



# Objections...a Catalyst to Win More Business!

By: F. Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA

Knowing how to handle objections is a critical link to sales success. In this article, I will reveal a step-by-step process to use objections as a catalyst to win more business.

So, what is an objection? By definition, it is the “action of challenging or disagreeing with something...an expression of disapproval or opposition.” Objections are a fact of life. And even the most successful people have had to learn how to handle them. Consider the following:

- **Oprah Winfrey** was fired by a local television station because the producer said she was “unfit for television.”
- **Bill Gates’** first business - Traf-O-Data – was a failure. The machine that Gates built to create reports for roadway engineers from raw data flopped.
- **Jim Carrey** was booed off the stage in his first comic stand-up at a club in Toronto. Later, when he auditioned for “Saturday Night Live,” he failed to get the part.
- **Walt Disney** was fired from the *Kansas City Star* because his editor said he “lacked imagination and had no good ideas.” When Disney created Mickey Mouse and tried to get MGM studios to distribute it, he was told that it would never work – a giant mouse in the screen would terrify women.
- **J.K. Rowling**, the creator of *Harry Potter*, saw herself as a failure. She was jobless, divorced, penniless, and with a dependent child after 12 major publishers rejected the script.

- **Colonel Sanders**, the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), got off to a rocky start. In fact, he was 62 years old when he used a \$105 social security check to pitch his first recipe to restaurants. Over a thousand people objected to his concept.
- **Thomas Edison** was told by his teachers that he was “too stupid to learn anything,” and was fired from his first two employment positions for not being productive enough.
- **Barbara Corcoran**, best known for her role on “Shark Tank,” was offered a position on the show only to be told that it had been given to an attractive blonde half her age. Facing objections, the real estate mogul wrote a brief email to Mark Burnett Productions, stating: “I consider your rejection a lucky charm, because everything that ever happened in my life came on the heels of failure.”

What do these eight legends have in common? When faced with what appeared to be insurmountable objections, they moved beyond them. They had doors slammed in their faces, yet used an objection-handling process through which fame and fortune followed.

### Are Objections Bad Things?

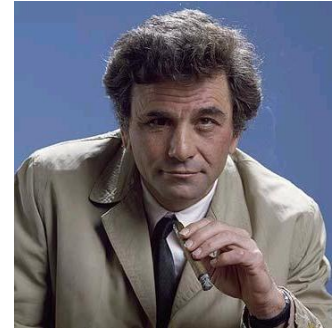
Absolutely not. When you are told, “It is just too expensive,” or “I am not sure,” or “It seems complicated,” or “I have a better offer,” you must embrace these objections and use them as an opportunity to understand what the customer is really thinking and feeling. When someone raises an objection, it is a good sign as he or she is giving you the opportunity to address it in a thorough and professional manner. Simply put, your ability to “address concerns” in the buyer-seller relationship is of huge importance.

When you receive an objection, you must begin peeling back the onion to determine if the customer:

- Simply needs more knowledge
- Has concerns or fears that need to be alleviated
- Is not fully authorized to make the decision
- Has a hidden agenda
- Needs more time to express his or her feelings
- Has a misperception about your product, service, or solution

I suggest that you consider an exercise through which you write down the most common objections that you face. Once on paper, attach pragmatic responses to the objections. Study your responses carefully and then visualize yourself in an encounter with the customer. Once you are confident in your response, role play and videotape your performance.

One of my favorite TV shows was “Columbo,” starring Peter Falk – the shabby, absent-minded police lieutenant who went about solving crimes. Columbo had the keen mind of Sherlock Holmes and Philip Marlowe, yet he had a mass of quirks and peculiarities. He was a seemingly distracted figure in a rumpled raincoat, perpetually patting his pockets for a light of his signature stogie. While awkward and unassuming, Columbo had a gift for working through objections. He used each objection as an opportunity to explore...to delve more deeply in his quest for discovering the truth.



## The Process of Using Objections to Win Business

The art of selling is best broken down into three distinct phases:

1. Identification of the need
2. Matching the need to a product, service, or solution
3. Moving the buyer to a place where he or she has no valid reason(s) not to move forward.

Most professionals are skilled in phases 1 and 2. It is phase 3 (moving the buyer) where many struggle. That being said, let's walk through the process of moving past objections to win more business.

**Listen to the objection before handling it.** Don't interrupt. First, hear them out. Listen carefully as you can pick up valuable clues from the way the customer phrases his or her objection.

**Repeat it back.** Always express gratitude before repeating back the gist of what has been said. Where possible, be aware of, sensitive to, and vicariously experience the feelings of the other person to demonstrate that you have his or her best interests at heart.

**Let the discovery begin.** Often, the first objection is not the customer's real concern. It is here that you ask open-ended questions to uncover what really is going on. It may take four or five layers of questions to uncover the real pain or objection. If you get “yes” or “no” responses, rephrase your questions. The “why” question is always a winner.

**Value proposition.** Once you understand the essence of the objection, your task is to relieve any concerns or fears through a clear, concise, compelling statement that summarizes how your product, service, or solution will respond to the issue(s) at hand and exceeds that of the competition. It is essential that your value proposition is aligned to the specific concern or issue.

**Testimonials and references.** In many issues, the consumer needs reassurance that your product, service, or solution is the right fit. It is here where testimonials and references

come into play. If you have a specific example, such as a story from an existing customer or a few statistics, by all means, present them. Hard facts make a huge difference.

**Ask for the business.** This might sound too obvious. However, you would be amazed how many talented professionals don't ask for the order.

As you master the process outlined above, you will gain enhanced confidence in handling objections. And you will relish the opportunity to take your customers to a place where they have no valid reason not to give you their business.

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#### About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace.