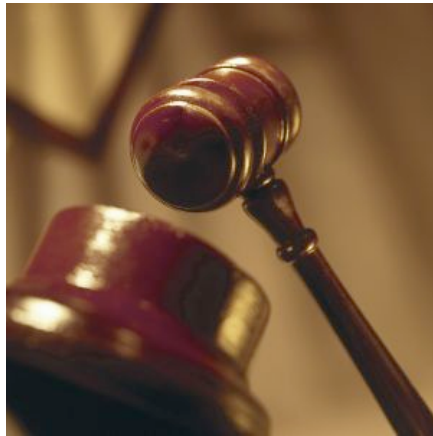


## **Objections Overruled?**

**By William Ho, Executive Coach & Trainer @ Progress-U Limited**



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### **Objections Overruled?**

You always wish that you (or someone from the great divine, like the judge) could just say "Overruled!" each time your customers object to your masterpiece-like proposal that you believe is the best that you could ever have done, when you have spent your precious time and super effort to prepare and present.

"Objections!" says your stone-faced and cold-hearted customer.

You respond, "Objections overruled!"

But then, does this really make you the winner while the customers become the losers?

Unfortunately, life does not always happen the way you want it to be. Moreover, in the business world, it is not a case where the winner takes all. Customers can simply walk away from you or any deal if they really think they would be the losers.

Let's be realistic here: why would you make a deal if you think you are the loser? Would you walk away as well if you were in that position? You probably would, and so should the customers, too!

The question becomes: what creates objections?

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Customers agree to purchase because they have a demand to fill, and they accept your offer because they trust what you are offering will best meet their demand and match their criteria. So, if they object, then there must be some legitimate reasons why the customer is uncertain: the uncertainty of whether or not what they are going to purchase actually will match their need and buying criteria.

If you were a “doctor of objections”, the best way to deal with any ‘disease’ would be by trying to prevent them. In other words, if you are clear about exactly what your customers want (their buying needs and decision criteria), then it should become natural that you can close the deal with your masterpiece-like proposal without any objection.

For instance, if you know that your product or service has a high price tag, face up to this early in your discussion. You know that you cannot avoid explaining as the customers are going to know anyway. Why is your price higher? Because your product or service is bigger and better? Can do what the competition can't do? If you don't know some good answers, then work some out even before you start the meeting with your potential customer.

Even if you are a doctor, you cannot always prevent your patients’ getting sick. So as a doctor you have to understand the meaning of the symptoms after you have done your diagnosis properly. The first and most important thing to do is to really get to the heart and soul of the objection.

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You might want to identify whether it is

- an objective objection: meaning it is a genuine objection
- a subjective objection: meaning the customers believe it is genuine but it isn't
- a tactics type of objection: meaning the customers know that it is not genuine but use it to improve their position
- a different meaning: meaning the customers actually meant something else

Each type of objection, like a sickness, has to be treated differently. Otherwise, you are simply giving the wrong prescription and you will do more harm than help. So, in order to know which is which, you need to ask some searching and coaching type of questions.

If it's a price objection, find out just what the prospect means. Is it outside the company budget? More than they can authorize? More than they expected? More than the competitor's? More than what they have paid before? Not matching with new purchasing policies? Or they actually simply want to get more discounts to justify their role as a professional buyer?

Questions such as "Compared with what?", "What exactly do you mean?", "What were you paying last time?" can help to get to the heart of the objection.

After you have clarified what the true meaning is behind the objection, you should NOT "overrule" the objection instantly even though you have the best objection against their objections, so to speak. The worse that could happen is that the customers feel that you are "overpowering" them. If you object, you'll almost certainly lose the sale.

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It is not that you should agree that they are right, but consider agreeing that there is a gap. Words such as "we can understand that", "we are glad that you raised this point" or "some of our best customers thought about that also" will avoid conflict and reduce the importance of the objection in the customers' mind.

Remember though that not all objections are real barriers to the purchase. Some objections are excuses not to buy. Even if you answer such an objection, you still would probably not get the business. So, before answering the objection, ask a test question: "If we can satisfy you on that issue, will you ...?" to get the customers' commitment to work with you.

Also, make sure that you get your customers' confirmation that the objections have been answered satisfactorily.

If you know the benefit of your product or service and understand your customers' needs, you should be able to answer any objection because you should have encountered them all before. And each time you hit a new brick wall, work out afterwards how you will be able to answer it better next time.

At the end of the day, there will be situations when the prospect really doesn't want your product and is never going to buy it (from you). Whose fault is that? It might be you who is to blame, because maybe you haven't done your homework first and made sure that you are only trying to match your customers' true needs.

Be prepared, because if you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail.

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William is a senior veteran in the business world, also helped to attract and confirm investors to set up overseas companies; and was involved in a few merger and acquisitions throughout his career. He earned his stripes through his practical experience in the actual market.

He is keen to help and coach companies to explore their own potential, understand their core competence, and ride through the adversity of the economy. He is especially interested in situation where companies have to deal with constant changes, new market developments, multicultural environments, fierce competitions, and leadership development, particularly in sales. His expertise lies in building and managing sales and marketing teams, key account management, tactical negotiation and closing deals, forming alliances and partnerships through training and coaching within the organization to develop a sales- and subsequently results-oriented culture.

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