

“Understanding Selling”

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“Understanding Selling” sounds like the title of a book you might have on your shelf, or the name of a class you have taken somewhere along the way in your professional sales career.

It is neither the book nor the class. This “Understanding Selling” is not about understanding the sales process. It is about having an understanding and knowledge of your product, but more important, it is about how you approach your customer first and foremost with the desire to understand their needs and wants. The focus is on the customer, not on the sale.

How much do we need to understand about what we are selling? Clearly, we need to know how our homes are built, the products that go into them, and what our Builder’s USP’s – Unique Special Points – are. To be a professional in the industry, we need to be in a continual learning mode about our homes, equally as much as our Builders are. We also need to be knowledgeable in all aspects of the community: the neighborhood, the schools, the civic organizations, the churches, the economic environment, the convenience of shops, restaurants, markets, health clubs, etc. This degree of knowledge will be the reassurance and peace of mind that the buyer is looking for. They will appreciate and respect your knowledge of product, its features and benefits, and the community. Their recognition and understanding of your competence will be one of the reasons they will “choose you”.

Now that we agree on the importance of product knowledge, let’s put the focus where it really belongs — on the customer. When you walk into your model, leave your sales goals and quotas at the door. You have a good, sound product, but before your customer can believe this, you need to understand your customer... this is “understanding” selling.

Imagine yourself in your customer’s shoes from the beginning of the model visit to the end; from the beginning of the sales process to the end. Take the time to learn what has brought them to your model. Ask sincere questions about what their needs and desires are, and be empathetic and understanding to each customer’s unique situation. Everyone is different and they have come to your model for a reason. When the customer knows that you understand them and have their best interest at heart (not just a sale), they will be ready to seriously listen while you tell them about your product.

How will they know you understand?

- You greet them with a sincere smile and let them know you are there to help them.
- You ask questions that will help you understand their situation. Your questions should be open-ended to get the most information you can. Yes or no questions to stimulate conversation.
- You have a dialogue with them, you don’t give them the same presentation you give to someone else. They will know a stock presentation because it is not taking their needs into consideration.

- You focus on finding the right product for them, not just making a sale. When you do talk about the product, you emphasize benefits. Customers want to know the features, but the benefits will help them decide that this is the right place for them. A family with 2 working adults, small children, and lots of running between jobs and activities will appreciate hearing the time-saving benefits that the low to no-maintenance siding will offer them or the attractive yet quick and easy to clean countertops and appliances. Maybe you learned Grandma comes to visit often, and the one level design will make it easier for her to get around. Know your product well so you can quickly personalize the benefits for each customer.

Selling is about understanding:

- who you are
- who they are
- what they need
- what you have

Learning “understanding” selling is developed over time. Asking questions and listening to the answers and understanding their needs will separate you from the competition. This process is a “skill set” that none of us should be without. Have you ever thought about how new you feel to a person who walks into your model? And yet with that feeling of uncharted waters, you begin a needs analysis of them immediately. Let’s back track a little and start the process of understanding selling, by sharing a little of ourselves first. HINT: It is much easier to open up to someone who has shared something of themselves with you first. Aren’t we all taught at a very young age, the importance of “sharing”? Let people know who you are, why you are there, so they will trust you and talk to you. That trust level will allow you to understand them, help them to make the best choice, and make them feel confident to choose you!

