talk *themselves* into the purchase, which makes it much easier for you to close the sale.

Listening allows you to think of your next move in your presentation. It also allows you to use the "ask, listen, paraphrase, close" technique. You also can ask the right questions to see if you'll need to use technical information (never volunteer this: it's a sale killer if they don't want it). When a client is speaking, never interrupt (also a sale killer).

Being world-class friendly makes the client feel that she's the most important person who has walked in all day. Listening shows that you respect her, you care about her and that she's important.

Believe me, everybody has "stuff" — leave your "stuff" at the door when you come in to work. During the time you're at work, make it about your clients, not yourself. After work, you can call

your friend to tell her about your life and about the amazing sales you made that day.

Listening is a powerful tool for all salespeople. The more information you gather, the easier it is to close. Happy selling!

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