

Top 10 Sales Mistakes

Every sales person, regardless of the industry, product, or skill level, makes mistakes. Here are some basic sales mistakes to avoid and some tips for selling more and having happier customers.

1. **Not listening.** Do not just listen to what the customer is asking for; look past that to find out what they need. Too often salespeople sing the praises of a product without hearing what the customer wants. You cannot sell to someone if you do not know what they want. Listen to your customers, identify the need, and fill it.
2. **Overselling.** A nonstop sales pitch leaves your potential customer with no room to make an intelligent decision. There is a fine line between being a good salesperson and being pushy or obnoxious. Know when to stop selling.
3. **Being unprepared.** Whether you are making a sale in a showroom, a board room, or on the phone, you need to know the details about what you are selling and be able to answer all pertinent questions. Be prepared. If you are prospecting for new business, know what you are going to say and be ready for questions you may be asked.
4. **Jumping straight to the sale.** In any type of sales business, you need to establish a relationship. Even on the Web you need to have landing pages to provide information about your products or services before jumping to the shopping cart. Do not rush to the sale. Take the time to educate your customers, and they will reward you with sales.
5. **Not closing the sale.** This is the flipside of the mistake above. Once you have provided your customer with the information he or she needs, ask if the customer is ready to make a purchase. It may seem unnecessary, but sometimes asking for the sale can be the nudge your customer needs to make a final decision.
6. **Going off topic.** Some salespeople overdo the need for a “relationship” with excessive chatter. Others continue to talk about the product or service, but spend an inordinate amount of time on irrelevant information. While you do want to build a relationship and make your customer comfortable, the goal is to make the sale. If the sale is the topic, don't veer too far off on tangents.
7. **Not researching your customer.** If you are trying to sell to a specific client at a meeting, you need to know what he or she is all about. Do some research before the sales meeting and get a good idea of the prospect's likes, dislikes, interests, and manner of doing business. The same holds true for consumers. Get to know who makes up your target audience.

8. **Judging books by their covers.** Salespeople routinely miss sales because they prejudge their customers. Do not let race, creed, gender, ethnicity, or appearance stand in the way of making a sale.
9. **Not following up on leads.** Just because someone does not buy immediately does not mean they will not be interested later -- particularly if they requested information. Follow-up is a critical aspect of sales that is often neglected.
10. **Failing to prospect for new customers.** Even when sales are at their peak, you need to devote time to looking for more customers. No company can survive without a constant influx of new customers, so no business can afford not to prospect for them.