

Men Are From Mars

“Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus.” John Gray penned this phrase many years ago to help men and women communicate more effectively. Since this book was written, it has been determined that both genders not only communicate differently, they also buy differently too. Learning how to effectively sell to each gender can significantly improve your sales results and increase customer loyalty. Let’s start by comparing how men and women view the shopping process.

The Shopping Process. Men see shopping as a necessity while women view it as an experience. Watch how women behave in a grocery compared to men. Unlike men who run in and out of a store, women will often peruse the entire store. Men will pick out the items they need, toss them in a cart, look at their list, and head directly to the next aisle. On the other hand, women will walk up and down each aisle, read labels, compare brands, and explore options.

There is nothing wrong with the way either gender approaches the shopping process – we are just different. We also make decisions differently.

Decision-Making Process. Women typically take more time to make a decision. A man will ask himself a few basic questions such as;

- Does this item meet my needs?
- Will it solve my problem?
- Is it what I am looking for - features, price, etc?

Assuming these questions are answered, he will make the purchase. Men tend to be more impulsive than women, too. Many men will make significant purchases very quickly or with seemingly little consideration.

Women, on the other hand, will ponder their choices, talk to other people – usually women – and do more research than the average man. Women will consider the purchase from many different angles, will make more comparisons, and will use more sources of information. She will search the Internet for information, compare it with the facts she has in her possession, return to the store, and ask a few more questions before finally making a decision. If you try to push a woman to make a decision too quickly it will backfire on you and you will likely lose the sale and any potential future business from her.

Buying Needs. All customers have certain buying needs – either logical or emotional. Asking the right questions will help you determine each customer’s requirements.

Men tend to focus on their logical needs when making a purchase. Some of their concerns include:

- Does the product have this feature?
- Can it do this particular thing?
- Is it the weight I need?
- If I buy it, will I be able to do this?

Generally speaking, men are not comfortable asking questions – that is why we seldom ask for directions! This discomfort increases when they are shopping for a product they are unfamiliar with. However, you can quickly make them feel at ease if you use the right approach.

Spend less time building rapport and talking. Instead, concentrate on helping him find exactly what he is looking for. If you do decide to make small talk, stay focused on topics that men find most comfortable talking about – sports, money, and business. And, when you talk about your product or service demonstrate how it will address his specific logical needs.

Women usually have more emotional needs when they make a buying decision. They will focus on how the item fits into their lifestyle, how it will make them feel and how the purchase will affect other important people in their lives. Ask plenty of open-ended questions to make women feel more comfortable in the sales process. Encourage her to open up and share information by asking questions such as:

- “Tell me about your previous unit...”
- “How was your experience at...?”
- “What did you find that...?”

- “What would you like to see changed this time?”

Question such as these are effective in learning exactly what she wants and needs, providing you pay attention to what she says.

You will notice that women also tend to give you more background information about their purchase than men. A man will say, “I need a new fax machine” while a female customer is more prone to say, “I’ve been getting a lot busier lately. My last fax machine worked okay for the first two years then it kept jamming every time I received a fax. I’ve tried to fix it but I’m not really good with these things. I’ve been getting really aggravated because I don’t have time to reset the paper every time I get a fax.”

Although for male sales associates, this seems like more information than is necessary, it actually demonstrates that she is beginning to trust you. Plus, in her mind, everything she told was relevant to the purchase.

The next time you are dealing with a customer of the opposite gender, adapt your style slightly. Even a modest change in your approach can garner great results.

© 2005 Kelley Robertson, All rights reserved

Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, works with businesses to help them increase their sales and motivate their employees. He is also the author of “Stop, Ask & Listen – Proven Sales Techniques to Turn Browsers into Buyers.” Receive a FREE copy of “100 Ways to Increase Your Sales” by subscribing to his free sales and motivational newsletter available at www.kelleyrobertson.com. Contact him at 905-633-7750 or Kelley@RobertsonTrainingGroup.com

