



Wants vs. Needs

The words are often used interchangeably. However, in selling, customers/prospects talk about wants while **needs have to be uncovered**. It is not uncommon for customers to say (sometimes even during the original phone call) “I just want a price.” They might also state, “We’re getting several prices” with further implication of *sharpen your pencil*. Rapid/early pricing is a want, yet may be interpreted as needs by both buyer and seller.

Factually, the prospect needs in-depth information to make a decision which raises an even more thorny issue - - How the presentation of the seller can be couched in language that responds to the needs of the buyer. Frequently, sales language is loaded with phrases, implications and statements which are self-serving, and the prospect and salesperson have two completely different agendas. The buyer may be intent on protecting themselves against practices which they believe will induce them to make unwise decisions, while the seller is trying to ensure that their product and service is the one of choice within several options – including taking no action at all.

Statements about, or objections to, “a price” are prime examples of misinterpretation. **While a salesperson may believe they have lost a sale because of price, it is most frequently about value perception** -- which is an essential need for the prospect.

When the prospect says, “make this brief” they imply they don’t want a long-winded explanation; however they do need complete information to make what is commonly known as an informed decision. This statement causes many salespeople to either shorten an otherwise information-laden sales message or to inject anecdotes and war stories, the intent of which is to build rapport and confidence but most frequently has the adverse effect.

Assume that you are selling a product that would benefit a homeowner - - often the prospect says things such as “We’re not going to live here that long, so we don’t need the highest quality.” The fact is that middle-class people or those without abundant wealth really do need exceptional quality to avoid excessive maintenance or early replacement. Again, a want expressed as a need.

Asking questions which leads to understanding the prospect's values creates the ability to actually gain insight into the prospect's needs no matter what industry you are in.

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