

INTRODUCTION

Why Should You Do Something Different?

Why should you do something different? Maybe you shouldn't. Maybe your sales results are steady or even spectacular. Maybe the methods getting you leads and referrals are working well. Maybe your company's closing percentages are high because of a strong sales process. Maybe your competition is far behind, and you don't feel the pressure to discount to close more business.

Maybe you are happy with the money you are making, the type of customers you are serving, and the time and resources needed to acquire and keep those customers. Great! If so, you may not be looking for ways to improve.

However—if you are like most sales professionals and business owners who sell primarily to customers in their homes—you may

be tired of doing the same things over and over again and getting the same (disappointing) results.

You may have a challenge in one or more of the areas we identified above. Or, things might be going pretty well and your business is good, but you know there is an opportunity to increase your sales and get a larger share of the potential market. You are looking for ways to improve and become even more effective. In that case, this book *is* for you.

Some of the most common problems we at Sandler hear from professionals selling to customers in their homes are:

- Frustration with overall sales results.
- Concern about the length of sales cycles and the number of people who say, “I’ll think it over.”
- Difficulty dealing with multiple decision makers who have different expectations and decision-making styles—and who may not even be home at the same time.
- Pressure from prospects for salespeople to send email quotes and “follow up”—a process that results in playing voicemail tag or leaving perpetually unreturned calls and emails.
- Pressure to discount in order to get business, resulting in reduced margins.
- No good way to identify from a sales call who is most likely to buy and why.
- Being increasingly “busy” with calls, quotes, follow up, etc., but not closing enough business.
- Frustration with hours spent on proposals to homeowners who don’t buy from anyone, not even the competition.
- Disappointment when sales that should close on the first call, do not and having no time for follow up.

- And, if you're management: No consistent hiring or training process; some salespeople "get it" and some don't, with no real way to predict accurately who will be successful.

If any of those problems resonate with you or your team, you might want to keep reading.

IN-HOME SELLING IS DIFFERENT

If you or anyone in your company go into the home for any part of the sales process, this book is for you. The techniques we will be sharing apply especially to professionals offering products or services to customers in their homes. This kind of selling is different from selling business-to-business.

In the unique world of in-home selling, you are not calling on a business where, since the decision makers are at work, they are expected to make business and financial decisions. You are entering your customers' personal and private space, where decision making can be a bit more fluid.

Different rules apply in the home. Children and pets may reign supreme. All decision makers may not be there from 9–5, Monday through Friday. Often homeowners have never before purchased your product or service. Or, if they have, they probably had a bad experience. (Otherwise, why would they be calling you?) In-home selling unfolds in an environment that can easily become an obstacle for the untrained sales professional.

Have you ever had any of these things happen to you on a sales call?

"Jim, please excuse Spot. He doesn't bite most people. He may growl occasionally. Just ignore him while we walk through the house."

“My husband was planning to be here, but he got called in early. He said just leave your quote on the counter. He has a couple more people coming by tomorrow. I have to run out in 15 minutes—will it take longer than that?”

“Wow, I never knew plants and shrubs could cost that much. If we decide to do this, it will cut into our family vacation. We will have to think about it and get back to you.”

Let’s be honest. Because you sell in this arena, you face a lot of unusual situations. You deal with personal space, personal relationships and personal financial decisions. The good news, however, is this:

You have been invited into their home.

Most homeowners are too busy to shop around if they have no intention of buying. If you follow the right process, you have a much better chance of closing the sale than you would if you were calling on a business customer.

You have an even stronger advantage when you learn the right process, set yourself apart and allow the customer to buy. Our objective in this book is to help you reach your goals by giving you the tools you need to become more effective.

WHY SELLING TO HOMEOWNERS THE SANDLER WAY IS DIFFERENT

For more than four decades, Sandler has trained tens of thousands of sales professionals, managers and business owners in industries that sell to customers in their homes. Sandler trainers—the two authors included—have gone on sales and service calls. We understand this unique selling environment.

In this book, we will introduce you to a complete sales process that is proven to succeed for in-home sales professionals. We will also provide you with resource options to develop over time, since reinforcement and practice are keys to success with in-home selling.

The strategies and techniques you will find here work across multiple industries, including yours. This book can help you whether you are experienced or a rookie, whether your title has the word “sales” in it or not. If you keep an open mind and commit to practicing what we share with you, you can see strong improvement over time.

We are emphasizing keeping an open mind and being willing to practice for a reason. Salespeople most frequently fail to see better results because they fail to do things differently. You didn’t get your current sales habits overnight, and you won’t change without time and energy. If you are willing to make some changes, though, we can show you a process that will improve your sales results.

This book is designed for those who sell directly to consumers in their homes, including, but not limited to, these industries:

- Custom-home building
- Fencing and gates
- Financial planning
- Floor covering
- Garage door installation and repair
- Home repair
- HVAC
- Insurance
- Interior design
- Landscaping
- Medical caregiving

- Movers
- Multi-level marketing (home-based business opportunities)
- Outdoor living
- Painters
- Pest control
- Plumbing
- Real estate
- Remodeling
- Roofing
- Security systems
- Siding and insulation
- Solar panels
- Swimming pool construction/maintenance
- Window installation

Are you ready for better sales?

Great! Let's start with a deeper understanding of why people buy and the purchasing "system" that most of your potential customers have learned.