



#1 Reason for Lost Sales: The Yielder

By Jeffrie Story
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How can I know the primary reason for lost sales?

Through 25 years of ongoing scientific research with salespeople, that's how. The research was done by a company for whom I'm a licensee: Behavioral Sciences Research Press, discoverer of the 12 types of Sales Call Reluctance®. Not surprisingly, I've noticed similar trends within the newspaper industry.

Sales Call Reluctance® is the hesitation caused by specific fears to initiate contact or conversation. It affects prospecting, questioning for needs assessment, controlling the contact, answering objections and closing. In other words, it dramatically affects sales results.

The #1 type of Sales Call Reluctance®, the Yielder, fears appearing pushy or intrusive. Notice that I said *appearing* pushy or intrusive, but how would Yielders know?

They claim to “just know” the right thing to do with prospects and clients. They know when they're going to be too pushy, or propose too much or close too soon. But this “knowledge” exists in their heads and overflows to their behaviors.

In *The Psychology of Sales Call Reluctance®*, published by Behavioral Sciences Research Press, authors Dudley and Goodson whimsically say that if Yielders were called “pushy and rude” by a prospect, they would “require two weeks of hospitalization.” This statement portrays the depth of the Yielder's feelings, lack of assertiveness and need for approval.

Some characteristics of Yielders follow. These might be a bit exaggerated or not. It depends on the amount of Yielder behavior within each person.

- They develop rapport quickly because they're *so* nice.
- They're good at servicing, but they'll over-do it; it is a good way to hide out from prospecting. Yielders receive customer praise but don't make quota.
- They think relationships make sales. Competitors get in, close a sale and get out while Yielders are getting to know about prospects' children.
- They hide behind consultative selling.
- They're office gossips.
- They are gullible and easy to persuade when prospects disagree or say, “We can't afford it.”

- They'll help anyone, including co-workers, even if it's detrimental to their success.
- They'll exaggerate when recounting their behavior to sound more assertive.
- They secretly call themselves "wimps," but they're clueless about how much their behaviors cost them and *you*.
- They're easy to manage and willing to agree, even if you suggest they're not assertive enough. But when they leave your office, they say to co-workers, "The manager is crazy if she thinks I'm going to do *that!*"
- They build up anger because they never disagree. If a rep atypically lashes out in anger, he has surpassed his tolerance level to yield.
- They handle customer service well, but they'll give away the farm if they're in charge of collecting overdue accounts.

How can Yielders stop being Yielders? While it's not always easy, the possibility of change is positive. Improvement starts with awareness, as does any behavioral change. The scientists offer behavioral techniques, but they also recommend books or training on assertiveness.

Why? If Yielders had an array of behavioral alternatives that didn't threaten to send them to the hospital, they could start making change and more sales.

How does one manage Yielders? And what if a sales manager is a Yelder? Read next month's column for answers!

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