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SalesInfluence

Response Block Selling



*A New Approach
for Lowering Buyer
Resistance and
Selling More!*

Victor Antonio, BSEE, MBA

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A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

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**A New Approach for
Lowering Buyer Resistance
& Selling More**

**By
Victor Antonio**

1st Edition

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Response Block Selling

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A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

Victor Antonio, Founder of Sales Influence

From food stamps and welfare to being the CEO of a high-tech company, Victor Antonio is proof that the American dream of success is alive and well. A poor upbringing in one of the roughest areas of Chicago didn't stop Victor from earning a BS in Electrical Engineering, then an MBA, and building a 20-year career as a top sales executive and manager.



Prior to being CEO, Victor was President of Global Sales and Marketing for a \$420M company and Vice President of International Sales for a Fortune 500 \$3B corporation. He was selected from over 500 sales managers to join the President's Advisory Council in 1999 and 2000 for excellence in sales and management.

He has conducted business in Europe, Asia, Australia, Latin America, the Caribbean, South Africa, and the Middle East.

Today, he trains salespeople to achieve quicker selling results with his program **Sales Influence**. Victor is a dynamic trainer who specializes in taking apart complex subject matter and breaking it down to simple, applicable, everyday strategies for sales success. His workshops are loaded with sales strategies backed by research in the field of consumer behavior.

A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

What makes this program different from others? **Sales Influence** isn't about "how to sell," but about "how people buy" and the thought processes that drive their decision-making behavior. When you understand how people buy, it's easier to sell to them. That's a new approach to selling!

For more information go to: www.SalesInfluence.com .

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A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

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Selling the Room

If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.

Sir Isaac Newton

A few years ago I received a call that would change the way I viewed selling from that day forward. The gentleman on the line was named Jason. He represented an Internet marketing company that sold software packages that allowed entrepreneurs or small business owners of any stripe the capability to build their own Web site. Jason called me because he wanted to see if I would be interested in being one of their consultants/trainers.

I asked Jason how he found me and he quickly replied with the obvious answer: the Internet. He noticed that my website, which I designed, ranked on the first page of the major search engines – which apparently demonstrated to him that I knew what I was doing. He also saw on my Web site videos of me speaking to large crowds so he knew I wasn't timid.

Jason asked if I would be willing to do some training for his company. I initially refused the offer, but he was persistent. He then suggested I go see one of their live workshops personally so I could see for myself how they

trained and sold their product from the front of the room. I agreed to fly to Tampa, Florida, where they were having their next event the next day.

That morning I arrived at 9 a.m. to the conference room , which was filled with almost 200 people. Before the training got started, the audience was introduced to the two packages that would be offered at the workshop. The startup package was listed at \$2,500 and the deluxe package at \$5,000. As I scanned the crowd, I suspected many wouldn't be able to afford the basic package, let alone the deluxe package at twice the price.

To my surprise, by the end of the workshop, they had sold almost 40% of the people in that room on either the single or deluxe package. To say the least, I was stunned. In many public seminars, if you can sell 10-20% of the room at these prices you are doing extremely well.

In a room of a hundred, let's assume 50 % purchased one of the two packages, which equates to 50 buying units (i.e., people who bought). Out of the 50, half bought the basic package and the other half purchased the deluxe package. All you have to do is run the numbers yourself to see how incredible this feat was:

Attendees: 100

Buying Units: 50

Basic Package: 25 buying units multiplied by \$2,500

Deluxe Package: 25 buying units multiplied by \$5,000

*Total Revenue = \$62,500 + \$125,000 = **\$187,500***

At the end of the event, Jason asked me my opinion and asked again if I would be interested in being one of their

trainers. The answer to the question should come as no surprise; I said yes. I asked Jason if that was a typical day. He said it was a 'decent' day. He said they have days where they're in the low 20s and have had days in the high 50s in terms of percent of the room closed. He began to describe for me the many different dynamics that go into selling the room (i.e., getting people to buy) and that as a trainer, one of the side benefits would be that I would learn many of these subtle techniques. And he was right; I did learn quite a bit working with this company.

Several Months Later

As a trainer, I conducted workshops throughout the U.S. and the same packages were being offered for purchase. I had learned the presentation and how to demonstrate Internet marketing techniques used by the best to get Web pages ranked on the first page of the search engines. Yet the sales were lingering in the low 20s and once in a while scraping the low 30s. Not bad, I thought to myself, but far from the company's minimum requirement of 35%. I didn't know what else to do to get my numbers higher.

It was then that I turned to Clint, the company's guru on presenting and training, for advice. I asked him to come see me do the training so he could offer me some advice on where I could improve. He agreed and two weeks later he was in the back of the room at 9 a.m. taking notes on everything I was doing and saying. I remember glancing toward the back once in a while and to my dismay saw him feverishly taking notes. I thought to myself, 'What did I do wrong?'

His constant note-taking made me paranoid and caused me to lose my place a few times during the presentation. I

finally settled in by deciding not to look where he was sitting and concentrated on getting through the presentation as if he weren't there.

At the lunch break he approached me and said we needed to talk. In my opinion it's never a good sign when someone starts a conversation that way. Here's a loose re-enactment of how the conversation went:

Me: (Nervously) Well, what did you think?

Clint: Well, not bad, but I think I know what your problem is.

Me: What is it?

Clint: You're not making the people feel comfortable with the software.

Me: What do you mean? Am I going to fast? Not demonstrating it correctly?

Clint: No your speed is fine and the demonstrations are good.

Me: Then what is it?

Clint: They don't believe they can do it for themselves.

Me: What do you mean? You just said my speed and demonstrations were fine.

Clint: Whoa. Don't get defensive; it's not your delivery. It's your ability to block their objections.

Me: No one is objecting.

Clint: You're missing my point. Listen. Everyone in the audience has a reason for why they shouldn't buy our product. It's your job to block those objections that prevent them from buying.

Me: How do you do that?

He then went on to explain the psychology of a crowd – what motivates them to take action and what prevents them from doing so. He then laid out for me a conceptual framework for blocking, not overcoming, objections and it so impacted how I thought about delivering a sales presentation or pitch that to this day I can still see myself standing there in the room listening as if it had happened yesterday.

After having time to digest and implement this conceptual framework, over the next few months I began to incorporate the principles into my presentation. With some refinement and adjustments, I then turned this conceptual framework into a five-step process for pre-empting objections (i.e., response blocking) and lowering sales resistance, which I'm about to share with you. Response Block Selling is the cornerstone of all my sales presentation and I suggest, no in fact I will be bold enough to say that if you want to increase your sales, I demand that you try my system. Once you learn it and understand it, I have no doubt that it will be the cornerstone of your sales presentation from this day forward.

This new approach was so powerful that it motivated me to dig a little deeper, beyond the technique itself, into the psychological aspects of how people make buying

decisions (i.e., consumer behavior and motivation). So before I divulge this five-step process, I will begin with a look at the psychological reasons behind people's actions. Knowing what motivates people to buy, or not to buy, can better help you understand the forces that drive their decision-making engines and why this new approach, Response Block Selling, can really help you increase your sales by lowering a prospect's sales resistance.

The Sales Pitch Redux

How do you deliver a persuasive message? A lawyer has to construct a persuasive argument in order to convince the jury, depending on what he's pleading, that his client is either guilty or innocent. How he formulates that argument and how he presents it to a jury of people with varying opinions will determine his success or failure. Salespeople, much like lawyers, are constructing a persuasive argument to get the client (one-on-one) or jury (group meeting) to buy our product or service. And, like the lawyer, how we construct that argument will determine whether or not we get the sale.

There is a big difference between delivering a presentation and delivering a persuasive argument. I can tell, based on the structure of a presentation, when a salesperson is delivering a presentation or a persuasive argument. I would argue that the 80-20 rule is usually in effect. Eighty percent of all sales presentations are just that, presentations. Only 20%, I would argue, and I believe I'm being generous here, are delivering a persuasive and compelling argument. The former is used to relay information to the client, the latter is used to convince the client and motivate the client to take action.

A typical sales presentation delivered by salespeople today has flow similar in structure as the following:

- Company background
- Existing clients and testimonials
- Management structure
- Product(s) and/or service(s) offered
- Demonstration
- Pricing options
- Client support reassurances

Look familiar? You can change the sequence or maybe even add one or two more things, but in essence, I am willing to gamble that over 90% of all sales presentations delivered today use this basic structure. I will argue that this type of presentation is not only limited in its ability to influence people to buy from you, but that it may also be causing you to lose sales.

You may argue that this is a standard presentation and good practice in introducing your company for the first time to a prospective client. I would argue that it may be standard practice, but it will do little to advance the sale. Most of the information listed in the above presentation structure is information the client can get off the company's Web site. This may prompt the client to think, 'Why am I in this meeting wasting my time listening to information I can pull off the Web?' Often times you only have one shot to get all the decision makers in one room. You don't want to blow it going over information they either already know or can access easily.

It has become all too apparent that times have changed, but unfortunately how we go about presenting our case to a client hasn't. Selling as we all know is about first reducing a client's sales resistance and then gaining sales acceptance. If we can get clients to lower their defense shields and be willing to listen to what we have to sell, then the rest is all in how we structure and deliver the sales pitch.



Being Consistent

“With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Before I get into the persuasive structure of Response Block Selling, I think it would be educational and advantageous to take a mental step and look at how people in general make decisions and how those decisions then direct their behavior.

In selling, we want people to be convinced to buy our products or services. But convincing them is one thing; getting them to sign on the proverbial dotted line is another. What every salesperson needs to know is how to convert that mental yes into getting the client to buy right there and then.

When you meet a client for the first time, whether you like it or not, prejudgments are being made about you. When you're in front of a large group presenting, prejudgments are being made about you, your company, and your product. Whether these prejudgments are right or wrong, people will make decisions on whether to do

business with you or not. So it's safe to say that first impressions are everything.

But what if these first impressions are wrong? What if the prospective client draws the wrong conclusion about you, your company, or your product? Is there anything you can do as a salesperson to correct those perceptions? I'm sure you would agree that these are important questions in the world of selling.

To answer these questions, let's review a study done by two prominent social psychologists by the names of Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard. Deutsch and Gerard wanted to know to what degree it was possible to get people to change their mind after being shown that their judgment was erroneous. They also wanted to know under what conditions people would be more reluctant or willing to change their mind if they were shown that their judgment was proven to be incorrect. Simply put:

- 1) *Would people change their minds if they were proven to be wrong?*
- 2) *Under what conditions would people be more willing or reluctant to admit their error in judgment?*

Deutsch and Gerard came up with a simple test to get to these answers. They set up an experiment with college students and broke them up into three groups. The three groups were then shown a set of lines and asked to estimate the lengths of the lines and record their answers.

The first group was asked to privately, in their own minds, estimate the lengths of the lines. The second group was asked to record their answers on a 'magic slate.' If

you were lucky enough as a child to have had one, you'll remember what these are. It's a writing pad with a carbon base and a clear plastic sheet laid over it whereby using a pointed object you can write on it and upon lifting the plastic sheet, everything is erased. The third group was asked to jot down their estimates on a piece of paper, sign it at the bottom and then hand it in. All three groups had to commit to their answers but in a way that ranged from private (think of the answer) to semi-private (write answer on magic slate than lift to erase) to public (write down answers, sign and hand in).

What Deutsch and Gerard wanted to know is which of the three groups when presented with answers unlike their own would be willing to change their minds and accept the new answers. What they found was interesting. The first group, who privately held the answers in their minds, was willing to accept their answers as being incorrect. The second group, whose answers were semi-private, being written and then erased with the magic slate, was somewhat reluctant to change their minds. But by far the group most resistant to changing their minds was the group who had jotted down their answers, signed the results and submitted the answers to the experimenter.

The results of this experiment will begin to make sense if we look at studies done by Leon Festinger, another prominent social psychologist. Festinger is responsible for the development of the theory of cognitive dissonance (also known as the consistency theory), which suggests that inconsistency between one's beliefs and behaviors will cause an undesirable psychological tension. The only way to reduce this undesirable psychological tension is for the person to change his or her beliefs to fit his or her actual behavior. So if you do something (behavior) and you're not in full agreement with it, you then have to modify your

thinking (belief) to fit the behavior (i.e., to reduce the psychological tension) so that you remain in or attain a state of consistency.

In the Deutsch and Gerard's experiment, they showed that the more public a behavior is, the more likely the person is unwilling to change his or her mind in order to appear consistent. Those who were not required to write but only think of their answers demonstrated more malleability in changing their minds because there was no actual public act performed (i.e., writing it and submitting it) as opposed to the other two groups who were required to show some form of public commitment.

Stepping back from the experiment, the consistency theory is about alignment or congruency between what you believe and what you do. If you publicly state your answers and someone shows you answers to the contrary, your immediate reaction is to defend your answers. Why? Your belief system (i.e., estimate length of lines) is now under a direct assault. Therefore, your thinking, your ability to comprehend or your judgment is in question. In order to reduce that tension, that anxiety surrounding your judgment, your immediate response is to reject anything to the contrary and insist that you are correct.

At the other extreme we have the first group in the study, who didn't have to write down the answers. For them it's easier to attribute their wrong answers to simple errors in judgment and not think much of changing their mind since only they themselves know they were wrong.

There are a plethora of studies that prove that consistency not only exists, but that it drives our behavior. Did you know that:

- *After placing a bet, a person is more assured of having a winning ticket.*
- *You have more hung juries when ballots are public (raise your hand) than if they are private (submit secret ballot).*
- *You are more willing to give a charitable donation if in the past you stated aloud you're in favor of charity organizations in general.*
- *You are more likely to vote if asked by someone if you're going to vote in the next election.*

These four examples have one theme that binds them together: consistency. In each example a public declaration of some sort is made. In each case, the person's belief system has to be in line with what he has committed to publicly if the person wants to avoid any 'psychological tension.'

What does this psychological tension feel like? Well, have you ever told someone you were going to do something and then didn't do it? How did you feel? Have you ever told someone something to not hurt their feelings, but deep down inside you knew it was untrue? Have you ever found yourself in a position where you were cornered into supporting someone publicly when deep down inside you knew it was the wrong thing to do? That's the psychological tension we're discussing here. There are three lessons to take away here:

- *Inconsistencies between what you say and what you do will cause psychological tension.*
- *This will lead people to change their beliefs to fit their actual behavior.*

- *The more public the decision, the more likely you are to act consistently with that decision.*

Selective Perception

One coping mechanism to deal with inconsistency is looking for information or reasons that will support your inconsistent behavior in order to reduce the tension. For example, let's say you're a registered Democrat and believe in the basic platform of the Democratic Party. If the party begins to stray from those basic tenets, you will find ways to rationalize why it may be necessary also to do so. You will then begin to seek out information that supports this belief and disregard any information that conflicts with it.

All this is done in an effort to reduce the psychological tension between what you believe and what your party is doing. This is called *selective perception*; you see what you want to see.

Here's another example. You stated publicly that you were going to participate in next year's annual fund raiser. As the date approaches, you regret making that decision. You then start looking for reasons not to be part of the fund raiser until you finally convince yourself that it's okay to let yourself off the hook.

One last example. You decided that you want to buy an MP3 player. But there are dozens of choices on the market and you're having a hard time making a decision. After much deliberation, you finally settle on one in particular.. Once you've purchased that particular MP3 player, you will then seek out information that will support your decision. You'll read all the positive reviews and ignore all other reviews. Selective perception is in play once again.

As you will see later on, both the theory of consistency and selective perception can work for us or against depending on how we construct and sequence what we say in our presentation.

Now, you may be wondering why I'm taking the time to introduce you to these concepts when they clearly belong in the province of psychology and not selling. I beg to differ.

I'm going to show you how these two concepts, theory of consistency and selective perception, are very much part of the sales process and the underpinnings of why Response Block Selling will help you close more deals. Understanding these principles and how to deploy them throughout a sales presentation is exactly what's going to take you from being a mediocre presenter to a master of sales influence.



R.I.P. Overcoming Objections

“Men acquiesce in a thousand things, once righteously and boldly done, to which, if proposed to them in advance, they might find endless objections.”

Robert Dale Owen

When a client raises an objection, we as salespeople are trained to overcome the objection using various sales tactics. If the client for example raises the issue of price and states aloud that the price is too high, salespeople have been trained to use several tried and true strategies to convince the client otherwise.

We may for instance employ the ‘for a few cents a day more’ strategy, which breaks down the price differential (i.e., the cost of your product and what the client is willing to pay) over a given period of time to make the difference in pricing look inconsequential. For example, if the product you’re selling costs \$120 more than what your client wants to pay, you could simply argue that having the best will only cost you an additional \$10 a month over a period of one year. Or, if the client owns the product for

five years, that comes out to a mere \$2 a month more. When presented this way, a client has a hard time saying price is the issue for not buying from you. We may attempt to use the ‘total cost of ownership’ tactic, which argues that it isn’t how much more the product will cost the client today, but how much it’ll save the client over the long run. We then follow the argument with a litany of reasons why paying for higher quality today makes much more sense than buying inexpensive alternatives.

You get the idea. In sales parlance we refer to these tactics as overcoming objections. No matter what the client objects to, we as salespeople will find a way to explain why that particular objection, or objections, shouldn’t stop the client from making a buying decision.

The best salespeople in the business have a ready stand-by response to overcome any objection(s) the client brings up. This is the way selling has been taught since the early 1920s and it’s been pretty darn effective, which is why overcoming sales objection techniques are still taught today. But could there be a better way?

The Psychology Behind Objections

Today’s consumers are not like those of the 1920s. Today with the advent of the Internet and the bombardment of constant messages from the media, which include radio, television, cellular phones, music players, billboards, etc., the human mind has reached a point of saturation. The human mind no longer processes these hundreds if not thousands of messages every day because people shut down their cognitive intake to protect themselves from the streams of chaotic messages.

Marketing should be the point of the spear in any sales campaign. But advertisers are starting to see that marketing tactics that used to work do not work in today's fragmented media smorgasbord. In fact, users of advertising are frustrated by the non-cohesiveness or lack of uniformity of consumer compliance.

In the past, you had three options for educating yourself on the market: newspaper, radio or television. As the media outlets have expanded to include the Internet, mobile devices and others, advertisers are at a loss for how to reach their targeted markets effectively. The running chide is that 50% of all marketing dollars are wasted; the problem is you don't know which 50% of the marketing money is being wasted and which is being effective.

The point of this tirade on the expansion of market outlets is to drive home the point that the consumer is no longer listening. We used to depend on marketing to condition our prospects to consider buying our products. But quite to the contrary, the informed consumer has grown more skeptical and more cautious. There was a time when the salesperson was one-up on the buyer when it came to product knowledge. Today, the script has been flipped. The expansion of choices across the Internet and availability of relevant information for buyers to do their own research further complicates the matter for today's salesperson. Oftentimes you'll find that the potential buyer is more knowledgeable about the products and the available choices than the salesperson.

Overcoming objections used to be a matter of having all the clever answers or quick comebacks available to thwart any objection the prospect might bring up. So what's changed in the mind of today's buyers? Two things:

- *Buyers know all the sales tricks and will turn off if they see a salesperson trying to manipulate them.*
- *Buyers are more reluctant than ever to be forthcoming about their hesitations for buying because they know the salesperson will have a response to their objection.*

The Informed Buyer

The new shift in selling is the simple recognition of the fact that today's buyer is well-informed. Shading or obfuscating any deficiency in your product or service is a risky play. In any sales scenario, you, the salesperson, must not underestimate how much the buyer knows about your product or your competition.

The best way to deal with an informed buyer is head-on but in a more strategic fashion than what we've been trained to do in the past. Enter Response Block Selling. Response Blocking is a method for preempting a buyer's objection before he voices the objection.

The premise of Response Block Selling is the following: If a buyer states an objection aloud, the buyer is more likely to stick to that objection (rule of consistency) and will look for validating information (selective perception) to support or defend that particular viewpoint.

So the key here is to prevent the buyer from voicing an objection thereby shunting the need to then support that objection.

If you can address a buyer's concerns before the buyer either brings it up or becomes aware of it, you stand a better chance of being able to control how the objection is

handled. If you raise and address the concern prior to the buyer bringing up the issue, you will have:

- *established credibility in the buyer's eyes by demonstrating a firm understanding of the buyer's concerns,*
- *gained trust by being forthright and not trying to obfuscate any product or service shortcomings, and*
- *taken control of the objection and be in a position to address the matter in a manner that is favorable to you.*

When you raise an anticipated objection, a client will mentally thank you for doing so especially if the subject is a touchy one. By doing so, the buyer will appreciate your not trying to skirt around the issue and leaving it up to the buyer to raise the issue. You also gain some trust points. Many salespeople today are notorious for 'lying by omission' (i.e., purposely failing to mention an important detail to the buyer). Addressing touchy issues is one way of catching the modern buyer off guard because they won't be expecting such directness (i.e., honesty).

Reversing Field

One of the fastest ways to build rapport and trust is to prove, in concrete terms, that you are looking out for the buyer's best interest. Zig Ziglar said that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care about them.

One tried and true strategy that I use to prove to a client that I care is something I call 'Reversing Field.' In

football, when a player carrying the football reverses field, he goes the opposite way to avoid getting tackled by the defense.

In sales, when someone thinks you're going to go one way, you surprise them by going the other way thereby catching the person off guard and *opening him up to being influenced* by demonstrating goodwill. Here are two examples to illustrate my point and how it can help you make more money:

Scenario 1:

You walk into a restaurant and then are escorted to your table by the greeter who tells you that your waiter will be by in a just a moment to take your order. After a few minutes a nice young man introduces himself politely and asks, "May I start you out with a beverage or a drink?" You order your drink and then the waiter tells you about the day's specials. After rambling off the list of specialties and before he quickly darts off he says, "Let me go get your drink and I'll be back to take your order."

Minutes later the waiter comes back with your drink. Then he grabs his pen and notepad and asks, "Are you ready for me to take your order?" You decide to order one of the specials. The waiter pauses for a moment and looks at you and says, "The last two people I had in here before you ordered the same plate and in both cases they weren't very happy with the way it was prepared. If you're really hungry for that type of dish, try this other dish. People love it! It's a bigger serving and \$5 cheaper than the special." You instinctively agree. As the waiter leaves you think to yourself,

'Wow, what an honest waiter. Not only did he save me from ordering something I might not like, he saved me \$5 in the process. I like this kid.'

Result: The meal was great. You usually tip 15%, but for his honesty and kindness you feel the need to reciprocate and show your appreciation so you decide to leave the kid a 20% tip.

Scenario 2:

You walk into a car dealership to look for a car. You walk past a few cars on the showroom floor and one of them catches your eye. Out of nowhere a salesman appears and says, "I can see you like this car. My name is Bob. You're lucky I got to you before one of the other salespeople. They've been trying to unload this car for the last month. Let me tell you upfront that it may look good, but you don't want the headaches that go along with it." At this point you have to slap yourself mentally to make sure you're not dreaming. 'Did a car salesman just tell me NOT to buy a car?'

The salesman then takes the time to escort you around the car lot telling you the pros and cons of each car in which you're interested. After a while, he figures out what you're looking for (i.e., a buyer's dominant buying motive) and helps you narrow your choices.

Result: You feel comfortable with his recommendation because he seems to understand your needs and you decide to buy a car that is 10% more expensive than the one he told you NOT to buy.

The old adage that honesty is the best policy holds true here. With so much information available to buyers today, they need someone who they can trust and who won't steer them in the wrong direction when making a purchase. This is the premise of consultative selling.

Buyers need help making critical decisions. Position yourself, much like the waiter and car salesman, as trustworthy and you will reap the benefits in the end. Seek to serve, then to sell. Demonstrating goodwill and a willingness to look out for the buyer's best interest is a powerful influencing technique if done correctly and used with integrity.

If You're Explaining You're Losing

On the flip side of being honest and upfront, let's look at what happens when you don't bring up an issue and the buyer is forced to challenge your claims. You just finished doing a product pitch and you conveniently left out a few details about how difficult it may be for the buyer's employees to use the product. So the buyer confronts you and asks, "Based on what you've shown us, the product looks difficult to use. I'm not comfortable that our employees will be able to use it correctly and will shy away from it altogether."

The objection had been in the buyer's mind. Throughout the presentation you may have reinforced the buyer's belief unknowingly as you demonstrated how to use the product. As the presentation proceeded the buyer may have subconsciously been looking for reasons to confirm his belief (i.e., selectively perceiving the software was difficult to use).

The objection having been made publicly now triggers the rule of consistency unless you can prove otherwise. At this point you're left having to convince the buyer that the product is not difficult to use – much like Deutsch and Gerard had to convince their students that the lines were different lengths than their original guesses.

You, the seller, are now in a position where you're having to explain and convince the buyer otherwise of a publicly made statement (i.e., the product seems difficult to use).

Even as you demonstrate the product ease of use, the buyer may be *selectively perceiving* the opposite, that it is difficult to use. Even worse, if the buyer had any hesitation in buying from you, the publicly made statement and your inability to convince him otherwise will further jeopardize your ability to close the deal, let alone convince the buyer that the product really isn't that difficult to use.

We've all been in situations where we were on the fence about buying a particular item and we were looking for something to give us an excuse for not buying. And when we did find something we perceived as a weakness we held on to that like a crutch for not making a buying decision.

My point here is that all this could have been avoided if the seller had pre-empted the objection (i.e., response block) by addressing the issue upfront instead of, in the words of the writer Langston Hughes, letting it “fester like a sore.”

What many salespeople do is ‘hope’ that the buyer doesn't see or notice a weak point in their product or service. Huge mistake! If there are obvious deficiencies in your product compared to your competitor's, the chances of

the buyer knowing or finding out, given the access to information, are very high.

A friend of mine told me many years ago something that acutely applies to this topic and has stuck with me. He said, “If you’re explaining yourself to a buyer, you’re losing the conversation.” His point was that you should always be in control of the sales process or conversation. If the buyer has brought up an issue you failed to address, and you find yourself having to explain it or defend it, you have lost control of the sales process.

The remedy to this is simple: Raise the issue and control how the issue is to be handled thereby maintaining control of the sales process. If you raise the issue you determine how to best address it or dispense it in front of the buyer.

A couple of examples are in order to illustrate my point. Let’s assume your product is available only in black and gray and you know your client has a preference for the item in blue. Here are two scenarios:

Scenario 1: You don’t have the resources to offer the item in any color other than the standard black and gray.

Response Block: Mr. Buyer, I’m well aware that some of our clients prefer our product in colors other than what we offer, black and gray. *But they would agree that we’re more concerned about the product’s performance than color-coordination, would you agree?*

Scenario 2: You do have the resources to offer the product in blue.

Response Block: Mr. Buyer, although our product is only available in black and gray today, we will be more than willing to special order the product in any color you desire. A service we provide to our most valued buyers at no charge. *Does that sound fair?*

In both scenarios the issue of having the product available in the buyer's desired color is addressed upfront or during the product presentation. The key here was developing an appropriate Response Block for that lingering mental objection.

It's worth noting that I also added an agreement or acknowledgment question (in italics) at the end of each Response Block to gain a mental commitment from the buyer.

A side benefit of using a Response Block is that other people in the room might have had the same lingering objection and you've just squelched that concern with them as well. This approach begins to lower a buyer's sales resistance because you're addressing the very concerns about which they are thinking and, in some cases, refuse to voice aloud.

Remember, buyers who have been burned in the past by giving the salesperson too much information are oftentimes reluctant to share with you why they might not buy. By using Response Blocks you are addressing concerns that may come up after you are done and gone. Any questions left unanswered in the buyer's mind may be a reason for

Response Block Selling

not buying. This is why it is crucial that you sit down and list out every possible objection a client might have for not buying from you. You then take each of these objections and create a Response Block for each one, which you will then pepper throughout your presentation. This is what Response Block Selling is all about.

A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance



Response Block Structure

“The crucial variable in the process of turning knowledge into value is creativity.”

John Kao

Now that the groundwork has been laid for understanding how a buyer buys, it's now time to introduce the Response Block structure mentioned earlier. But before I do so, I think it's worth reiterating the two cognitive concepts that are the premise for why Response Block Selling works:

Rule of Consistency: *People will behave in accordance to their belief in order to reduce cognitive dissonance (mental discomfort for not being congruent). According the Deutsch and Gerard experiment, a publicly stated position will be more defended than a privately held belief. So our goal is to answer buyers' questions or objections before they are publicly stated so that we may overcome that objection more easily.*

Selective Perception: *Once people make a public statement, they will seek out information, selectively, to*

reinforce their views while filtering out anything that may challenge or contradict their views. If an objection is voiced or left unchecked, buyers may seek information to confirm their beliefs and therefore not go forward with a buying decision.

So our goal with Response Block Selling is twofold:

- 1) To answer buyers' concerns before they are made public, and*
- 2) In so doing, we prevent buyers from 'selecting' reasons for why they shouldn't buy (i.e., take away any excuses or justification, real or imagined).*

I also explained that when you, the salesperson, raise an objection, that leaves you in full control on how best to handle or discard the objection before the buyer voices or thinks it. This pre-emption of the objection will keep you on the offense and not on the defense, which is usually an indication that you've lost control of the meeting, presentation or sales process.

Response Block Selling Structure

Step 1: List all possible client objections that a client might give you for not buying. This is the starting point for an effective sales pitch.

Step 2: Take each objection and create an acknowledgement statement or a Response Block so you can raise the objection yourself. By raising the objection you can control the direction of the conversation.

Step 3: Create an offer to resolve that objection for the client. What you're looking for here is to make the client agree to a deal so to speak. For example, "Mr. Buyer, if I can show you how this will do X, will you promise to do Y." You are seeking a small agreement, which you will close in Step 4.

Step 4: Demonstrate how your product or service can help overcome the particular objection you've just raised in Step 2.

Step 5: Tie down the prospect to an agreement that the objection was resolved. This is the opportunity to get the buyer to agree that the objection you raised was indeed put to bed in the buyer's eyes. The goal here is to get an agreement so that later on in the presentation the buyer doesn't use it as an excuse not to move forward. This agreement should be in line with the agreement you've asked for in Step 3. All you want here is a confirmation.

In both Step 3 and Step 5 you will be inserting an agreement question of some sort. Each agreement is aimed at getting the buyer to agree that the objection made in Step 2 has been addressed and resolved. This tactic is crucial in getting the client to make small commitments leading up to the ultimate commitment where you ask for the order.

When a buyer agrees to Step 3 and acknowledges that agreement in Step 5, the buyer, according to the rule of consistency, will have to behave accordingly. In other words, if you address the objection in Step 3 and have resolved the objection, then you need to get the buyer to acknowledge the very same in Step 5.

Agreement Questions

Here are some agreement questions that you might want to consider inserting into Step 3 (the resolve statement) of the Response Block structure:

- *If I can show X, would that be of use to you?*
- *If I can prove that $A = B$, would that help?*
- *What if I could show you a way....would you agree that's a better way?*

You may have already noticed that questions inserted into Step 3 all have to do with the word 'if.'

Here are some agreement questions that you might want to consider inserting into Step 3 (tie-down) of the Response Block structure:

- *Based on what I just showed you...would you agree...?*
- *After seeing the demo, can you see how this will help you?*
- *Based on these testimonials, wouldn't you agree that....?*

Let's go ahead and start getting into the guts of how this all comes together. The first step in using Response Block Selling to help you sell more is to begin by listing out all the possible sales objections your buyer is likely to throw at you.

For your review and consideration, here are the common objections that all salespeople face:

- Your price is too high.
- I need to speak with my boss or partner before I can make a decision. I want to think about it some more.
- I don't make same-day decisions.
- I can do it myself.
- We're already using a competitor's product (or service).
- I've got more business than I can handle.
- I don't think I can learn how to use it (or do it).
- I'll do it later, down the road.
- I can get it cheaper elsewhere.
- Your company hasn't been around a long time.

- I don't like your CEO (or your company).
- I don't like your product.
- I'm concerned about your customer support.
- I can't afford it right now.
- I'm afraid of the hidden fees.
- I hear you're going to discontinue the product.
- My friends (or family) tell me it doesn't work.
- What if I buy and find something better later?

Response Block Selling

- Now's not a good time for me to buy.
- I don't have that kind of money.
- I've heard bad things about your company.
- I don't want to charge it (to my credit card).
- If I buy, people will laugh at me.
- What if I buy and I don't like it?

Take this opportunity to check off all the objections above that apply to your sales business today.

In the subsequent pages you will find *Response Block Structures (RBS)* for each of the listed objections. Once you become familiar with how the RBS work, in the final chapter you're going to pull it all together to develop and construct your most persuasive sales pitch ever!

Exercise

Can you think of any more objections not listed? If so, jot them down here before you forget them:

Objections and Response Block Structures

A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

Objection #1: Your price is too high (compared to your competitors).

Objection variations:

- *Why does your product cost more than others?*
- *Your competitor sells it for X % less.*
- *Your prices seem really high!*

Let's start out by taking a very common objection, "*Your price is too high.*" You'll never hear a prospect complain that the price is too low, but you can bet your last dollar that nine out of ten will always complain that the price is too high. The knee-jerk reaction to this push-back by the prospect is for the salesperson to launch into a defense with sheer indignation. Bad move!

The best way to handle this objection is obviously before it is verbalized as an objection. But beyond that, you need to leave yourself open to why the prospect may be thinking your price is too high. Once this is understood, it's easy to create an effective Response Block that will stop the prospect from making the statement.

When a prospect thinks that your price may be too high, the best way to confront this objection is head on. Your job as a salesperson is to figure out:

- a) If the prospect is comparing your product or service to one of your competitors; if so, which ones?
- b) Is this a knee-jerk reaction to a price the prospect either wasn't expecting or is unwilling pay?

In any industry, the top salespeople know their top three competitors. Have that information readily available to present to the client who may be unfairly comparing your products to a competitor's whose product is inferior. Never assume the prospect is aware of all the details of your competitor's products. Remember, competitors will only show the prospect what's to their advantage and will minimize anything that would make them look bad.

Also, it's worth pointing out that many prospects *may not be aware of the going market price* for your product. So to make the assumption that the prospect has some pricing knowledge of your product could be a costly mistake. The best way to deal with this is to incorporate some sort of education statement in your Response Block.

That said, walk into any presentation or product pitch with the mindset that the prospect is not well-informed and you are there to set the record straight when it comes to the evaluation of your product against the competition's products.

Objection #1: Your price is too high (compared to your competitors).

Buyer Objection	Your price is too high.
Response Block	Many of my clients will tell me that our prices are higher than our competitors' prices.
Offer to Resolve	But if I could show you that when you compare what we have to offer on a point-by-point basis with that of other products, you'll agree that we're more than reasonable when it comes to our pricing. <i>How does that sound?</i> ¹
Demonstrate	Demo: show a side-by-side comparison of your product's features/benefits alongside your competitors' products.
Tie-Down	Mr. Prospect, based on what I've shown you, can you now see how we're not only cheaper, but in the long run, <i>can you also see how we can help you save more money?</i>

¹ I've italicized the agreement questions in Steps 3 and 5.

Objection #1 – variation: Prospect is unaware of the going market price for your product and perceives your price to be too high.

Buyer Objection	I'm not sure how much this should cost, but your price seems too high.
Response Block	Many of my clients aren't familiar with how our product and pricing compare to similar products on the market.
Offer to Resolve	If I could show you that what we offer relative to other products on the market is a bargain, <i>would you be willing to consider what we have to offer?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show a side-by-side comparison of your product's features/benefits alongside your competitors' products.
Tie-Down	Mr. Prospect, based on what I've shown you, <i>can you see how what we offer is as competitive as you're going to get on the market today?</i>

If after these Response Blocks are presented and the client still insists that your pricing is too high, then there may be another reason for not buying that the prospect isn't telling you.

Objection Exercise: *(Select one of the objection variations listed at the beginning of this example or come up with one of your own and create your own Response Block Structure below)*

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #2: I need to speak with my boss or partner before I can make a decision.

Objection variations:

- *I need to speak with my spouse before deciding.*
- *We'll need to discuss amongst ourselves and then we'll let you know.*
- *I'll bring your proposal up at our next meeting.*

Before we build a Response Block Structure for this objection I think it's worth mentioning a few housekeeping rules when it comes to selling and pre-qualifying the buyer.

Any good salesperson knows that getting the right people into the room is the key to any successful product (or service) presentation. It is incumbent upon the salesperson to work with the buyer, prior to the meeting, to make sure the right people are in the room to make a decision. You can ask the buyer commitment questions like:

- *“Will you make sure the key decision makers are present?”*
- *“So to be clear, if I can show how our product can help your company, you are in a position to make a decision without other approval?”*

You can reword the above questions to fit your speaking style. My point is only to drive home the fact that you must ask for a 'yes or no' from the buyer. And, according to the rule of consistency, if the buyer confirms that he is the sole

decision maker than he has gone on record and will behave accordingly.

If you're doing a direct sell to a residence, more specifically a family, you'll want to make sure that the all heads of the household are present to avoid the above objection from being used. You can reword the above questions accordingly to sell to a couple.

- *“So, Bob, will you make sure your wife is available to help you make a good decision?”*
- *“So, Bob, what you're telling me is that I can show how our product can help, and you can make a decision without having to consult your wife?”*

Again, massage the questions above to fit your style, but my point is obvious: Get them to commit upfront that a decision can be made at the end of the presentation.²

² *If the objective of the meeting is to advance the sale (i.e., just a preliminary meeting to see if your product qualifies for consideration), then the commitment you're seeking isn't for them to buy, but a commitment from the potential buyer for a follow-up meeting at the next level.*

Objection #2: I need to speak with my boss or partner before I can make a decision.

Buyer Objection	I need to speak with my boss or partner before I can make a decision.
Response Block	Having to make a decision on your own can be a bit intimidating when considering a new product. Would you agree?
Offer to Resolve	But if I could show you that what we have to offer can help you, <i>would you agree that making that decision will be a whole lot easier?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show a side-by-side comparison of your product's features/benefits compared to your competitors' products.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what I've shown you, <i>can you see how what we offer is not only going to help you but also make your decision an easy one?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #3: I want to think about it some more

Objection variations:

- *Let me get back to you in a week.*
- *Let me give this more careful consideration.*
- *I'll take your suggestions under advisement.*
- *Let me discuss with others and I'll get back to you.*

Second only to 'Your price is too high,' this is the most often encountered objection in the closing process. When a buyer tells you he needs to think about it, experience has taught me that you missed something in the sales presentation that is still concerning the buyer.

The best way to attack this objection is to get an upfront agreement from the buyer as to what the critical buying criteria are. By getting the buyer on the record, you're able to build an effective Response Block Structure. Again, let's go back to the rule of consistency. If you can get the buyer to agree to what the key factors are for buying, then later in the presentation, toward the close, you'll be in a stronger position to close because the buyer will be compelled to act consistently to what he agreed to earlier.

For example, let's say the buyer tells you that the critical buying factors in making a decision are color, delivery time, and price. So in your presentation you make it a point to address all three factors. You tee this up by building a Response Block around the buying criteria.

Objection #3: I want to think about it some more.

Buyer Objection	I want to think about it some more.
Response Block	I'm sure you've been thinking about or looking around for the right product to fit your needs.
Offer to Resolve	If I can show you that our product meets all three of your immediate needs, being a man (or woman) of action, <i>would you be willing to make a decision today?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the features you've identified as being critical to the buyer.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what I've shown you, and having addressed all three of the needs you outlined for making a decision, <i>can you now see how our product is a perfect fit?</i>

Another strategy I've seen used effectively, using the rule of consistency, is to get the client to prioritize what's important to him.

For instance, let's say during the investigative stage of the sales process you identified a total of seven factors that will drive the buyer's decision. What you then do is list all seven factors on a piece of paper and do the following:

***You:** Mr. Prospect, based on our conversation, let me review the seven factors that you will use to make a buying decision. (You then review them aloud). Did I miss anything?*

***Buyer:** No, it sounds like you got them all.*

***You:** Would you do me a small favor. (You then flip and slide the sheet with the seven factors over to the client) Would you just take a moment and prioritize these seven in order of importance from 1 to 7; with 1 being the most important. This will help me gear the presentation to address the most important factors first.*

This is a great tactic! By now you must've caught on that this just is another variation of employing the rule of consistency by getting the buyer to commit to a position on paper (prioritize), as well to agree that these are the factors that will drive the buying decision. Think back to the Deutsch and Gerard experiment. If a person commits their position to paper they are more likely to stick to it according to the rule of consistency.

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #4: I don't make same-day decisions.

Objection variations:

- *I like to take my time making a decision.*
- *I like to give myself a few days before making a decision.*
- *Can I get 24 hours to think about it?*
- *I'm in no rush to decide right now.*

This is an objection often found in a simple sale (i.e., relatively small transaction) as opposed to complex sale (i.e., large transaction usually requiring more research and the involvement of others in the decision-making process).

A simple sale is a sale where the buyer doesn't have to consult anyone and has the financial means to make a decision. The 'I don't make a same-day decision' objection may be a way out of having to make a buying decision. The reasons could be justified, but if you get this objection it usually means that there is something that is still hindering the buyer from making a decision. It could be that you missed something in the presentation or it could simply be a matter of fear (i.e., cold feet).

The key here is to make sure you don't let the buyer off the hook easily by letting him walk out of the room or meeting. A good salesperson will ask questions in order to get to the real objection.

A good Response Block tactic here is to remind the buyer that this is not a same-day decision and that he has all

the information he needs in front of him to make the necessary decision.

My experience with this objection has been that people know they want to do something but are often afraid to make the final decision. Oftentimes the buyer, believe it or not, is looking to the salesperson for permission to make a buying decision. Yes, they're looking for the salesperson to push them to make a buying decision.

The best approach here, again we're talking about a simple sale, is to remind the buyer that it isn't a same-day buying decision. Many buyers have been thinking about doing something for a long time but find reasons not to do so.

For example, you're a car salesman trying to sell a car and you've gone through all the buyer hot buttons, but when you get to the close, the buyer says, "I don't make same-day decisions". At this point the salesperson has to 1) remind the buyer that it really isn't a same-day decision, and 2) give the buyer permission to make the purchase.

This scenario could've been minimized or even avoided if the salesperson had just injected a Response Block into the sales pitch.

Objection #4: I don't make same-day decisions.

Buyer Objection	I don't make same-day decisions.
Response Block	Most people tell me that they won't buy today because they don't make same-day decisions.
Offer to Resolve	But if I can show you that our product meets your needs, <i>would you agree that making thr decision today will be easy?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the features you've identified as being critical to the buyer.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what I've shown you, even though you may think it's a same-day decision <i>this is something you've wanted for some time now; am I right?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #5: I can do it myself

Objection variations:

- *I don't need your product or your help.*
- *I can figure this out without having to pay you.*
- *I can do it better, faster, and cheaper.*

You often hear this type of objection when selling a product that will make the buyer or his or her business more efficient. Buyers in this case will look for reasons not to buy and seek to justify or rationalize to themselves that they can do it without having to buy your product.

The strategic approach here is to really drive home the following points:

- a) Time is money and the buyer may not have the time to do it himself.
- b) Given how quickly things change, even if the buyer did do it himself or herself, by the time the buyer figures it out, new changes are already being introduced.
- c) A short-term investment in your product will save the buyer both time and money in the long run. Here would be a good place to discuss Return on Investment (ROI).

Find a way to illustrate to the buyer that buying your product, although it might be difficult to dish out money

Response Block Selling

right now (i.e., requiring an investment in the short term), it will save the buyer money in the long run. Re-emphasize that buying from you is not a cost, but an investment.

A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

Objection #5: I can do it myself.

Buyer Objection	I can do it myself.
Response Block	I have a lot of clients who initially started out thinking they could do this by themselves.
Offer to Resolve	If I could show you that using our product will save you time and money in the long run, <i>would that help you (or your business) get an edge?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the buyer how you can save them time and money.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, even you would agree that trying to keep up by doing it yourself can be challenging. Based on what I've shown you, <i>can you see how this product can save you time and money?</i>

Another approach you may want to explore when confronted with the ‘I can do it myself’ objection is to make the buyer aware of the opportunity cost involved when doing it without the help of your products.

For example, if you’re selling a product that will increase the buyer’s efficiency by 50%, then you need to show the buyer the real cost (i.e., the opportunity cost) of not using your product.

You: *Mr. Buyer, how much time do you spend doing this by hand?*

Buyer: *Well, it takes an hour or so a day and once in while a couple of hours to get it done.*

You: *So can I say that it probably takes you on average 10 hours a week?*

Buyer: *Sounds about right.*

You: *Mr. Buyer, what’s your time worth? If you had to assign your time an hourly rate, what would that be?*

Buyer: *I don’t know, I guess \$25 an hour.*

You: *Mr. Buyer, let’s say that in one year, you invest 520 hours (10 hours per week multiplied by 52 weeks). By simply using our product, you could save half that time; that’s 260 hours a year. Sound about right?*

Buyer: *Yeah.*

You: *Well, if your time is worth \$25 an hour, you can calculate for yourself the financial savings. Moreover, by using our product, instead of losing 260 hours of inefficiency (i.e., opportunity cost), how much more could you get done in terms of getting more business with an additional 260 hours every year?*

Buyer: *I see your point.*

In this example you can see the time-is-money relationship quite clearly. With whatever product or service you're selling, find a way to illustrate in terms of hours and dollars what the real cost is by not buying what you have to offer.

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #6: We're already using a competitor's product (or service).

Objection variations:

- *We already use someone else or do that with another company.*
- *We're satisfied with our current vendor (or supplier).*
- *A new supplier means more training; we're happy with our current supplier.*
- *I don't need to diversify how I do business.*

This objection will strike fear into even the most experienced of salespeople. The insinuation here is that if they're buying from another supplier, you're wasting your time presenting your product. Many salespeople upon hearing that the buyer is already using a competitor's brand will mentally fold up their sales tent and move on to the next buyer without even attempting to grab the business. Mistake!

The old adage still holds that if you're not first in line for the buyer's business, position yourself second in line because sooner or later the front runner will falter and you want to be there to benefit from the competitor's misfortune. This happens all the time. If you're not the buyer's choice today, stick around long enough and eventually you will find an opportunity to insert yourself and your product.

During a presentation, most salespeople tend to ignore the fact that the buyer is already purchasing their product or receiving a service from a competitor and go about their

presentation without confronting the issue to avoid any discomfort.

The best defense is a good offense. Instead of denying that the elephant is in the room, raise the objection yourself and acknowledge that very fact. Then move to dismiss the fact that the buyer is buying from competition and position your product as an alternative for any future needs that may arise.

Don't be surprised that if during your presentation the buyer learns more about what he's not getting from his existing supplier. In your sales pitch, make sure to hit all the highpoints you know your competitors talk about, and then go out of your way to highlight those things the buyer isn't currently getting with his existing supplier.

Objection #6: We're already using a competitor's product (or service).

Buyer Objection	We're already using a competitor's product (or service)..
Response Block	You may already be using a product (or service) from another supplier that is similar to ours.
Offer to Resolve	Many of my clients started out using our competitor's products as well until we showed them what they were not getting. <i>Can I assume you would consider our product if I can show you how you can get more for your money?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the buyer how your product is better than the competition's products.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, as you can see our product has a lot of additional features you're currently not getting, <i>would you agree?</i>

Keep in mind the rule of consistency and the dynamics of what's happening with the psychology of the buyer. The buyer has already made a purchase of your competitor's products (i.e., they've made a public commitment), which means that the buyer will be more resistant to change and will seek information to justify his original decision to buy from your competitor. So in this particular case you need to be a little more sensitive and tactful. Telling the buyer he has made a mistake by not choosing your product might make you take a step backward with the buyer.

You can overcome this disadvantage by taking an indirect tactic and positioning your product with the buyer not as a replacement, but as a complement to what he is already using. By shifting the focus away from, *'Hey you made a mistake by not buying from me'* to *'Our product can enhance or supplement what you've already purchased'* will go a long way in lowering the buyer's resistance to hearing your sales pitch.

It's important to acknowledge that you know that the buyer is using another company's product or service and that your product or service can be used to enhance what he is currently using. Again, acknowledging the elephant in the room will set the stage for a better sales presentation. And using the indirect approach will position you more as an advisor or consultant as opposed to someone who is there to tell the buyer he made a mistake by using someone else.

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #7: I've got more business than I can handle.

Objection variations:

- *We're too busy right now to try anything new.*
- *Why change anything when things are going so well?*
- *We don't have any additional resources to review your product.*

When a buyer tells me that they won't buy because his business has more business than they can handle, look out. If it smells like a red herring it probably is. A variation of this objection for not wanting to buy from you may go something like this, 'Even if we were to buy, we're so busy right now that we don't have the time or the manpower to actually do anything.'

In either case the client may reject what you have to offer because his business is so busy that they don't even have time to stop and look at what you have to offer. So your goal as a salesperson is to figure out a way to make them stop long enough to hear your sales pitch.

You, the salesperson, might be compelled to challenge the buyer on the apparent absurdity of his claim, but refrain from doing so. Challenging or questioning a buyer's motivation or lack thereof has never helped a salesperson close a deal.

One trick that you can employ here is what is known in the business of selling as the **Boomerang Method**, where you take the buyer's reason(s) for not buying and turn it into the very reason for them to stop, look, listen, and even buy from you. For example, when someone says, 'I have

more business than I can handle,' your response should be, 'That's exactly the reason why you should listen to what I have to offer.' By using the buyer's reason for not wanting to buy you've now tied what he believes to what you have to offer.

Objection #7: I've got more business than I can handle.

Buyer Objection	I've got more business than I can handle.
Response Block	Today you may have more business than you can handle and I congratulate you. And that's exactly the reason why you should consider our product (or service).*
Offer to Resolve	We all know that given today's volatile market things can change. <i>If I can show you how our product can help you continue to grow, would that be worth your consideration?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the buyer why you product is worth taking a look at.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, as you can see our product has a lot of additional features you will need as your business continues to grow, <i>would you agree?</i>

* Boomerang Method

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #8: I don't think I can learn to use (or do) it.

Objection variations:

- *It looks really complicated to use.*
- *I'm not good at figuring things out.*
- *I'm afraid I'll break it if I used it.*
- *I'm comfortable doing it my way.*

You often hear this objection when you're selling something that at first glance may seem intimidating to the buyer. In many cases the buyer will not admit his lack of confidence aloud. This is what makes this objection a little more difficult to identify.

If you're in the business of selling something that may be considered too technical (e.g., software, electronics, machinery, etc.) than you need to apply a Response Block for this unannounced objection. You typically have two types of buyers in a company: the technical buyer and the user.

The technical buyer may be the person who makes the final decision on what to buy, but the technical buyer is cognizant and will consider whether or not the average user will be able to learn how to use the product. So it's important to keep in mind that you're really selling to two types of buyers when making your sales presentation.

If you're in the service business, you may want to take a look at incorporating a Response Block into your presentation as well. Sometimes the buyer may not know if or how he will use your services going forward, which may

require you, the salesperson, to lay out a road map of how the relationship will proceed if the buyer agrees to do business with you.

In either case, you will have to demonstrate how easy it will be to work with your product or service. During the demonstration focus on keeping it simple and concise as to how the product applies directly to the buyer's current business needs. Don't over do it by showing all the product's bells and whistles. You may think it's helping your sales pitch, when in fact you may be pushing the buyer away by overwhelming him from the onset and giving the buyer the feeling that he can't possibly learn how to use all those features.

Also, if your company offers any type of training or ongoing support, be sure to mention it in your sales pitch.

Objection #8: I don't think I can learn to use (or do) it.

Buyer Objection	I don't think I can learn to use (or do) it.
Response Block	At first glance, many of my clients didn't feel that they could learn how to work with our product and felt a bit intimidated.
Offer to Resolve	I'm going to show you a few key features and you'll see for yourself that with a little time and training, the average person can learn how to do this. <i>Does that sound like something you'd like to see?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the buyer how easy it is to use your product or service.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what I've just shown you, <i>do you think that with a little time and support from our company that you can learn how to use this in no time?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #9: I'll do it later, down the road.

Objection variations:

- *Now's not a good time for me personally.*
- *It can wait a bit longer.*
- *I know I should, but now isn't the right time.*

I'm sure you've heard this objection many times. Even after demonstrating to buyers how buying your product can benefit them immediately, you'll get procrastinators who'll come up with reasons to delay making a buying decision. The reasons may be justified, but as is often the case the real reason may simply be the fear of the unknown or lack of financial resources.

Note that with this objection, the buyer is not saying he doesn't need the product or that what you've presented doesn't merit a buying decision. What the buyer is saying is 'not now.' This is frustrating because there is no real point of contention (i.e., questions or hesitation about the product) except for the buyer's willingness to take action.

Ernest Dichter, the famous advertising agent, talked about using motivational techniques to get people to buy. So in this scenario what you want to do is to paint a picture of the cost of failure to act.

It may also help to remind the buyer that he has been putting off the decision for quite some time and that now is the time to finally make the commitment to do something as opposed to just thinking about it.

This objection requires an appeal to emotion rather than logic. The reasons for buying may be obvious to the buyer, but what may not be obvious to the buyer is something we discussed earlier, opportunity cost: How much is it costing the buyer not to take action. Emphasize the value of time and how you can't get that time back. Whatever your tactic during your presentation, the goal should be to get the buyer to stop stalling and make a decision.

The best Response Block here is to address the matter head on and get the buyer to acknowledge at some level that continued procrastination as a strategy for growth and success is unacceptable.

Objection #9: I'll do it later, down the road.

Buyer Objection	I'll do it later, down the road.
Response Block	You can always find a good reason to put things off for tomorrow and say that you'll do it later.
Offer to Resolve	But if what I have to offer can help you today, <i>would you agree that there's no point in waiting until tomorrow to take action?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show the buyer how what you have to offer will benefit him today.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, many people never get started because they put it off for another day. But based on what I've just shown you, <i>can you begin to see why it makes good sense not to wait any longer?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #10: I can get it cheaper elsewhere.

Objection variations:

- *I'm sure if I shop around I can get a better price.*
- *I think I saw it for half the price at another place.*
- *I think you're overcharging.*

This objection is a close cousin of 'you're too expensive' coin. How you Response Block this objection depends on whether or not the claim by the buyer is true.

If it's true that the buyer can get it cheaper elsewhere then you have to find a way to create value in your offering to offset the price differential. I'm not saying you have to match your competitor's price because price alone isn't the real objection. Buyers will pay a premium (upwards of 20% in some cases) if they feel that you offer better quality and support for your product.

In selling today, the salesperson is just as much part of the product itself as he is part of the sales. Selling is about establishing a long-lasting and trusting relationship with a buyer. The adage that people buy from people they like is truer today than it ever was. Given the heightened sense of distrust in our society, buyers are willing to pay more to work with someone who they believe is looking out for their best interest and not just there to make a sale. Simply stated, you have to sell yourself to the buyer as well as your product.

Also, by admitting up front that your products are indeed more expensive will catch the buyer off guard because they don't expect such brazen honesty from a

salesperson. But as has been discussed, what people are looking for is honesty when doing business. One way to develop trust and rapport is to do the unexpected, be honest and direct with the buyer without fear of repercussion (i.e., losing the sale).

Instead of trying to overcome the price objection or simply ignoring that very fact, what you want to do is tell the buyer that if price is the only determinant in choosing a product or service then there's no need for the meeting. If price is the other factor on which the buyer is making the decision, then why doesn't the buyer just have everyone email in their prices and be done with it.

Your job as a salesperson is to make the buyer sensitive to the fact that there are other mitigating circumstances and/or features that should drive the decision-making process, such as quality and support. DO NOT be afraid to challenge a buyer (without being too confrontational) who says to you that the only determining factor is pricing.

Any buyer who insists that price is the only consideration is a short-term thinker and may not be worth the effort if loyalty is no more than just a number. Even if you win the business today, what's to stop the buyer from coming back tomorrow wanting a better price. And if the salesperson can't offer to drop the price, it's on to the next supplier he goes. It's been my experience that this type of buyer makes the worst client. This buyer will always demand more and expect to pay less.

One final note: If you drop your prices once, you have pretty much conditioned the buyer to come back and ask for another discount unless you make it clear that the discount was an exception to the rule. Using discounts in the negotiation phase to win new business is acceptable as

Response Block Selling

long as the price break is not viewed by the buyer as a precedent for future purchases.

A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance

Objection #10: I can get it cheaper elsewhere. (True)

Buyer Objection	I can get it cheaper elsewhere.
Response Block	You may find our product cheaper elsewhere if you look hard enough. But what's harder to find is the quality and support that go along with it.
Offer to Resolve	It's safe to say that you will have questions down the road and having someone to answer those questions is important, <i>would you agree?</i> Allow me to show you what we offer.
Demonstrate	Demo: show the buyer the quality of your product and how you'll be able to support him and his business. Emphasize how much the client will save by using your product and support.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, given the quality of the product, I hope you'll never need our support, but if you do, <i>can you see the value of having us just one phone call away?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #10: I can get it cheaper elsewhere. (Not True)

If the objection is not true and you do offer the best prices in town, then your Response Block and demonstration should be geared at dispelling any misperception about what your competitors are charging. Keep in mind that this objection may be a red herring and that, in fact, the buyer isn't even aware of what the going market price is for your particular product.

Focus on showing the cost savings with your product, but also make sure you're emphasizing the quality and support of what you have to offer. The mistake many salespeople make is focusing on convincing the buyer that they have the best prices in town. When you do this, you inadvertently minimize the other important attributes of the product you offer and the discussion then turns into a numbers game.

Sell price, but make sure you also sell value. Studies have shown that price isn't usually the linchpin when making a buying decision. Buyers want to buy the best at the best price, but they value long-term security over price.

Objection #10: I can get it cheaper elsewhere. (Not True)

Buyer Objection	I can get it cheaper elsewhere.
Response Block	Buyers think they can find this product cheaper elsewhere and I encourage them to try because I am confident we offer the best price.
Offer to Resolve	You would agree that finding the best price is important, but what's even more important is the quality and support that goes along with it. <i>Would you agree?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show how your prices, quality and support stack up against your competitors' products.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, our price is unbeatable and I hope you'll never need our support, but if you do, <i>can you see the real value of having us just one phone call away?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #11: Your company hasn't been around a long time.

Objection variations:

- *I've never heard of your company.*
- *Your company is relatively new, isn't it?*
- *How big is your company anyway?*
- *What year was your company founded?*

If you or the company you represent hasn't been in business for many years, expect some push back on why anyone would want to take a risk and buy from a new company in the first place. The concerns here from the buyer's perspective is the absence of a track record (i.e., performance and reliability) and if the buyer were to buy, how do they know that a year or so down the line you're still going to be in business (i.e., long term support). Both are valid concerns that need to be addressed. The key to overcoming the main objection will be to take this apparent disadvantage (not being in business for long time) and turn it into an advantage.

There's no way to defend the absence of a track record. If you've been in business one year and the client expects you to provide three years of history, there is simply no way that's going to be possible. The best you can do here is to talk about your existing client base and share with the buyer your clients' feedback on your product or service over the last year.

You may be able to defend the second key concern regarding longevity and how long your company plans to

be around. The best way to approach this, if you can, is to talk about your company's financial position today and its commitment to be a leader in its particular market niche. Although any proof you provide will be anecdotal at best, assuaging your client's concern about your company's liquidity and your commitment to being a long-term player is all in how you deliver the message in your sales pitch.

To do it effectively requires that you address the aforementioned concerns, but more importantly, while shifting the focus of the sales pitch to why being a new or relatively young company is really an advantage that will benefit the buyer. Tricky? Yes. Possible? Absolutely!

Objection #11: Your company hasn't been around a long time.

Buyer Objection	Your company hasn't been around a long time.
Response Block	We're a relatively new company; in fact, many buyers have never heard of us.
Offer to Resolve	Being a young company has its advantages over established companies who refuse to adapt to market changes and give limited accessibility to key people inside the company. <i>Is adaptability and access to support important to you?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show how your 'smallness and newness' plays to the buyer's needs.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, <i>can you now see the value of working with a young, energetic company that is willing to listen to you and adapt quickly to your needs?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #12: I don't like your CEO (or your company).

Objection variations:

- *I don't like the people who work for your company.*
- *I've heard negative things about your company.*
- *Your company is more concerned with making money than helping.*

This objection, although not common, is one that's never stated aloud but everyone seems to know about. This may be due to some product defect or bad news the company faced in the past. Sometimes one small misstep by a company or mishap with a product will be blown out of proportion. Sort of the like the telephone game we used to play as kids where you whispered something into one person's ear and by the time it got to the last person, the message had been completely distorted.

The best tactic here, assuming the client is already aware and ready to remind you of past errors, is to throw yourself on the mercy of the buyer's discretion by acknowledging that your product or company had problems in the past and then reassure the buyer that concerns have been addressed and rectified.

Every company will have its critics. Even the largest of corporations with healthy track records of producing good products and contributing positively will have their detractors. It's worth reminding the buyer of all the good work the company and/or the products have done in helping other buyers achieve their goals whatever they might be.

For some buyers, if they are aware of your misstep, it will be hard for them to forget especially if they had a poor experience with your product and personnel.

I had a client at one time who refused to take a meeting with me because my predecessor had treated him and his company poorly. But after two months of being persistent, I was able to get the meeting with the decision makers. The initial reception was quite frosty. For the first 10 minutes of my sales pitch I was getting nothing but dead pan looks and apathetic glances. It wasn't until I addressed my predecessor's past mistakes and product mishaps and admitted to the group that as a company we had not been good to the buyer that the buyers began to warm up.

I reassured them that things would be different going forward and that we would work to regain their confidence with no expectation that they would buy from me in the short run. This last statement seemed to defrost them a bit, but it still took six months to get the first order. And although it wasn't huge, I viewed it as a success and a test by the buyer to see if indeed this time around things would be different.

If this is the case, develop a Response Block that cuts to the heart of the buyer's hesitation and addresses the matter directly. Show no fear and find solace in knowing that even the buyer you're addressing, at one time or another, made similar mistakes and will be sympathetic to your apologetic plight. Remember, people love to forgive and they also love to loathe those who refuse to take personal responsibility for past mistakes.

Objection #12: I don't like your CEO (or your company).

Buyer Objection	I don't like your CEO (or your company).
Response Block	Over the past few months we've heard complaints from buyers who weren't happy with our support or personnel in the past, and swore they would never buy from our company.
Offer to Resolve	With your permission I'd like to go ahead and discuss some of the changes we've implemented to show you that we're serious about winning your business and that we value you as a customer. <i>Is that alright?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: talk about the changes that have been made.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, as you can see, we've changed. Although we're still growing and learning, <i>would you at least be willing to listen to some of things we now offer?</i>

Objection #13: I don't like your products.

Buyer Objection	I don't like your products.
Response Block	Over the past few months we've heard complaints from buyers who weren't happy with our product or support in the past, and swore they would never buy from our company again.
Offer to Resolve	With your permission I'd like to go ahead and discuss some of the product changes and improvements we've implement to show you that we're serious about meeting our client's needs. <i>Is that alright?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: talk about the changes that have been made.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, as you can see, we've made changes to our products to avoid problems like we've had in the past. I know we'll have to earn your trust once more, but <i>would you at least be willing to listen to some of things we now offer?</i>

You'll notice that the tie-downs for these last two objections are a little gentler than some of the previous examples. The reason should be obvious, but worth emphasizing. If a client has been burned in the past by someone in your company, asking the buyer to forgive you on the spot is expecting a bit much. The buyer's trust has to be earned once more over time. Your goal is to get the buyer to at least begin to consider your products once more and open the door to future business.

Lastly, a word of caution is in order. Only raise the issue of your company's lack of performance or persons associated with your company not being liked if you know for a fact this is the main reason this buyer will use to refuse to buy from you. If you raise this objection when no concerns existed in the first place, you've just planted in the buyer's mind a reason for him not to buy from you. In other words, you just shot yourself in the proverbial sales foot.

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #14: I'm concerned about your customer support.

Objection variations:

- *Do you have a customer support department?*
- *How will you support us after we buy?*
- *How do you currently support your existing customers?*
- *How many employees do you have?*

In many cases it isn't the fear of buying or the price tag that concerns the buyer. It is what follows after the decision is made. Today buying a product or service with a high price tag requires that the buyer and the salesperson's company enter into a long-term relationship.

For example, if I purchased a \$10 watch, I wouldn't be too concerned with the support later on if the watch failed. If it did malfunction, I would toss it and cut my losses. But, if I were to buy an expensive item requiring a sizeable investment, I would be more careful in choosing whom I buy from since I might require some support down the road.

So if the buyer is concerned about the type of support he will receive after the fact, be prepared to discuss it during your sales pitch. For example:

- Toll-free phone support
- 24/7 online support or on-site support (if available)
- On-call support (you provide the buyer with a specific phone number to call if he has problems.

Objection #14: I'm concerned about your customer support.

Buyer Objection	I'm concerned about your customer support.
Response Block	One of things we pride ourselves on is the type of customer support our clients' demand.
Offer to Resolve	With your permission I'd like to show you how our customer service functions and how you, as a client of ours, will be able to take advantage of services. <i>Is that alright?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: talk about how to use customer support.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what you've seen and what I've discussed, <i>can you see how we have several ways of supporting you in order to ensure things go smoothly?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #15: I can't afford it right now.

Objection variations:

- *I don't have that kind of money available.*
- *That's more than I expected to pay (i.e., out of my price range or stretching my budget).*
- *I don't want to charge it on my credit card.*
- *Now's not a good time for me to buy.*

Whenever this objection is raised, I simply don't buy it at face value. Assuming you are speaking to a qualified buyer, the only reason a buyer would put forth such an objection is because not enough value was created to compel the buyer to move forward and find the necessary financial resources.

I'm reminded of story told by the master salesman himself Zig Ziglar. He recounts a story when he visited a family when selling cookware. He could tell the family didn't have a lot of money, but he knew for sure the family needed his set of cookware. No matter what Zig did, the wife just kept refusing to buy the cookware claiming they simply didn't have the financial means to buy.

As Zig recounts the story he tells about how he was ready to fold up his tent when somewhere in the conversation he mentioned a set of china he was also selling. He noticed that the wife perked up and her eyes widened with excitement. Being a great salesman, Zig asked if she would like to take a look at the set of china. Before the woman could say yes, Zig was halfway out the door going to fetch the set.

As she was examining the china, Zig mentioned the cost of the china and noticed that the objection over price had been reduced to a mild concern. To make a long story short she bought the set of china, which turned out to be more expensive than the set of cookware he had been pushing all evening.

How is it that a person can go from ‘I can’t afford that’ to ‘I’ll take it right now’? As Zig tells the story, that woman always wanted a set of china, something she thought she would never own. There was a strong emotional factor that was driving her decision and that emotional factor translated into personal value for her. Because of the emotional component, she found a way the means to pay for the set of china.

I want you to remember this story the next time someone says, “I can’t afford it.” Then ask yourself if your sales pitch is creating enough emotional value whereby the buyer sees that your product or service is something that’s going to help them reach some personal or business goal. Buyers will find the financial resources if you give them enough reasons to do so.

There’s never a good time for the buyer to spend money, but the time is always right to spend money if the buyer is shown how your product exceeds, in terms of value, the money they possess. Said another way, if the value you provide with your product is greater than the value of the money they have, you will always make a sale. Don’t take my word for it, just simply examine your own buying behavior and you’ll come to the same conclusion.

Finally, I would be negligent in this discussion if I didn’t mention that sometimes it’s not a matter of want or desire to buy but a matter of *liquidity*; they buyer simply doesn’t have the cash available to make the buying

decision. If you or your company is in a position to offer some type of financing and/or payment terms (e.g., 50% today, 50% due in 60 days), this type of flexibility will allow you to increase your chances of closing the sale.

Objection #15: I can't afford it right now (has the money but doesn't see the value).

Buyer Objection	I can't afford it right now.
Response Block	My clients often tell me that my product is too expensive and that they simply can't afford it.
Offer to Resolve	But if I can show you that you can afford our product and show you how it's going to help you save money (or time) over the long run, <i>would you at least consider it?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: talk about how the product or service will help the buyer save money.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what you've seen <i>would you agree that it's never a matter of how much something is going to cost, but how much it's going to save you that should drive a decision?</i>

Objection #15: In can't afford it right now (doesn't have the money but sees the value of buying).

Buyer Objection	I can't afford it right now.
Response Block	My clients often tell me that my product is too expensive and that they simply can't afford it.
Offer to Resolve	But if I can show you that you can afford our product and how it's going to help you save money (or time) over the long run, <i>would you at least consider it?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: talk about how the product or service will help the buyer save money AND include finance options.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what you've seen I know you see the value of ownership, <i>but did the flexible financing we offer make sense to you?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #16: I'm afraid of the hidden fees.

Objection variations:

- *What's it really going to cost me?*
- *What else do I have to pay for?*
- *Who pays for changes or upgrades?*
- *It's the fine print I'm worried about.*
- *Why is your price so low? What's the catch?*

With so many scams out there and the cost of litigation (legal representation) skyrocketing, it's no wonder buyers are a bit apprehensive when it comes to signing their name on the dotted line – especially when the commitment is for an extended period of time or the price of the product or service is substantial.

One needs only look at how cellular phone companies do business today to understand why buyers are hesitant to sign on. Every advertisement you see gives a pretty direct price on what each calling plan will cost. So you sign on the dotted line thinking you're going to pay \$69.99 a month. But when the bill arrives the following month it reads \$103.25. Why? It's called the fine print. Salespeople in the business rarely go into all the taxes and surcharges you'll be slapped with once you decide to buy. The \$69.99 is the cost to sign up, not the real cost of what you'll pay every month. It's this type of deceptive salesmanship that makes it hard for legitimate salespeople who aren't out to screw the buyer.

Response Block Selling

The best way to deal with this objection is to reinsure through examples or an overt statement in the agreement that there are no hidden charges that will appear out of left field. Be sensitive to the buyer's concern.

Objection #16: I'm afraid of the hidden fees.

Buyer Objection	I'm afraid of the hidden fees.
Response Block	My clients often ask me if there are any hidden costs when you buy our products.
Offer to Resolve	<i>Would you mind if I take a moment to break down all the costs associated with our products so there are no surprises?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show all the costs.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, I hope you can appreciate why I took the time to assuage any concerns you may have about pricing. The last thing I want to do is surprise you with the cost. <i>Did that help clarify things?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #17: I hear you're going to discontinue the product.

Objection variations:

- *I hear you're going out of business.*
- *How long will you continue to offer this product?*
- *Is there a new version of this product being developed?*
- *Are you (or your company) still supporting this product?*

This is one of those objections your competitors might drop on the buyer to prevent you from making the sale. Or maybe someone else told the buyer that your product was going to be discontinued. No one likes to buy a product that won't be supported down the road. Whatever the reason, the best way to do handle this objection is to reassure the buyer that the product will be around for a while.

Objection #17: I hear you're going to discontinue the product.

Buyer Objection	I hear you're going to discontinue the product.
Response Block	Many buyers worry about product support and continuation over the life of the product.
Offer to Resolve	<i>Would it be okay if I share with you some of our plans for this product going forward?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: talk about future plans for your product that apply to the buyer.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what I've shown you, <i>can you see how we are not only going to continue supporting the product, but how some of the new features will benefit your needs later on?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #18: My friends (or family) tell me it doesn't work.

Objection variations:

- *I heard that it doesn't work.*
- *I don't know anyone who is using the product.*
- *I've heard people (or peers) bad-mouthing the product.*
- *Can you tell me who else is using this?*
- *If I buy this, people are going to laugh at me!*

There will come a time when you will probably have to defend the integrity of your product (or service). I'll assume for the sake of this example that that the rumors of the product or service being defective are exaggerated.

I worked with a software company once that produced a great package to help people market their businesses online. The product was well worth its price tag. The problem came when buyers who purchased the product assumed that it would require minimal effort on their part. In the end, of course, they were awakened to the harsh reality that the product was not some off-the-shelf package that just needed plugged in and it started working. The package required effort and persistence on the part of the buyer.

In the buyer's eyes, this product was a failure because it failed to perform up to their perceived expectations. The company made it abundantly clear that the product was only as good as the effort put into it. Nonetheless, buyers

who expected the product to work miracles without effort turned out to be the biggest critics of the company.

Some of the disenchanted buyers went as far as to create a Web site to bash the software and dissuade potential buyers from buying the package. The Web site was full of one-sided criticism for why the package didn't work. Buyers ignored full disclosure as they refused to mention that the seller had stated that users must put in the time and effort to make it work.

The moral of the story here is that when you're selling a product, you have to set realistic expectations for the buyer and reiterate those expectations so that the seller and buyer are on the same page.

Sometimes a few disenfranchised buyers make enough noise to drown out the praise heaved on a product by ardent supporters. In your sales pitch, if there is any doubt in the buyer's mind about the quality or performance of your product, a good tactic would be to talk about existing clients and share some of their success stories.

Objection #18: My friends (or family) tell me it doesn't work.

Buyer Objection	My friends (or family) tell me it doesn't work.
Response Block	Many buyers worry about others will say when they decide to use our products.
Offer to Resolve	I'm quick to remind people that those who say it doesn't work have never used it. <i>Would you allow me to show you how it works and then you can decide for yourself?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show how the product works and how it will help the buyer.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, based on what I've shown you I hope I've convinced you that not only does the product work, but that it will work for your needs as well, <i>would you agree?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	

Objection #19: What if I buy and find something better later?

Objection variations:

- *What if I buy it and don't like it?*
- *I'll just wait for the next version to come out.*
- *Is this product the latest (or best) on the market?*
- *I'm told there are other products on the market I should look at.*
- *I need to do more research before I buy.*

Many buyers are afraid to commit to buying a particular item for fear that there may be something better down the road or offered by another company. The technical term for this condition is “buyer’s remorse.” Most buyers don’t know what else is available and will hesitate in making a decision until they ‘do some research.’

The best way to handle this type of objection is to frame the conversation in such a way that it’ll favor your products. In other words, you’re going to help the buyer by providing the needed research. For example, if you have two other competitors in the market with a relatively weaker product, in your sales presentation contrast your product to the others and position your product as the obvious product of choice.

Studies have shown that if a buyer doesn’t know the inherent value of a product, the buyer will look to contrast the offering with other similar products. By providing two other competitive examples, the buyer is able to contrast

the difference and be more willing to arrive at a buying decision.

So in your presentation be prepared to address this potential objection by having some sort of ‘comparative analysis’ available to show to the buyer. A comparative analysis is simply a feature-by-feature comparison of your product against the competitors. An effective way of doing this is to use a table where each product and corresponding feature is checked off and listed side-by-side allowing the buyer to see a visual representation of how your product is superior to the others.

If you offer a product today that isn’t upgradeable (i.e., new changes or modifications can’t be incorporated as they become available) then you need to sell the strength of the product as is.

But, if you offer a product that will have upgrades available for the product (e.g., software or hardware on a computer), then you need to really drive home the point to the buyer that today he only needs to buy what he needs and as those needs grow, he can easily size or grow the product as he sees fit.

Objection #19: What if I buy and find something better later on? (No upgrades available)

Buyer Objection	What if I buy and find something better later on?
Response Block	I'm often asked if there is something better on the market or something that is going to come out next year.
Offer to Resolve	There will always be something new or more fashionable. But if you wait for the perfect product, you'll never make a purchase. The question should be 'is this product for me and can it help me right now?' <i>Would you allow me to show you how it works and then you can decide for yourself if you want to wait?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show how the product works and how it will help the buyer.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, this product has everything to meet your needs today. Holding off and waiting for the next best thing can cost you time and money, <i>would you agree?</i>

Objection #19: What if I buy and find something better later on? (Upgrades available)

Buyer Objection	What if I buy and find something better later on?
Response Block	I'm often asked if there is something better on the market or something that is going to come out next year.
Offer to Resolve	I'm going to show you how you can easily upgrade the product in the future to meet your needs as you continue to grow. <i>How does that sound?</i>
Demonstrate	Demo: show how the product works and how the buyer can upgrade in the future.
Tie-Down	Mr. Buyer, as you can see, our products can grow alongside your needs so there's no need to worry about holding off for the next best thing, <i>would you agree?</i>

Objection Exercise:

Buyer Objection	
Response Block	
Offer to Resolve	
Demonstrate	
Tie-Down	



Constructing the Sales Pitch

"It takes one hour of preparation for each minute of presentation time."

Wayne Burgraff

Now comes the most important part of the Response Block process: putting it all together into a coherent sales pitch that you can use to lower a buyer's resistance. Let's review once more what we know up to this point before proceeding. We know that there are two psychological processes that we must be aware of before we make our sales pitch to a buyer:

Rule of Consistency: A publicly stated position will be more vigorously defended than a privately held belief. So our goal is to answer buyers' questions or block their objections before they are publicly stated so that we may overcome that objection more easily.

Selective Perception: If an objection is voiced or left unchecked, buyers may seek information to confirm

their beliefs and therefore not go forward with buying decisions.

So the objective of using Response Blocks is to answer a buyer's concerns (i.e., objections) before they are publicly stated in order to prevent the buyer or others who heard the statements from selectively seeking information to confirm the objections.

The next phase before visiting any buyer and presenting your product or service was to prepare by listing out common buyer concerns and developing a way of raising the objection and then addressing the same using the following five-step Response Block Structure:

Step 1: List all possible objections a client might use for not buying.

Step 2: For each objection, create an acknowledgement statement or a Response Block.

Step 3: Create an offer to resolve the objection for the client and along with a small agreement question.

Step 4: Demonstrate how your product or service can resolve the particular objection raised in Step 2.

Step 5: Tie-down the prospect to an agreement that the objection was resolved by asking a question. This agreement should be in line with the agreement you've asked for in Step 3.

Each step has a specific purpose. Step 1, for example, is obviously used for preparation. It's worth taking the time to quietly sit down and brainstorm all the different

objections a buyer can throw at you. This type of preparation will allow you to go into almost any presentation situation with more *confidence*—something the buyer will take note of.

Step 2 in the RBS is used to *build trust and rapport* by bringing up or raising an issue before the buyer has had a chance to do so. Again, most buyers today are distrustful of salespeople and will be pleasantly surprised when the issues are raised in a forthright manner as opposed to being brushed aside or swept under the rug. This directness will help you begin to *reduce the buyer's resistance*.

Step 3 sets up the buyer to make a small agreement, a concession if you will. The agreement formula is simple, 'If I can show you how to solve X, would that be useful?' The rule of consistency is in play here and will work in favor of the salesperson. When a person makes an agreement, according to the rule of consistency, he will have to bring his behavior in line with that publicly made statement. Using this approach will help you begin to *gain a buyer's commitment*.

Step 4 is where your ability to answer all the buyer's concerns is on display. By methodically going through your sales pitch (presentation) addressing the buyer's unvoiced concern helps you *gain credibility* and at the same time *further lowers a buyer's resistance* as you continue to address and resolve the relevant concern.

Finally in Step 5, by asking the buyer another agreement question at this point, you are trying to *further gain commitment* by having the buyer publicly acknowledge (i.e., rule of consistency working in your favor) that the concern you raised has been satisfactorily addressed.

As you can see, each step in the RBS has a dual purpose: lower buyer resistance and increase buyer commitment (i.e., acceptance) for each concern or objection that the buyer might raise.

Step 6: Stringing Together the RBS

It's now time to pull this all together so you can begin constructing your first RBS presentation. I want you to pretend for a moment you have 3:30 p.m. meeting with a first-time client. You've been after this presentation opportunity for quite some time and you don't want to blow it. You also know that there may be some issues that you'll have to confront if you want to stand a chance of winning the business. Here's what you know going in:

- 1) They're not familiar with your company; you're the new kid on the block.
- 2) The company is already buying from your competitor.
- 3) Your prices are 20% higher than your competitor's prices, but you know your products offer more bang for the buck.
- 4) You have the best customer support in the industry.
- 5) They've heard bad things about your company.

To prepare for your presentation, take each of the concerns listed and create a Response Block Structure for each one. As has been demonstrated, each RBS will allow you to formulate what to say and develop the right agreement questions to ask ahead of the time.

Once this is done, it's now time to strategically plan how you will make the sales pitch. For this, let's look at two different scenarios and discuss how the setting will affect the dynamics of how you make your sales pitch.

Scenario 1: You're meeting with the buyer face-to-face and it's an informal setting (e.g., across the kitchen table).

Scenario 2: You're meeting with the buyer and others associated with making a decision face-to-face in a formal setting (e.g., meeting or conference room).

In selling there's a saying that's often repeated, 'Eye level is buy level,' which means that you should adjust your presentation to the buyer's level of comfort. In an informal setting you don't want to create a mismatch. For example, you're buyers are simple people who want straightforward answers, but you show up with a computer and projector to do a full-blown, corporate-like presentation. That's a blatant mismatch.

If the buyer is informal, make your presentation informal but maintain the professionalism expected. In your informal presentation you simply raise each of the concerns using the RBS as you chat with the buyer.

Here's an example of how to organize or construct your sales pitch using the RBS to present your product.

***You:** Bob, I want to thank you for taking time to meet with me. I know your time is valuable. Do you mind if I just jump right into it?*

***Bob:** Not at all.*

You: *(Raise the objection) Many people aren't familiar with our company because we're relatively new. Would it comfort you to know that we've worked with some highly visible clients?*

Bob: *Yes it would.*

You: *(Offer to resolve the objection and get agreement) With your permission I'd like to share with you how we've help other companies and see if there's a way we can help you. Does that sound good?*

Bob: *Sounds good.*

(Demonstrate)

You: *(Tie-down with acknowledgement question) Bob, based on what I've shown you, can you see how although we're a relatively young and unknown company, we're serious about helping you grow your business?*

Bob: *Yes, I can see that.*

In this conversation segment you can see how the objection of, *'I'm not familiar with your company'* is raised, addressed, and put to bed. If done correctly, the buyer acknowledges at the end (tie-down) that being a new or unknown company is not an issue any more. This is important. Keep in mind the rule of consistency.

If the buyer acknowledges that being a new or unknown company isn't an issue, then this very same concern can not

be used later on in the conversation (toward the close) as reason for not buying, get it?

Once the tie-down is completed in the first Response Block, find a way to segue into the next objection (e.g., *the buyer is already buying from your competitor*) and repeat the RBS all over again.

You: *(Raise the next objection) Now, Bob, I know you may be buying from someone else today and that's understandable especially because you were unfamiliar with our company. But, Bob, in business, isn't it always a good idea to have options?*

Bob: *Of course it is.*

You: *(Offer to resolve objection) I knew you'd agree. If I could show why our products are amongst the best in the market, would you to consider our products as an option today?*

Bob: *If the products do what you say, absolutely.*

(Demonstrate)

You: *(Tie-down) Based on what I've shown you, can you see how our products are more than capable of handling your needs today?*

Bob: *Yes, I'd have to agree.*

You can see how by stringing the RBS together you can build a full-blown sales pitch or presentation. As you proceed from one RBS to the other throughout the sales

pitch you are reducing the buyer's sales resistance and gaining buyer commitment (or acceptance) with each tie-down.

Exercise: Complete the above sales pitch by writing out an RBS script for the three remaining objections:

- 1) *Your prices are 20% higher than your competitor's prices, but you know your products offer more bang for the buck.*
- 2) *You have the best customer support in the industry.*
- 3) *They've heard bad things about your company.*

If your presentation requires a formal presentation (Scenario 2) with many people in the room, you will need to develop a slide show that addresses the buyer's concerns. I strongly recommend that you still take the time to build and write out an RBS for each of those concerns. Writing out the RBS allows you to find the right wording to use in your sales pitch and you'll also begin to encode and memorize what you're going to say in front of your buyer or from the front of the room so that it comes across naturally and effortlessly.

In Closing about Closing

Finally, each commitment, each tie-down you get from the buyer is aimed at getting the buyer to lower his resistance and increase his acceptance of what you have to offer.

There are many books written on how to close a buyer and most are filled with all sorts of high-pressure tactics. The problem with these tactics is that they're outdated, and buyers in today's market are tired of being pressured. So the end result is a buyer who resents you and won't buy from you.

Instead, what salespeople need today is a new approach. Using the RBS allows you to gently nudge the buyer closer and closer to the purchase line. If done correctly, by the time you get to the close, don't be surprised if it's only a matter of a gentle nudge to close the deal.

Appendix:

Response Block Structures – Behavior Modification

Response Block Structures can be used for blocking buyers' objections, but they can also be used to *modify a buyer's behavior*. This realization occurred to me one day when I was trying to find a way to reduce audience attrition for our full-day seminars, which were essentially free.

If you recall from the opening chapter I was involved in selling software packages to large audiences. When we surveyed people who were leaving around lunch time we found that the excuses fell into three main categories:

- 1) I already know all this stuff so I'm leaving.
- 2) I can't afford to invest so I'm leaving.
- 3) I can do it on my own; I don't need this tool...I'm leaving

This made me think about using RBS to get people to stay in the room. Then it hit me. I decided to build a *slightly modified version of the RBS* (using only the first three steps) for each of these excuses used for leaving early in hopes of Response Blocking the buyer's motivation for wanting to leave. So during my presentation from the front of the room, I would insert two RBS statements like this one:

Step 1: (Objection) I already know all this stuff.

Step 2: (Raise the objection from the front of the room)
"Today is going to be full of a lot of information. For

those of you who know a lot or are experts, I'm going ask you to be patient since there are others who are just getting started."

Step 3: (Offer to resolve the objection from the front of the room) *"But I promise that we will pick up the pace. In the morning session we will be covering the basics so that in the afternoon we'll be ready to get into advance techniques that most of you have never heard of. (Asking the audience) Does that sound like a good deal folks?"*

This Response Block from the front of the room had great results. Instead of the typical 20% attrition by mid-day, we managed to get it down to around 10%. Given the mixed bag of people you get in the room doing public seminars, a 10% attrition rate is exceptional. You're always going to have people who aren't serious buyers or were just there to get a free lunch.

We also have had people in the workshops who will walk in with a mindset that they can't afford to purchase our product or decide early on that they can't afford it. . As long as a person is in the room, there's a chance of still changing that person's mind or swaying him to reconsider. You can't sell to someone who's left the room so the question is, 'how do you keep in the room?' Here's another example of the modified RBS aimed at modifying the buyer's behavior (i.e., not leaving the room).

Step 1: (Objection) I can't afford to invest so I'm leaving.

Step 2: (Raise the objection from the front of the room)

“One day a person wanted to leave the seminar early because he convinced himself before hearing all the facts that he couldn’t afford it so he decided he was going to leave.”

Step 3: (Offer to resolve the objection from the front of the room)

“At the break I told him that was more of a reason for him to stay. If you can’t afford to buy then you should be in here taking lots of notes and making sure you learn as much as you can today. (Asking the audience) Does that make sense to you all?”

The goal here is to keep the person in the room. When addressing your audience with this modified RBS, you want to get some type of commitment from them – which is why you always want to end the with an acknowledgement question like, ‘Does that makes sense to you all?’

Exercise: Write out a modified RBS for the third objection, *'I can do it on my own; I don't need this tool...I'm leaving.'* in terms of a formal meeting where you're meeting with a group of people.

Response Block Selling

A New Approach for Lowering Buyer Resistance