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Are you on track? If not, get back on the path...

In our January newsletter we discussed selling new homes to a process and specifically Step #1, Preparing for the sale. The most common name for this process is the Critical Path. I am continually amazed how few salespeople understand this process (less than 1% in my estimation) and more importantly, how a salesperson can double and even triple their incomes and sales volume once they have mastered it.

In today's market, knowing the critical path to new home sales is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity for survival. The idea here is a buyer can throw any sort of curve ball at you; you can handle it and continue down the path to make the sale. I'm going to share some key ideas today on Steps #2 and 3, Greeting and Discovery.

The Critical Path to new home sales (in chronological order):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Preparation | 7. Objections |
| 2. Greeting | 8. Finance |
| 3. Discovery/Needs Analysis | 9. Closing |
| 4. Presentation | 10. Follow up |
| 5. Demonstration | 11. Due Diligence |
| 6. Select One | 12. Referrals |



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Greeting

‘What is so hard about greeting,’ is a common question I get asked from the untrained salesperson. ‘All I have to do is hand them a brochure when they step into the model, tell them my name and that I will answer any of their questions.’ I have to admit, I once used this greeting as well. In a seller’s market, we could get away with this.

How things change! If you are still using the previous greeting today, you will soon be out of business. Our homes won’t sell themselves anymore, we need to take charge of the sales process and the greeting is where it all begins. Some things to keep in mind:

1. The customer looks at you as a nuisance and doesn’t want to talk to you.
2. They are most likely afraid of you.
3. They are trying to eliminate you.

A good greeting takes less than one minute but sets the tone for the experience the customer will have in your model. Here are some key ideas you need to incorporate into your greeting:

1. Shake their hand and meet them at the door with a great big smile. Greet them as they were at your model yesterday and came back for a second look.
2. Give them your name and your builders name twice, along with the name of your neighborhood.



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3. Get them to say 'yes' twice. Try something like, "It sure is warm/cool/windy today, isn't it?" The more times you get your customer to say the word yes, the better they feel about you and your home. The more they say 'no', the less likely they are to get involved with you.

The primary goal of the Greeting is to **remove the defenses of your buyer** and move them into the Discovery stage.

Discovery

How many times have you made a great connection with a buyer, given them a beautiful presentation and demonstration, only to find out they weren't qualified for your home or neighborhood? We've all done it and it especially hurts when you missed talking with other prospects because you were focused on this unqualified one. Let's take a look at some of the key discovery components:

1. Follow the 80/20 rule here. Ask questions 20% of the time and listen to your customers the other 80%. Selling is not telling!
2. You must wrap some rapport building questions into your discovery ones such as asking about their family, occupations, what they like to do for recreation and what their dream home looks like. I suggest asking about them every 3rd or 4th question. A favorite of mine is "What do you do for a living?" followed up with, "How did you get into that business?"
3. Always ask open ended questions and use their name often.



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4. Dig deep and ask *Second Level Questions*. This is a question followed by an answer to a First Level Question. Second level questions will give you the true motivators why your customer is at your model home. These motivators or hot buttons are often guarded and need extra coaxing to get them out.

Salesperson initial First Level Question: “What type of home style appeals to you Mr. Customer?”

Customer: “A two-story.”

Salesperson follow up Second Level Question: “I’m just curious, what do you like about two stories?”

Now the customer will give you inner details to their motivations for considering a two story. You need to carefully listen to this information and use it in your presentation.

Well conceived discovery questions will draw out the 2-3 hot buttons that are motivating your customers to make a change in their lives. Next month we’ll talk more about using these hot buttons while presenting your product.

Happy Selling!