



Episode #265 - How To Sell Well

Ray Edwards: Ray Edwards Show Episode 265: How to Sell Well.

Voice-over: The Ray Edwards Show. Live your destiny by design. Start, run and grow your own Internet-based business and create the life of your dreams. You can do it. This is the Ray Edwards Show. [music]

Sean Edwards: Feels like there should be a joke there but I cant.

Ray: I can't either. Nothing appropriate anyway.

Sean: No.

Ray: Selling is a problem for a lot of people. It's hard to do, they're not good at it, they don't like it. These are the general things that I hear.

I actually started my career in radio, I was doing on-air stuff and I did some selling. I did not like it, but it seemed like every radio job I got involved some selling at some point.

I had a conversation with a friend of mine who changed my thinking on this whole thing because I kept saying to him, " I don't like selling, I don't like it, I don't like it, I don't like it." He said, "You know, that's totally up to you." This was 1991.

Sean: Hey, I was five.

Ray: Jim Sykes.

Sean: Jim Sykes. I know Jim.

Ray: Jungle Jim. He doesn't call himself that anymore.

Sean: It's been a long time since I've seen Jim.

Ray: Yes. I see him on Facebook quite a bit. Do you know the "Start your day with Ray" Facebook Live things I was doing?

Sean: Yes.

Ray: He was on every one of them.

Sean: No.

Ray: And Jerry Howell was on it too.

Sean: Oh, you were telling me about that, yes, Jerry Howell.

Ray: The three of us who used to do a morning show together were all on these live Facebook things. It was--

Sean: You should do morning show again.

Ray: Oh my gosh.

Sean: [laughs]

Ray: That is going to happen. We can talk about all the people I used to work with.

Sean: Yes. You can do all your voices.

Ray: "Yes, that will be fun."

Sean: All right. Let's stay on course for this episode. [laughs]

Ray: "Hey Lois." Okay. So selling, Jim said to me, he said, "That's totally up to you. You can just decide that you like it." Now, if anybody who knows Jim or knew Jim back then, he was not the motivational speaking kind of guy.

Sean: So he wasn't the like--

Ray: He wasn't like super sales guy.

Sean: Tony Robbins [laughs].

Ray: No, no, no, no. He was totally the opposite of all those things. Sorry Jim, that's how you were back then.

Sean: [laughs]

Ray: But you said to me, "You could just decide you like it and decide to enjoy it." And so I did. I just made the decision, I'm going to just enjoy this. I began to realize I was pretty good at it. Now was it because I was good at it that I enjoyed it, or did I become good at it because I'm-- or the other way around?

Sean: Yes I get you, I know what you're trying to say. It's hard, language is hard.

Ray: Yes, good. Talking is difficult.

Sean: Yes. Just ask all the other animals.

Ray: [laughs] "Hey Lois, this guy's funny."

Sean: The character from Family Guy I can do really well. I can't do on this show.

Ray: I know which character that is.

Sean: [laughs]

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Ray: You would just set up a whole quagmire. [laughs]

Sean: [laughs] Oh my.

Ray: Okay.

I decided to enjoy selling and I did. I found that I was pretty good at it and I enjoy it. A huge part of it came from realizing it was done in service to other people. Because you're not going to succeed long term at selling if you're selling stuff to people they don't need or it's not good for them.

So the interview that I'm doing today is with a guy who surprisingly, I did not expect this when I first got started getting to know him, but he's really like an excellent, expert salesperson. His current job is he's the CEO of StoryBrand for Donald Miller.

Sean: Right, that's pretty cool.

Ray: I'm talking about Nigel Green.

Sean: Yes. I want you to hear this. I was supposed to meet Nigel a while back in Phoenix.

Ray: That's right. We were having a Mastermind meeting with some of our joint venture partners.

Sean: Right. I had to leave early for various reasons. I was so bummed because there were other people I didn't get to meet either. So I don't know a whole lot about this guy. Why don't you tell me a little bit about him?

Ray: First of all, he's a great dresser. He wears the best shoes. He's one of the only guys I ever met who makes me feel bad about the shoes I wear. Every time I see him I'm like, "Dude, where did you get those shoes?"

Sean: Well the whole shoes thing, whenever someone notices I got a new pair of shoes, it always doesn't make me feel good. Because it just makes me realize they notice my shoes the rest of the time.

Ray: Yes, like they notice I've been wearing the same Nike's for a year.

Sean: Same. Right, yes, the same shoes.

Ray: I just make myself feel better by reminding myself that Steve Jobs wore the same New Balance shoes every day.

Sean: Yes, all right. So Nigel, nice shoes.

Ray: So Nigel, great dresser, really nice guy, very friendly, very personable. He talks to anybody as if they were the most important person in the world.

And here is the thing that really first made the big impression on me was we had this Mastermind meeting and from the very first 30 minutes of the meeting, he would say things that everybody in the room would stop and go, "Whoa."

Sean: Some heavy revvies?

Ray: Yes, exactly. Because I think the first thing he said that really got my attention was, he said, "Well, I wouldn't let my education get in the way of my knowledge."

Sean: Whoa.

Ray: It's that kind of stuff.

Sean: That totally sounds like something Bill Johnson would say.

Ray: It does, right? He's exactly that kind of guy. We got to talking about sales and he was explaining to me how he really likes sales and the way-- the approach that he takes. He's actually-- I think I'm okay to reveal this. He's working on a book about sales, about selling. So I decided while I was in Nashville the last time, I need to interview this guy. So that's what our interview is about.

This will be helpful to you, especially if you feel like you come from a place, if you're uncomfortable of selling. Nigel has the secret-- what I think is-- I know one of our listeners last week said, "If they're telling you it's a secret formula, run."

Sean: Run.

Ray: Yes run, run toward us because you're going to love this. This is going to show you the secret of selling and being at ease with it and doing it in a way that serves people and doesn't make either one of you feel icky. Does that sound good?

Sean: That sounds great.

Ray: All right. Let's get to it.

Voice Over: [music] And now, our feature presentation.

Nigel Green: Ray, it's always a pleasure to be with you.

Ray: Give a paragraph or two about where you come from and how you ended up where you are now.

Nigel: Yes. I grew up very humble beginnings in a small town in Alabama and at a very young age had an insatiable curiosity of people. Never let my studies get in the way of my education, loved being study of humans, people. Just insatiably curious, like I said.

That got me into selling things at an early age because that was human-to-human interaction and I enjoyed it after I've done it. So I went to school and very quickly after college got into health care, selling devices into the operating room. Learned that I really enjoyed others that had a passion for selling and selling with purpose,

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and it really just built a career around making businesses successful through people that understand what customers want, and that is what I think is the art of selling.

Ray: That's unusual because often, the best sales person does not make the best trainer or motivator of other sales people.

Nigel: It's true, and if you look at-- you're right, the data will support that your best managers are kind of your core performers. They are right around that 80%, 90%, 100% to plan but they're never really hitting it out of the park.

I never was a 220% of quota kind of guy because I oftentimes was the guy that was pushing back on the company that, "Actually this product isn't exactly what the customer's asking for." So I would often get in my own way by advocating for different features or different benefits and oftentimes get in trouble with my manager.

I often had customers that stayed with me longer because they felt like I was an extension of their team. I wasn't a supplier that was showing up on every Wednesday or every other week but I almost was-- they viewed me as someone who had a corner office that had their interest ahead of mine.

Ray: What is it inside of you that made you different from other salespeople in that way? Because that's an unusual position to have with a customer.

Nigel: I think it because I'd never been really successful so I didn't know what some of those other reps had at stake or had to lose by advocating for their customer.

I'd often seen reps who I knew were well above goal, always number one year-over-year and I saw the cars they drove and I saw the lifestyle they lived but I'd never had that, so I didn't have as much to lose as them.

Ray: I draw a clear line of differentiation between advertising and marketing and sales,

you agree with that?

Nigel: I do. I think that the first to miss one component, and that's asking for the business, they are about brand awareness, they're about product positioning. Selling has a distinction because it requires you get uncomfortable and ask someone to spend money with you.

Ray: Seems to me most people do not succeed at selling, why is that?

Nigel: They don't ask for the business and there could be a few reasons why they don't ask for the business but ultimately they don't succeed in selling because they don't ask for the business. I'm going to come back to that asking for the business but we'll talk about maybe why they don't ask for the business.

The most successful reps have an ability to find some moment in their career, maybe it's with this product, hopefully it is with the one that they're representing, where they've seen it have a profound impact in someone's life. That's

called a noble selling purpose.

They have some moment where they know that this product works, that they can draw on is a higher place of strength that convince them that it is their sacred duty to ask you to spend money with them, that if you don't, if they don't ask you, they're doing you a disservice.

That is a very key thing to being being successful in sales. The people that don't do that are either they don't have that noble selling purpose or they really don't have confidence in themselves. That's teachable, the other one isn't. So if you can't think of a moment like that, then you may need to be thinking about, "How do I find a product to represent that I could be that passionate about?"

Ray: And I like the word conviction. Because I think if you've got conviction about what you're selling, then you don't come across as being a pushy or hard sales kind of person. People will know that you want them to buy but you want it for them, not from them.

Nigel: Yes exactly, for them, not from them. The other thing about asking is if you just ask once, you didn't ask, they didn't hear you, you didn't ask it the right way.

Asking needs to be something you're always doing, and it's asking to help is what you're always asking to do, not asking them to buy but, "Hey, how can I help you? This would help you. I'd love to show how this can-- can I show you how this might help you? Can I just take a moment and share with you how this is going to make your life better, how it's going to reduce tasks, save you time, make you a better whatever." Always be asking.

Ray: What is the biggest mistake that sales people make?

Nigel: They don't listen, that's the biggest mistake that a lot of people make. You see it in selling, you also see it in parenting, you see it in leadership, but it's really clear in selling.

Jim Collins, he says your question-to-statement ratio should always be two-to-one, and I found that the reps that lived by that in their sales calls, whether their sales call is an email or a face-to-face interaction, if you're asking more questions than telling, making statements, your customers are going to be talking. Even in an email, if you posit a question, what does that do? It's a social cue to reply to this email, tell me what you're thinking.

It's really profound in a one-on-one setting to ask a question, sit there even if it's uncomfortable and wait for someone to answer your question. We want to rush in-- and I blame a lot of this on sales training and not sales people because if you look at the vast majority of sales trainings, it's all about how you present, how you position the features and benefits.

It's all about telling and pitches and elevators, and there's literally no sales training on, "Just shut up, just listen," how are you quieting the conversation in you head,

eliminating the nervous body language that you're bringing into the meeting and really listening.

Ray: Being quiet and waiting for your turn to speak is not listening.

Nigel: No, it's not. I think the questions that really work in a selling environment start with how and what. Questions that start with who and why are almost accusatory and they come off as a little bit defensive or dodgy. Even if it's something as seemingly benign as, who is the decision maker in this process?

A better question would be, can you help me understand all the steps that we would need to take to make sure you receive the maximum benefit of this arrangement? That is just a better question than who is the decision maker.

Tells me a little bit more about your intent when you are more interested in the steps. What does the customer need to see, feel and know for this to be the best experience for them versus, "Hey, I really just want to know who's anchoring [sic] this deal".

Another distinction about questions is there's so many times when it would be easy to insert an assertion in a conversation to agree or to just say something. Even if you think that you already know what the customer's motives are, to just validate them.

There's a little secret weapon called a rhetorical question that gets misused, underused and often abandoned in the sales meeting. What the rhetorical question does is it posits an affirmation in the form of the question. It allows the customer to insert their own motives and their own desires to affirm what we all already know to be true but is unsaid at the moment.

Ray: Can you give me an example?

Nigel: A good rhetorical question might be something like this, "Well isn't it true that the things worth having are expensive?"

And that's something that is universally true, that's why it's rhetorical, and then if you are comfortable enough to just sit there and let them answer it, they will use their own motivation, they will think back to a moment in time when something was really expensive and it really made their life a lot better, and they insert that story and they start attaching the meaning of your offering to that moment.

Ray: If I'm hearing this and I'm thinking, "Okay, this makes sense," what are the steps I need to take to get better at listening and asking these kind of questions?

Nigel: The simplest thing you can do is make note of how many questions you ask versus statements you made in a meeting. When I've led sales teams, what we've done as a part of our training program is actually role play on camera with other reps and have them go through this exercise, watch their body language and see how they respond when they ask questions or how they're behaving while a customer answers.

The best way to do it is just on a sheet of paper. When you're in that meeting, as if you're taking notes, you can just keep a tally of how many questions you're asking.

Another good exercise is to think about the questions you want to ask before you go into the meeting and start thinking about what will these questions do for the customer? Am I asking who and what questions or am I asking how and questions that allow for conversation or are my questions more just direct get to an answer.

You want your questions to be opening up a conversation. So think about the quality of your questions before you go into a meeting and then document how well you did sticking to the two-to-one question-to-statement ratio.

Ray: What I'm I listening for?

Nigel: You are listening for two things, consequences and motivations. Consequences, not just the bad but the good consequences, and the motivations.

So you want to uncover what a potential future might look like with your product, without your product, with a yes, with a no absent of any judgement. You want to be able to hit the fast-forward button for the customer and be able to paint a picture of what tomorrow would look like, what an average day would look like, what the future is going to look like, if they say yes or if they say no, so that you can articulate it back to them.

The other thing is motives, why would they really want to do this? The truth is it's not always that they want to buy your product because of what it does for them. It might be that there's a bigger story at play, that you are just a piece in a larger web of motives for this customer.

For example, you may have a customer who sees your product as a commodity, that it may often be just reduced to price. That may be one piece of a larger cost-containment initiative. So if you can ask motives as to why saving money is important, you might be able to uncover that there's a larger play going on, that you are one offering in a series of many offerings that the company needs to save money on.

So what you've done by asking a better question and understanding the motives if you said, "Okay now, maybe the distinction between me getting the business and not getting the business is not how low my price is, but what if I happen to know other vendors who can save them money and I can package a deal that shows an overall cost reduction, and the only way they get those cost reductions is by going through me?" You have understood now what the real motive is. It's not because they need widget X at dollar Y, there's a bigger thing going on that you have to uncover that motive.

Ray: Let's say we've got a small company, they have a relatively small sales force and they need to make the needle move this month, what do you recommend that they do to make things happen but still be in service to their customers?

Nigel: I'm a firm believer that it's a lot easier to sell something to a customer you already have than it is to go get a new customer.

So if I'm working for a sales team, and this has happened to me in the past, where you've got a short window to turn this thing around. The mistake would be to try to go out and do this activity blitz and bang on a bunch of doors or run a promotion, drop your price and try to get everybody to come in in the next 30 days, not going to happen.

What I would do is look at the customers that have been the most loyal, that spent the most money with me, that are most excited about us and what we do for them. I want to sit down with them and say, "What else can we do for you?" So instead of taking a product we already have and try to go pitch it to a bunch of people, I want to sit down with customers I already have and I want to figure out where there gaps in the service or the offering that we can make better so that we can better serve them.

A good little nugget on this it's so much better to be in love with a customer you want to have than the product you sell. If you can go listen to your customers, ask them what else you can do for them-- you've already got the rapport, you already have the trust, they're already sending you money every month-- it's going to be a lot easier to hit your sales target with those customers than running around banging on doors of people that don't know you, that already have relationships with somebody else. That would be what I'd do.

Ray: Nigel, give me your core philosophy, the belief that you want people to walk away from this interview holding. What is it you want them to believe?

Nigel: I want them to believe that selling is less about what you say and more about what you hear. The people that make it in this business are those that spend more time investigating and being insatiably curious about what they hear and less time focusing on what they're going to say.

Ray: Nigel, this has been fantastic. If I'm listening to this and I think, "I want more, I want to know more about how to do all this," where can I find more?

Nigel: Yes, so we teach people how to get clear on their message, how to have a compelling message. We think that noise is the enemy. What I would say is go to fiveminutemarketingmakeover.com. You can spell out the word five, you can use the number.

We're giving away three five-minute videos that will help you eliminate the noise, clear your message and have a more compelling message that will allow customers to engage, sales will improve and your life will be better. A clear message is your advantage.

Ray: Thank you very much.

Nigel: Ray, it's been a pleasure.

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Ray: Well, I hope you enjoyed that as much as I did because I really got some nuggets and insights into the selling process that I've never realized before, and frankly, I cannot wait to read Nigel's book.

Sean: Yes, and if you found the show helpful and you like to get some show notes, the transcript, please go to rayedwards.com/265 and it will be there for you.

Please subscribe to the show, if you haven't already, through iTunes and the Apple podcast app that helps out with the ratings. Make sure to put your real name and website in the text, the review itself. We will mention you in the show.

Ray: Yes, we will.

Sean: It's no longer a fable.

Ray: No, it's actually true. All right, remember what Zig Ziglar said, "Timid sales people have skinny children." Until next time. God bless you. I pray that he does more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine. Peace to your house.

Voice-over: Thank you for listening. This has been The Ray Edwards Show. Find the archives of this weekly show at rayedwards.com/podcast or on iTunes. Contact Ray at rayedwards.com.

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Each week, we bring you a message of prosperity with purpose and freedom and remembering that true freedom is available to all through Jesus Christ.

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