A Great Competitive Response

The Trusted Advisor Sales Engineer

We’ve all been in that position when the customer directly asks you a question like “why should I buy from you?” or “why are you better than your competition?” It was certainly one of my favourite questions as a CIO and it still a question that I am asked today running the MTS business.

Typically responses fall into two categories. Either you get a “let me tell you why my competition is terrible and why you cannot trust them” or “let me tell you why we are so amazing and marvelous”. Think of politicians as a proof point for that! Although both answers can be effective depending on the circumstances- and I’d always prefer the positive to the negative – there is a third approach.

I’d like to think of this as the consultative / trusted advisor type approach that can be very effective in the hands of a knowledgeable and empathetic Sales Engineer. My suggestion is a response more like:

“Well, Mr. Customer – I’m not really an expert on my competition as I know my own product much better. What I can share with you are the top three or four reasons that my customers have told me why they choose to do business with us. Will that work for you?

“OK. So what my customers tell me is that (list of features-advantages-benefits that make you look good and aren’t so great for your competition). How do you feel about those items?”

Put that into your own natural words, adjust for local culture and make sure you have three or four really good items to share with the customer. The rest is up to you. The reason it is so effective is that you are referencing, even indirectly, what your customers think and not what you think.

“It is not your customer’s job to remember you. It is your obligation and responsibility to make sure they don’t have the chance to forget you”

Talking Points is a monthly column authored by John Care, Managing Director of Mastering Technical Sales. For more information about this and other Sales Engineering topics visit the website at www.masteringtechnicalsales.com.

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