

Your **BIAS AGAINST** **SELLING**

is Gonna Kill Your Success!

By Lenann McGookey Gardner



Many people think that salespeople are the lowest of the low – the unprincipled people who trick their victims into parting with their money. Everyone knows the stereotype of the used car salesman: pushy, loud, aggressive, deceptive, won't-take-no-for-an-answer gross-o people. NO ONE wants to be that sort of person – and yet many people assume such behavior is necessary for selling success.

What's often true is this: We hate selling – and sellers – so much that we can't grow our own incomes! Are you among those who don't trust anyone who might have something to sell, because you just know that person will lie, cheat and steal to sell whatever-it-is? And how do you reconcile that attitude with the fact that, as a professional, for your business to be successful – and for your career to move forward – you have to be able to do some selling?

Any bias a person has against selling will limit their success, and is usually completely unnecessary.

Successful sellers today understand that the foundation of professional selling efforts (as opposed to "Do you want fries with that?"-type selling) is TRUST. And they know how to create an atmosphere in which trust can grow. Such an atmosphere has nothing to do with the "pushy salesman stereotype!"

Since all the selling methods, tools, and approaches in the world won't help you much if you have a bias against selling, here are five steps to help you overcome your bias and become a successful salesperson:

1. Understand Where Your Bias Against Selling Comes From.

Studies have shown that Americans receive between 3,000 and 7,000 promotional, marketing or advertising messages every day. From TV and radio ads, newspapers, magazines, billboards, words on the sides of buses, junk mail and junk e-mail, to the wrappings on the products we buy – if not on the products themselves (think of the Nike “swoosh”) – we are inundated with efforts to sell us something.

And most people have been burned by offers that sounded too good to be true, and were.

People hate the part of themselves that wants to believe the offers, spends hard-earned money, and then gets taken. Most people have had telemarketing offers that came in, and, while they blew off 99 out of 100 telemarketers, the one that they didn't blow off turned out to be taking advantage of them. Salespeople have promised things, and not only not delivered what was promised, but also just disappeared! It's hard to think of a profession that is trusted less than salespeople – maybe politicians or lawyers – but probably salespeople are the least trusted of all.

2. Understand and Accept the Need for Selling.

In the context of all those negative feelings, there's an inescapable fact: for most of us, being successful will require some selling. If you're going to succeed as an entrepreneur or a business owner, as an accountant or a consultant, as a banker or a hotelier or a scientist, even as an attorney, architect or computer specialist, you're going to have to FIND CLIENTS. And once you have found those clients, you're going to have to develop ongoing revenue streams from some of them – or you'll have to constantly seek out new clients – for your business or practice to be viable.

It's true: Finding Clients = Selling.

It's also true that Developing Additional Business with Established Clients = Selling.

3. Clean Up Your Attitude.

Selling is a discipline. A body of knowledge. Something that can be learned. Remove the emotional loading, the image of a greasy used-car salesman, by replacing it with an image of a helpful, concerned human being. That's a more accurate picture of today's successful rainmaker. Selling is just a way of behaving, a way of structuring conversations, to uncover the ways in which you might be helpful to other people, and then making those people aware of the opportunity you represent to them, so they can be big boys and girls and decide whether they'd like to take advantage of that opportunity. That's it! No pushing, no convincing, no persuading – people hate that. They will persuade themselves. *It's your job, simply, to be sure your conversation with them goes on long enough for them to see the opportunity you represent to them accurately, so they can decide whether to take advantage of that opportunity.*

4. Learn How to Sell Without Manipulating.

The problem, usually, is that well-intentioned, kind people, when called upon to sell, somehow flip themselves into what they think of as “sales mode” – smiling ingratiatingly, pursuing their own agenda, subtly or not-so-subtly pushing for a purchase. They're so wrapped up in their expectations and goals for the conversation that the prospective client can barely get a word in edgewise!

How to do better? Get clear on your objective for any meeting with a prospect – what will have to happen in this conversation for you to feel that it has been successful – and then turn your

attention and all your curiosity toward your prospect, hear him out, and offer to help if you can.

5. Think MORAL.

Too often, thanks to media images of salespeople probably, we think of selling as unprincipled, whatever-it-takes, even spirit-killing work. It's not. Finding the people who can benefit from what you have to offer, making them aware of that, and offering to help -- always being more concerned for their welfare than your profit sharing, commission or bonus, puts you on a higher plane; a better place from which to operate and feel good about yourself.

While there will always be the pushy car salesman stereotype, that doesn't have to be the behavior you exhibit as a caring, concerned provider of services. Recognize the opportunities to grow your business and succeed by becoming good at selling – and get your negative attitude out of the way today!



Lenann Gardner is an internationally known sales consultant and author of Got Sales? The Complete Guide to Today's Proven Methods for Selling Services, a new book covering the highlights of all the latest sales-related research and writings, published by Jarndyce & Jarndyce. A Harvard MBA, Lenann was the number one sales representative worldwide at a unit of Xerox Corporation in her first year selling, and achieved unprecedented results as a marketing executive at Mattel and in a leadership role at Blue Cross Blue Shield before becoming a coach, speaker and trainer for those who sell professional services. She is a winner of the American Marketing Association's Professional Services “Marketer of the Year” award and is profiled in Who's Who in America. For more information, please contact Lenann at Lenann@YouCanSell.com or at 505.828.1788.