

THE CUSTOMER GUIDE MANIFESTO

Why Sales Has to Move Beyond Pressure, Scripts, and Closing Techniques

SELLING UNDERSTOOD

Read the moment. Protect the trust. Guide with clarity.

A founder manifesto from Selling Understood

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A Note From the Founder

I did not build Selling Understood because I thought the sales industry needed another script.

It has enough scripts.

It has enough closing techniques.

It has enough ways to handle objections.

What I think sales needs now is a better understanding of what our value is supposed to be.

Because the customer has changed.

Before they ever talk to us, a lot of customers have already done their homework.

They have searched online, read reviews, compared products, watched videos, looked at competitors, and now they have AI helping them research too.

Depending on the industry, they may walk into the conversation already knowing the specifications, the price range, the alternatives, and the questions they want answered.

Sometimes they may even know more about a particular product than the salesperson standing in front of them.

If the customer can already get the information, why do they still need us?

I do not think the answer is simply product knowledge anymore.

Product knowledge still matters. A lot.

You need to know what you are selling. You need to understand your industry. You need to be able to answer questions accurately and explain the differences between options.

But knowing the product is no longer enough by itself.

The customer can get information almost anywhere.

What they cannot always get is clarity.

They may know ten different options and still not know which one actually makes sense for them.

They may have read hundreds of reviews and still be afraid of making the wrong decision. They may understand every feature and still not know which features actually matter to their situation.

That is where I believe the salesperson becomes more important, not less.

But our role has to change.

We are no longer valuable simply because we know something the customer does not.

We are valuable when we can help the customer make sense of what they already know.

We can help them separate what matters from what does not. We can explain the tradeoffs. We can recognize when they are confused, hesitant, overwhelmed, interested, or ready.

Sometimes we can ask the question that helps them realize what they actually care about.

That is guidance.

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And there is another part of this that matters just as much.

The customer is not only deciding what to buy.

They are also deciding who they trust to help them make that decision.

That happens whether we acknowledge it or not.

They are deciding whether we are actually listening, whether we understand what matters to them, and whether our recommendation is based on their situation or simply on what we wanted to sell.

They are deciding whether we would tell them the truth even if the truth does not create the quickest sale.

That decision matters.

Product knowledge can give you credibility. But trust is what gives your recommendation weight.

I have seen customers buy from one person when they could have bought the exact same thing somewhere else. Sometimes the product was the same. Sometimes the price was close.

What changed was the person guiding the decision.

The customer believed them.

They trusted the way the conversation was handled.

They felt understood.

That does not mean the salesperson manipulated them into liking them. And it is bigger than the old idea that people simply buy from people they like.

A customer can like you and still not trust your recommendation.

Trust has to be earned.

It is earned when you listen. When you remember what they told you. When you respect the research they have already done. When you are willing to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out," instead of pretending.

It is earned when you explain why something does or does not make sense for them, and when you do not make them defend their budget, their timeline, their hesitation, or their right to think.

When a customer trusts you enough to move forward with you, they are not just choosing a product.

They are choosing the person they believe can guide them through the decision.

That is a responsibility.

And I think too much sales training has focused on what happens at the end of the conversation without spending enough time on what earns that responsibility in the first place.

How do you become the person the customer trusts?

How do you understand what is actually driving the decision?

How do you recognize what the customer is telling you without forcing everything into a script?

How do you know when to lead and when to slow down?

How do you make a recommendation without taking control of the decision away from the person making it?

Those questions became the foundation of Selling Understood.

The idea behind it is simple:

Customers do not want to feel sold. They want to feel understood.

That does not mean salespeople should become passive.

It does not mean we stop recommending.

It does not mean we stop closing.

And it definitely does not mean product knowledge is no longer important.

It means those things have to come from understanding the customer first.

A recommendation should mean more because the customer knows where it came from.

The next step should make sense because the conversation earned it.

The close should feel like the natural result of clarity, not the moment where pressure suddenly increases.

That is the difference I am trying to build around.

I call that person a Customer Guide.

A Customer Guide still sells.

They still lead.

They still use expertise.

But they understand that their value is not simply knowing more than the customer.

Their value is helping the customer understand what matters, make sense of what they know, and feel confident in the direction they choose.

That is where I believe sales is going.

And I think the sales professionals who understand that will become more valuable as customers become more informed, not less.

Because information is everywhere now.

Trust, judgment, understanding, and real guidance are not.

That is why I built Selling Understood.

Sales Has a Trust Problem

The customer has more information than ever.

But I do not think that means they trust salespeople more.

If anything, a lot of customers are walking into sales conversations more prepared and more skeptical at the same time.

And when you think about it, that makes sense.

They have already seen the ads. They have read the reviews. They have looked at prices and compared competitors. They may have watched ten videos and asked AI twenty questions before they ever talk to us.

So they are not walking in waiting for the salesperson to tell them everything anymore.

A lot of them already know quite a bit.

What they do not know yet is whether they can trust the person standing in front of them.

That is a different problem.

The customer is not only asking:

“Is this the right product?”

They are also trying to figure out:

“Why are you recommending this to me?”

Is it really because it fits what I need?

Did you actually listen?

Would you tell me if the less expensive option made more sense?

Or are we already headed toward whatever you wanted to sell me before I walked in?

That is where trust starts to matter.

And I do not think you build trust by telling somebody you are trustworthy.

You build it in all the little things that happen during the conversation.

A customer tells you something important. Do you remember it later?

They hesitate. Do you notice, or do you keep going?

They ask a direct question. Do you answer it, or use the question as another opening for your pitch?

They tell you something is not important to them. Does your recommendation actually change?

That is the stuff customers pay attention to.

Maybe not consciously every single time, but they feel it.

I have always believed customers can tell when you are really listening and when you are just waiting for your turn to talk.

They notice when your energy changes after they mention their budget.

They notice when suddenly everything gets more serious because they said they might buy today.

And they notice when every road somehow leads back to the option you wanted them to choose in the first place.

That is why having the right words is not enough.

You can say all the right things and still make somebody uncomfortable.

Trust is not really in the words.

It is in what you do with what the customer gives you.

Knowing More Does Not Automatically Make Someone Trust You

Product knowledge matters.

I would never tell a sales professional otherwise.

But being knowledgeable and being trustworthy are two different things.

You can know more than anyone in the room and still make the customer feel like you are using that knowledge to push them somewhere.

The customer should feel like your expertise is helping them understand the decision, not like you are using everything you know to win an argument.

Sometimes the most credible thing you can say is:

“I don't think you need that.”

“The less expensive option probably makes more sense based on what you told me.”

“I'm not sure. Let me find that out instead of guessing.”

Those moments may not look like traditional selling.

But they tell the customer something important.

Your recommendation can be trusted.

And once that happens, the advice you give later carries more weight.

Not because you became more persuasive.

Because you became more believable.

Sometimes We Create the Resistance

This is one of the parts of sales I think we need to be more willing to look at.

A customer comes in interested.

Then somewhere during the conversation they start pulling back.

Now we hear:

“I need to think about it.”

“I want to look around.”

“I need to talk to my wife.”

“I’m not ready yet.”

Sometimes that is exactly what is happening.

People really do need time. They really do compare. They really do need another person involved.

But there are also times when the customer is really saying:

“I need some space from this conversation.”

If we created the pressure and then treat their response to that pressure as another objection that needs to be overcome, we are making the problem worse.

Instead of automatically reaching for another technique, it is worth asking what happened right before the hesitation showed up.

Did we move too fast?

Did we assume something?

Did we recommend too early?

Did the customer give us a signal we missed?

That is not about blaming the salesperson.

It is about being good enough at this job to recognize that we affect the conversation too.

Trust Does Not Mean the Customer Says Yes

This matters.

If the only proof that a customer trusted you is that they bought something, then we are measuring trust by the outcome we wanted.

That is not trust.

A customer can trust you and still decide not to buy. They can want to come back tomorrow. They can choose the less expensive option. They can realize that what you sell is not actually right for them.

Sometimes the thing that earns the most trust is being willing to tell them that.

The job is not to make every customer give us the answer we want.

The job is to become somebody whose guidance means something when we give it.

When a customer believes you understand what they are trying to accomplish, the conversation changes.

They start telling you more.

They ask questions they might not have asked before.

And when you finally make a recommendation, they are more willing to hear it.

Not because you figured out how to lower their defenses.

It is because you gave them fewer reasons to need those defenses in the first place.

The Customer Should Not Have to Defend Themselves From Us

This is one of the things that has bothered me about sales for a long time.

A customer walks in asking for help.

Then somewhere during the conversation, they start defending everything.

Their budget.

Their timeline.

Their hesitation.

Their preferences.

Why they do not want the more expensive option.

Why they want to think.

Why they are not ready yet.

At some point I started asking myself:

How did the person who came in asking for help end up feeling like they had to protect themselves from the person helping them?

That should bother us.

Because I do not think most sales professionals are trying to make customers feel that way.

Usually they are trying to do their job.

The problem is that what feels like progress to us can sometimes feel like pressure to them.

And the customer usually will not stop the conversation and explain that.

They just start protecting themselves.

We Can Turn Normal Customer Behavior Into an Objection

A customer says:

“I want to stay around \$5,000.”

Maybe that is a hard budget.

Maybe it is simply where they feel comfortable starting.

Maybe they would spend more if there were a real reason.

Maybe they would not.

We do not know yet.

That is exactly why our first instinct should not be:

| How do I get them above that number?

The same thing happens with timing.

“I’m not ready to decide today.”

Now we start thinking about how to keep them from leaving.

Or they tell us they do not think they need something, and suddenly we are explaining why they actually do.

The customer gave us information about how they are thinking.

If we immediately treat that information as something standing between us and the sale, normal customer behavior starts becoming an objection.

Once we label it that way, our mindset changes.

Now we have something to overcome.

But what if the customer was simply telling us the truth?

There are absolutely times when it makes sense to challenge a budget, a preference, or an assumption.

But if I am going to challenge what a customer came in thinking, they should understand exactly why.

It should connect back to something they told me.

Otherwise I am not guiding them.

I am just trying to move them.

“I Need to Think About It” Is Not Always the Problem

I think this phrase has been treated like an enemy in sales for years.

Before we start thinking about how to isolate the objection or keep the customer moving, there is a more useful question:

| What do they actually need to think about?

Maybe they are still unsure about the product.

Maybe they do not understand the difference between two options.

Maybe the price still does not feel right.

Maybe somebody else matters to the decision.

Maybe they do not trust the direction yet.

And sometimes they really do just need time.

Those are not the same situations.

If we respond to all of them with the same technique, we are not reading the customer.

We are reacting to a phrase.

Not every sale that does not happen is the salesperson's fault. Some customers are going to need time no matter how good the conversation is. Some are indecisive. Some have unrealistic expectations. Some simply are not going to buy.

We cannot control that.

But we are responsible for how we affect the environment in which they make the decision.

That is the part we should be willing to look at.

The Customer Should Not Have to Fight to Keep Control

Most people do not want to leave thinking:

“I knew I was not comfortable, but I let somebody else talk me into it.”

Even if the product is good.

Even if the salesperson was technically right.

A strong salesperson should be able to lead without taking the decision away from the person who has to live with it.

There are times to challenge somebody's thinking. There are times to recommend something they had not considered. There are times to tell a customer that the option they came in asking for may not actually be the best fit.

But the customer should understand where that recommendation came from.

They should be able to connect it back to something they told us.

That is what makes guidance feel different from pressure.

Customers Should Feel Comfortable Telling Us the Truth

One of the simplest ways to judge the health of a sales conversation is to ask:

As the conversation goes on, is the customer becoming more honest with you?

Or more guarded?

Can they comfortably say:

“That's too much.”

“I don't like that.”

“I'm not sure.”

“That doesn't make sense to me.”

“I need more time.”

If they can say those things without feeling like they just triggered another sales technique, that is a good sign.

You cannot guide somebody very well if they feel like every honest answer is going to become something you try to overcome.

Trust grows when the customer sees that you listened, remembered what they told you, adjusted when something changed, and did not turn every hesitation into another argument.

The Goal Is Not to Get Their Guard Down

I do not want sales professionals thinking:

| **How do I get the customer's guard down?**

The customer has every right to protect themselves.

Our job is to give them fewer reasons to feel like they need to.

There is a difference.

Sometimes the resistance is the customer.

Sometimes it is the situation.

And sometimes it is us.

The better we become at recognizing the difference, the better we become at actually helping.

There is one person in the conversation with the expertise.

There is another person who has to live with the decision.

| **Our job is to never forget which one is which.**

The Salesperson Is Not the Hero

I think sales gets into trouble when the salesperson starts seeing themselves as the person who has to make the decision happen.

That sounds small, but it changes the way we handle the whole conversation.

Now we are thinking about how to move the customer, how to get past the hesitation, how to keep the sale going, and how to get them across the finish line.

Before long, the customer stops being the person making the decision and becomes the person we are trying to move.

I do not think that is our role.

The customer is the one who has to live with the decision.

They are spending the money.

They are using the product.

They are the one who has to feel good about what happens after the conversation is over.

So yes, we should influence the decision.

That is part of selling.

But influencing the decision is not the same thing as taking ownership of it.

That distinction matters.

A Customer Guide Still Leads

Selling Understood is not passive selling.

A Customer Guide should still lead.

Sometimes that means asking the harder question.

Sometimes it means pointing out something the customer has not considered.

Sometimes it means telling them that the option they came in wanting may not actually fit what they told you.

You should explain the tradeoffs.

You should make recommendations.

And if you think the customer is about to make a decision they may regret, I think you should be willing to say so.

But the reason behind the recommendation should be clear.

The customer should be able to see how you got there.

There is a difference between:

■ **“I know what you should do.”**

and:

“Based on what you told me, this is why I think this direction makes more sense.”

You are still leading.

You are just not taking the decision away from them.

We Do Not Need to Win Every Moment

Sometimes sales gets treated like a contest.

The customer gives an objection.

We answer it.

They hesitate.

We handle it.

They push back.

We have another response.

Eventually somebody is supposed to win.

I have never liked looking at the conversation that way.

If I prove the customer wrong but they trust me less afterward, what did I really accomplish?

Getting the yes does not automatically mean I guided the decision well.

The customer can agree with you and still leave unsure. They can buy and still wonder whether they moved too fast. They can say yes because they wanted the conversation to be over.

That is not the standard I want.

Sometimes the better move is admitting the customer may have a point.

Other times it is saying:

“I actually think the other option fits what you told me better.”

And every once in a while, the most useful thing you can say is:

“I do not think you need this.”

Those moments matter because they show the customer you are not trying to win every exchange.

You are trying to help them get to the right answer.

The Decision Should Become Clearer as We Go

The best sales conversations do not feel like somebody is being dragged toward an answer.

The customer becomes clearer as the conversation goes on.

The things that felt confusing at the beginning start making more sense.

Eventually the next step feels reasonable.

That is the kind of movement I want to see.

Not movement because we increased the pressure.

Movement because the customer has enough clarity to move.

This Is What I Mean by Customer Guide

A Customer Guide is not someone who stands there and agrees with everything the customer says.

They bring expertise, judgment, and structure into the conversation.

They help the customer see what matters.

They slow things down when something is being rushed and move things forward when the decision is actually clear enough to do so.

They are willing to challenge.

They are willing to recommend.

They are willing to tell the customer the truth when something does not fit.

And when the customer is ready, they help them take the next step with confidence.

That is still leadership.

The salesperson absolutely affects the decision.

We should.

That is part of why we are there.

But the customer is still the one who has to own that decision when they walk away.

Our job is not to make the decision for them. Our job is to help them make it well.

From Salesperson to Customer Guide

If the customer has changed, then our role has to change with them.

That does not mean we stop selling.

It means we have to get clearer about what makes us valuable now.

A customer can know a lot and still not know what matters.

They can compare ten options and still feel unsure.

They can understand every feature and still not know which one actually fits their situation.

That is where the salesperson still matters.

Not because we automatically know more.

Because we can help the customer make sense of what they know.

Information Is Not the Same as Clarity

I have seen customers come into a conversation with plenty of information and still feel stuck.

Sometimes the problem is not that they need another answer.

They already have too many.

The salesperson can make that worse without realizing it.

We know the product, so we keep giving them more information.

Another option.

Another feature.

Another comparison.

We think we are being helpful.

But there is a point where more information stops helping the customer decide and just gives them more to sort through.

A Customer Guide has to recognize that.

Sometimes the most useful thing you can do is help the customer narrow the decision down.

Maybe that sounds like:

“Based on what you have told me so far, I think there are really two things that matter here.”

That is not taking information away from them.

It is helping them understand which information actually matters to their decision.

Understanding Has to Come Before Direction

Experience makes it easy to recognize familiar situations.

That can be a huge advantage.

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It can also get you in trouble.

I have caught myself doing it.

You hear something you have heard a hundred times before and think you already know where the conversation is going.

But this customer is not the last hundred customers.

The situation may look familiar and still mean something completely different to them.

That is where experience has to help us ask better questions instead of giving us permission to assume.

A salesperson can start with what they know about the product.

A Customer Guide also has to start with what they still need to understand about the person.

That is the difference.

Hearing the Words Is Not Always Understanding the Customer

A customer says:

“I want something simple.”

What does simple mean?

Less expensive?

Less maintenance?

Less complicated?

Easy to use?

Something they will not have to think about again?

Customers use words like quality, value, comfortable, reliable, and affordable all the time.

We hear the word and think we understand it.

Sometimes we do.

Sometimes we are putting our own definition on it.

That is why one good follow-up question can matter so much.

Not because a training told you to ask another question.

Because you actually need to understand what the customer meant before you can give them useful direction.

That is what discovery should be.

Not an interrogation.

Just enough understanding that the recommendation has a real reason behind it.

Experience Should Make Us More Curious, Not Less

The more experience you have, the faster you recognize what looks familiar.

That is useful.

But if we are not careful, we stop being curious.
We start finishing the customer's sentence in our own head.
We decide what the problem is before they finish explaining it.
We already know what we are going to recommend.
And sometimes we are right.
But being right often enough can make us comfortable assuming.
That is where we can miss the person standing in front of us.
Experience should help us notice more.
It should not make us ask less.

A Customer Guide Does Not Have to Pretend to Know Everything

Customers can verify almost anything now.
If they have spent weeks researching one specific product, they may know some detail you have never come across.
That does not threaten your value.
Pretending you know something when you do not does.
I would much rather hear a salesperson say:

“I have not come across that before. Let me check it instead of guessing.”

There is nothing weak about that.
The customer does not need us to know every fact on earth.
They need to believe the information we give them is honest.

Our Time With the Customer Has to Matter

A customer can research before they meet us.
They can compare prices, read reviews, and talk through the decision with AI.
So if they choose to spend time with a salesperson, that time should give them something worthwhile.
They should leave the conversation clearer than when they entered it.
Maybe they understand which option fits better. Maybe they understand why something they thought mattered actually does not. Maybe they discover something important they had not considered.
Maybe they decide not to buy yet.
That can still be a useful conversation.
Because our value should not be measured only by how much information we gave them or how quickly we got to the close.
It should also show up in whether we helped them understand the decision better.

That is what I mean by moving from salesperson to Customer Guide.

You still bring the product knowledge.

You still bring experience.

You still recommend.

You still influence the decision.

But now all of that is built on something first:

| understanding who you are actually guiding.

The Four Pillars

The more I thought about the conversations that went well—and the ones that did not—I kept coming back to the same things.

Did we connect with the person?

Did we actually learn what mattered to them?

Did we notice what was changing during the conversation?

And did we help them work through what still did not feel settled?

That became:

Relate. Reveal. Read. Resolve.

Those are the Four Pillars of Selling Understood.

I do not think of them as steps.

That would make the whole thing too mechanical.

Real conversations do not move in a straight line.

Trust can go up and down. Something new can come out late in the conversation. A customer can look ready one minute and unsure the next.

You may need to Relate again after something changes.

You may Reveal something important after you thought you already understood the situation.

You may Read a signal that changes where the conversation needs to go.

The Four Pillars are not a sequence.

They are four things I want the salesperson paying attention to throughout the conversation.

Relate

Relate is about creating the conditions for a real conversation.

That does not mean fake rapport.

It does not mean trying to make the customer like you.

It means being present enough that the customer feels like they are actually talking to somebody who is listening.

Somebody who is not rushing to prove what they know or trying to steer the conversation before they understand it.

You do not need deep trust in the first few minutes.

But you do need enough comfort that the customer is willing to engage honestly.

That is where Relate starts.

Reveal

Reveal is where we start understanding what is actually driving the decision.

What the customer asks for and what actually matters to them are not always exactly the same thing.

That does not mean they are hiding something.

Sometimes they simply have not thought it through yet.

That is where curiosity matters.

Not twenty questions.

Not an interrogation.

Just enough genuine interest to understand what the customer really means before we start giving direction.

Read

This is the part I think gets missed all the time.

Customers tell us a lot without directly saying it.

Their pace changes.

They get quieter.

They keep coming back to the same concern.

They ask the same question again in a different way.

They start engaging more when something finally makes sense, or they begin pulling back when we move too fast.

Reading the customer means noticing those things while the conversation is happening.

And then doing something with what you noticed.

If the customer is pulling away and we keep going exactly the same way, we did not really read anything.

Read is not just noticing.

It is adjusting.

Resolve

Resolve is about helping the customer work through what still does not feel settled.

Sometimes that is price.

Sometimes it is uncertainty.

Sometimes there are too many options.

Sometimes another person needs to be involved.

Sometimes the customer just needs a little more clarity.

And sometimes the most honest resolution is realizing they are not ready yet.

That is okay.

Resolve is not about removing an objection so we can get to the close.

It is about helping the customer understand what is still unresolved and what, if anything, makes sense to do next.

Sometimes that ends in a sale.

Sometimes it does not.

I am comfortable with that.

Because the goal is not to manufacture a yes.

The goal is to help the customer make a decision they understand and can live with.

Why These Four Matter

I did not want Selling Understood to become another system where the salesperson is trying to remember what line comes next.

That is not how people work.

The Four Pillars are there to keep us grounded in what is actually happening.

Are we connected?

Do we really understand what matters?

Are we paying attention to the person in front of us?

Have we helped them get clear on what still feels unsettled?

That is the structure.

Simple enough to remember.

Flexible enough to use with a real person.

And that was the point.

What Good Sales Leadership Feels Like

I think one of the easiest mistakes to make in sales is assuming leadership means having the strongest opinion in the room.

I do not think it does.

A customer can feel when somebody is confident.

They can also feel when that confidence starts turning into control.

There is a difference between saying:

“Based on what you told me, I think this is the better direction.”

and making the customer feel like they now have to agree with you.

Good sales leadership should make the decision clearer.

That is the part I care about most.

Confidence Should Help the Customer Think Better

A salesperson should have confidence.

You should know your product and be willing to make a recommendation.

But confidence should not become the reason the customer stops trusting their own judgment.

There is a kind of sales confidence that sounds impressive from the outside.

The salesperson has an answer for everything. They are certain. They know exactly what the customer should do.

And sometimes that works.

But sometimes it leaves the customer with less room to think for themselves.

I would rather the customer understand why the recommendation makes sense than simply be impressed by how certain I sound.

That feels like a better use of confidence.

Knowing When to Stop Matters Too

This may be harder than knowing when to speak.

There are times when the customer has enough information.

They understand the options.

They understand your recommendation.

And now they need a minute.

That silence can make salespeople uncomfortable.

We want to fill it.

We explain one more thing. We reassure them again. We bring up another reason because we are afraid the sale might be slipping away.

Sometimes that extra push is exactly what changes the feeling of the conversation.

A Customer Guide has to be comfortable enough to leave room when the customer is actually thinking.

Not because we have given up.

Because they may finally be doing the thing we have been trying to help them do the entire time.

Making the decision.

That takes confidence too.

The Customer Should Leave More Confident, Not More Dependent

This is a big one for me.

I do not think great sales should leave the customer thinking:

| **“I hope that salesperson was right.”**

I would rather they leave thinking:

| **“I understand why I made this decision.”**

If we did our job well, the customer should understand the choice better than they did when the conversation started.

They should be able to make sense of the tradeoffs and explain to themselves why the decision felt right.

They should not need us standing next to them afterward to keep reassuring them.

That does not make the salesperson less important.

I think it proves the opposite.

You were useful enough to help the customer become more confident in their own judgment.

That is stronger than simply getting them to rely on yours.

Sometimes Leadership Means Saying Something the Sale Does Not Want to Hear

There are times when the right thing to say is:

| **“I do not think this is the right fit for you.”**

| **“I think you should wait.”**

| **“Based on what you told me, I would not recommend this.”**

That can be uncomfortable.

Especially when the sale is right there.

Sometimes doing that costs you the sale.

The customer may not come back.

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There may not be some perfect story later where they remember your integrity and send ten people to you.

Sometimes you simply lose the business.

I still think it matters.

Because if trust only matters when it helps us close, then it is not really trust.

There has to be a point where protecting the customer's decision matters more than protecting the immediate transaction.

That is part of the responsibility.

Good Leadership Should Make the Customer More Capable

The goal is not for the customer to walk away more impressed with us.

The goal is for them to walk away more capable of making the decision.

If they are ready, we should help them move.

If something still does not feel settled, we should help them understand what it is.

And if the decision is clear, ask for the business.

That is still sales.

The difference is that the movement comes from what is actually happening in the conversation, not from our need to force an ending.

The customer should know we are leading. They should be able to feel our experience and know we have an opinion.

But they should also know the decision is still theirs.

That is the kind of leadership I want Selling Understood to stand for.

What Selling Understood Believes

By this point, I do not think we need to keep explaining the philosophy.

This is the part where we just say what we stand for.

The customer owns the decision

We are there to help, influence, and recommend.

But the decision still belongs to the customer.

If they feel like they have to fight us to keep control of it, we have missed something.

Product knowledge matters. Understanding gives it direction.

You should know what you sell.

That is part of being good at the job.

But knowing the product does not automatically mean you know what makes sense for the person in front of you.

That part has to be learned from them.

Trust has to be earned through behavior

Customers do not trust us because we say the right things.

They decide whether to trust us by what actually happens in the conversation—whether we listened, remembered what mattered, told the truth, and gave recommendations that fit what they told us.

That is where trust comes from.

Pressure can create movement without creating confidence

I am not going to pretend pressure never works.

It can.

It can create urgency, action, and even a yes.

But a yes and a confident decision are not always the same thing.

That difference matters to me.

A recommendation should come from what we learned

A recommendation should not simply be:

“This is what I would buy.”

It should be closer to:

“Based on what you told me, this is why I think this direction makes sense.”

The customer should understand how we got there.

If they cannot connect the recommendation back to their own priorities, we probably moved too fast.

Listening should change the conversation

I do not think listening means waiting quietly until it is our turn to talk again.

If the customer tells us something important, it should affect what we do next.

If something changes, we should adjust.

If we hear the customer and continue exactly the same way anyway, I am not sure we really listened.

Honesty matters even when it costs the sale

Sometimes the right thing to say is:

“I do not think you need this.”

“I think you should wait.”

“The less expensive option probably makes more sense for you.”

Sometimes that costs the sale.

There may not be a reward for it later.

I still think it is the right thing to do.

If honesty only matters when it helps us close, then it does not mean very much.

The customer should leave more confident in their own decision

This may be the one that matters most to me.

I do not want the customer leaving thinking:

“I hope that salesperson was right.”

I would rather they leave thinking:

“I understand why I made this decision.”

The customer is changing.

The tools are changing.

The information available to them is changing.

That does not make sales less important.

It raises the standard for what we bring to the conversation.

If a customer chooses to spend time with us, that interaction should be worth having.

They should leave clearer than when they started.

And if they decide to buy from us, I want it to be because they trusted the way we helped them get there. That is what Selling Understood believes.

A Different Standard for Sales

I do not think sales is disappearing.

I think the standard is changing.

Customers have more information, more options, and more ways to research before they ever speak to us.

That changes the value of the salesperson.

Knowing the product still matters.

Knowing your industry still matters.

Being able to explain what you sell still matters.

But those things are becoming the starting point.

The bigger question is what happens when another person is standing in front of us trying to make a decision.

Can we help them make sense of what they already know?

Can we recognize what actually matters to them?

Can we give useful direction without taking over?

Can we be honest when the answer does not benefit us?

That is where I think the standard is moving.

The Customer Does Not Need Another Trick

I have spent a lot of time thinking about why sales has the reputation it does.

I do not think customers dislike being helped.

Most people appreciate somebody who knows what they are talking about and can give them useful direction.

What they do not want is to feel managed.

They do not want every question to have an angle behind it. They do not want their hesitation treated like something that needs to be defeated. They do not want to feel like somebody is waiting for the right moment to use a technique on them.

The answer to that is not a better trick.

It is getting better at the conversation itself.

That is harder.

You cannot memorize your way through every customer.

You cannot predict exactly what somebody is going to say.

You cannot control how another person thinks.

So you have to pay attention, use judgment, and be willing to adjust.

Sometimes you also have to be comfortable saying:

“I do not know yet.”

I respect that a lot more than somebody who always has a line ready.

Experience Should Raise the Standard

The longer we do this work, the more responsibility I think we have.

Experience should not just make us faster.

It should make us better at recognizing what is happening.

It should help us know when a customer needs more information and when they already have enough.

It should help us know when to challenge and when to stop.

It should help us recognize the difference between a real customer concern and our own fear of losing the sale.

And it should make us more comfortable telling the truth.

That is the kind of experience I respect.

Not just somebody who has been selling for twenty years.

Somebody who has been paying attention for twenty years.

There is a difference.

The Numbers Still Matter

Selling Understood is still about sales.

Businesses need revenue.

Salespeople have goals.

Companies have targets.

Performance matters.

I understand that.

I do not think respecting the customer means pretending those things do not exist.

But how we get the result matters too.

A strong sales culture should not have to depend on pressure customers do not want.

And if the only way somebody knows how to move a customer forward is by controlling the conversation, then I think there is still room to get better at the job.

There may be times when doing the right thing costs the immediate sale.

That is real too.

I am not going to pretend trust and revenue always line up perfectly in every moment.

But if our numbers look good while customers consistently feel like they need to protect themselves from us, then the numbers do not tell the whole story.

The Choice Is Still Ours

Technology will keep changing.

AI will keep getting better.

Customers will keep becoming more informed.

I expect all of that.

But there is still a person on the other side of the conversation trying to figure out what makes sense for them.

And there is still a choice in front of us.

We can focus first on what we want from the customer.

Or we can understand what the customer needs from us.

That choice changes the way we listen, the questions we ask, the recommendations we make, and the way we handle hesitation.

It changes what the customer feels when the conversation is over.

Selling Understood was built around that choice.

Not because I think it sounds better.

Because after years of working with customers, I believe it is a better way to sell.

A way of selling where expertise still matters, results still matter, and leadership still matters—but none of those things require us to forget who actually has to live with the decision.

That is the standard I built Selling Understood around.

Customers do not want to feel sold. They want to feel understood.

SELLING UNDERSTOOD

Read the moment. Protect the trust. Guide with clarity.

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