

Why Deals Don't **CLOSE**

In just 15 minutes, this will change how you look at your business... FOREVER!

By
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Stop fixing symptoms - diagnose the real illness

Most business people or entrepreneurs can relate to the following statements or questions. We can relate because we've heard these questions being asked or we've asked them ourselves. I've been asked these questions many times by business owners. Have a look at these and see which of them resonate with you.

- “Even though our clients give us good feedback, our profits are really low. What can we do to improve our situation?”
- “Even though I'd never admit this in public, between you and me, I never know which marketing tools would work best for us. There are just too many options and I get confused. I just feel overwhelmed, especially by all this social media stuff.”
- “As a consultant/ coach I really struggle to ask for a sale. I don't want people to think I'm desperate for clients. Is there a *non-salesy* way of signing lucrative clients routinely?”
- “What frustrates me the most is that we send out so many quotes, but very few result in orders. I wish I had a crystal ball to know why they don't buy – even better, to know in advance who's going to buy.”
- “As a consultant I know it's a good idea to promote your business through publishing a book or public speaking, but I have no clue how to do this in an effective way.”
- “To be honest, nothing really differentiates us from our competitors, we are all the same in this industry. I'm always worried that our customers may leave us for the cheapest solution rather than staying loyal to us. How can we prevent this from happening?”
- “When I started this business I was 25. I thought owning my own business was going to give me freedom. My plan was to retire 10 years ago, as a very wealthy 40-year old. At the rate things are going, it's doubtful that I can retire in the next 10 years. Sometimes I just feel stuck, what can I do?”
- “Selling premium products is hit and miss because it's hard to find clients that can easily spend a lot of money with us. How can we get a steady flow of high-paying clients?”

Most entrepreneurs erroneously believe that these are the core challenges their businesses are facing. They believe that if they can fix these, their business would be perfect. They are wrong. All these statements and questions are merely symptoms of the core problem

There's a reason why when you get admitted in hospital they tell you to take off your suit and they give you a tiny robe that barely covers the bum. They are not trying to humiliate you – they want to have all the access they need into your body, in order to do a complete and thorough diagnosis. They want to ensure that no serious symptoms are hidden under a fancy suit. As entrepreneurs, we are experts at hiding our businesses' serious symptoms under the proverbial business suit. We can pretend for years that everything is ok at our kingdom.

After years of being in business; working in various capacities with CEOs of multi-billion rand corporations; researching and writing bestselling books; helping fellow entrepreneurs boost their profits – I've seen many cases of symptoms being advanced as real problems preventing business growth - thus causing stress-related poor health, unhappy families and unfulfilled lives. Fortunately, all is not lost - these are really easy to treat. But if you don't get to the root of your business' illness – these symptoms can keep recurring for years.

Peter Drucker famously stated that, *“the purpose of a business is to create and keep a customer”*. In the role of customer creation and retention there are 2 fundamental ingredients that every business owner needs to get in right amounts (among other ingredients). These two ingredients are:

1. Value; and
2. A Catalyst

Without value you have absolutely nothing to offer your customer or client. The catalyst is YOU. A catalyst is a substance that speeds up the creation process but still comes out intact at the end of the process. It does not get consumed in the process. So, as a catalyst what exactly do you bring to the customer creation and retention party? According to my late mentor, Bill Gibson, a world-renowned Sales and Marketing expert - there are 5 key assets that you can bring to the party; and they are:

1. Energy
2. Time
3. Money
4. Reputation
5. Ability

These 5 assets are key to your success, but like everything in life, they have adverse side effects if you don't understand them. Unfortunately, most business owners do not fully understand how to optimally employ these 5 assets. Here's how these assets can backfire when incorrectly employed.

ASSETS	MYTH	SYMPTOMS
Energy	To succeed in life you must work hard all the time.	Fatigue. Stress. Poor health.
Time	To make more money you must put in more hours.	Sell hours for Rands. Family relations suffer.
Money	It takes money to make money.	Poor business investments and low margins.
Reputation	It's about who you know and who knows you. We must get our name out there!	Competing on price and premature obsession with building a 'brand'.
Ability	You must pay your dues and earn your stripes through years of experience.	New businesses owned by rookies come into your industry and overtake you.

So what can you do today to ensure that you create premium value for your market and that you are a good catalyst for your business? Firstly, you need to understand that value is not what you say it is, but what your customer says it is. Value can only be defined from the customer's perspective.

As a catalyst you need to understand one important fact: the most valuable real estate of your business is not located within your business, but it's in the minds of your customers. Therefore you need to invest your 5 assets and balance your portfolio with one goal in mind – increasing the value of your real estate inside the minds of your customers. Remember: the purpose of business is to create and keep a customer. Quite frankly no one cares how hard you work, how long you've been in business, how popular you are. Your clients only care about the results you deliver and your creditors only care about you paying your bills on time – with money (not your reputation or experience or hard work).

The long and short of it is that you must invest your assets to achieve maximum return on investment in terms of – client acquisition, client retention and profitability! Fortunately for you, you already possess and, to a large extent, have already invested these assets. The question now is how can you optimize them for maximum return on investment?

First let's look closely into your most important real estate – your customers' minds.

*“People love to
buy but they
hate being sold.”*
Jeffrey Gitomer

The shocking truth about your customers

Your clients want to send you more money. They love buying stuff, and they'd love to buy from you too. But you are frustrating them. You are trying too hard to tell them about the facts, figures, information and features of what you sell. You are trying to get them to desire your products or services by filling their heads with ideas, opinions, hopes, dreams, fears and beliefs! With your well-crafted marketing and selling, you are trying too hard to convince them, to persuade them, to cajole, threaten, pressure and even argue with them. They are sick of it! Of course, you mean well. All you are trying to do is get through to them.

Forget it!

You cannot get through to them. Your clients are swimming in information the same way fish is swimming in water. And you can't catch a fish by shooting it with a water gun... just the thought of that is funny, actually! Stop trying to get through to your clients with a bunch of your product facts and figures. Your job is to enter the conversation that is already taking place in their minds. They want you to resonate with them.

Can you relate to this scenario?

You are at a party and you are talking to someone, and the room has background noise because everyone is engaged in some conversation. Now imagine - about a meter from you there are two other people who are talking, but you're not paying attention to what they are saying... when suddenly, one of them in the middle of a sentence mentions the name of the person you're talking to. What will that do to the attention of the person you're talking to?

Her attention will switch immediately to the neighbouring conversation because she wants to know what the other person is saying about her. Our brains are able to filter through or block out any noise, but are well trained to pay attention when our names are mentioned. Unfortunately, people's brains can also block out all the bombardment with your marketing messages ... until you say **one thing** that resonates with the conversation they are constantly having in their heads. Until you say something that resonates deeply with them.

Have you ever heard someone say:

- "what she's saying **rings true/ resonates** with me"
- "what he said **struck a chord** with me"
- "she gives me **good vibes**"

It is this kind of resonance that triggers a response. So the question for you is,

“What do they already believe/ fear/ hope for/ dream of or desire that resonates with what you sell?”

In his book *The Responsive Chord*, this is what Tony Schwartz says about your prospective customer,

“A listener or viewer brings far more information to the communication event than a communicator can put into his program, commercial, or message. The communicator’s problem, then, is not to get stimuli across, or even to package his stimuli so they can be understood and absorbed. Rather, he must deeply understand the kinds of information and experiences stored in his audience, the patterning of this information, and the interactive resonance process.”

The communicator = YOU

The listener /viewer = your prospective customer

“It’s been my observation that everyone wants to succeed in business. Most people don’t. It’s not that they can’t. It’s just that they don’t know how.”

Siya Mapoko

What your customers wish you knew about them

When Oprah was hosting her last show of the old Oprah Winfrey Show, before transitioning to OWN – she said something I’ll never forget. She said in the 25 years of hosting her show – interviewing presidents, movie stars, musicians, Nobel Prize winners, terminally ill people, ruthless criminals and cold-blooded killers – when the cameras went off, all her guests asked her different versions of the same question.

“Did I do okay?”

Oprah concluded that all human beings are in need of or are secretly craving validation or affirmation in some way. One of the most powerful drivers of all your customers’ buying decisions is deep-seated desire for **self-expression**. Everyone, no matter how humble, is trying to communicate a message to himself and to the world that he is ‘*somebody*’. Every decision he makes must be consistent with his own opinion of himself. For instance, if he buys life insurance, he is affirming that he is a caring father who absolutely loves his family so much that he wants to take care of them even after his death. Therefore, buying the highest possible life cover he can afford is not just an expense – it’s powerful self-expression.

The world is starved of recognition. In the eyes of ordinary people... sports stars, artists, actors, celebrities – seem to have it easy because they are able to fully express themselves to the world in a public way – through their work. *(It seems Oprah has made a huge discovery that even with celebrities this may not be enough.)*

Fortunately the 21st century has come to the rescue of the masses – those who did not have the public platform to fully express themselves – now do. Thanks to social media, everyone is a broadcaster. Anyone can just pull out his phone and shout his opinion online – and get a few ‘likes’. *Validated!!*

But there’s an even more powerful way of self-expression that your customers love...

it’s BUYING stuff!!

People love to buy and they are good at it – not just to satisfy shallow self-gratification, but even for companies they represent. Nobody can stop people from buying. It's a powerful, addictive and insatiable form of self-expression.

Companies like Apple understand that their business is not just to sell phones and computers as mere communication tools – but it is to create beautiful props and objects of mass-desire so that the owners can make a powerful statement of self-expression, just by owning the gadget. Do you think the people who stand in long queues outside Apple stores around the world, 24 hours before the release of the latest iPhone, are merely waiting to buy a communication device? Think again!

Now the big question you should be asking yourself is ...

“What is my customer trying to say about herself when she buys my product?”

New iPhone going on sale



Which of these says...
“Hi, I’m a wealthy, successful and
sophisticated man to whom money
is no object.”



When people are expressing themselves through buying – it’s not just a status symbol. It’s not even just a story they are trying to tell other people, but it’s the story they are constantly telling themselves. They are buying it because it fits with their personal story of who they are.

Every successful and satisfying purchase must fulfill three objectives:

1. **Desire:** their driving need to seek a solution or a better alternative situation.
2. **Self-expression:** reinforce their internally held idea of who they think they are.
3. **Belief:** they can rest in the comfort of knowing that they can recreate their world through your help, your product, service, etc.

Another question for you is...

“What specific belief does a purchase of your product reinforce in your customers’ minds and hearts?”

BEWARE: The customer sometimes lies with his words, but he always tells the truth with his money!

You can’t fully optimize the return on investment of your 5 assets until you fully understand the workings of the mind of your customer. Failure to understand the workings of the minds of your customer is at the heart of why deals don’t close.

Fully taking charge of the financial health of your business by creating end-to-end predictable revenue systems is dependent on your understanding of the most valuable real estate of your business – the mind of your customer. Having predictable and adjustable revenue systems in your business can have massive and immediate transformational impact in other areas of your life – the happiness of your family; your health; your fitness levels; your societal influence; the strength of your spiritual foundation, etc.

Someone once asked me whether there was direct proportionality between working excessively hard and making more money. Working hard meaning long hours, at the expense of your family and at great risk to health. It took me back to 2006 when I was beginning my journey as an entrepreneur after I decided to retire – in my twenties - from a *comfy* job at a top Asset Management company.

Within 18 months of starting my first business, I lost about R3million and I felt stuck. Until I pondered the words of Sir Isaac Newton...

“If I had seen further it is by standing on shoulders of giants.”

I then approached the JSE and requested to interview successful CEOs who started their companies from scratch. These companies were reporting annual revenues of high tens of millions to hundreds of millions. At that stage I was not interested in making hundreds of millions, I just wanted to learn how to build a business that can make a few millions predictably and consistently each year. I’ve refined and perfected this formula over the past 10 years. Now I happily teach it to small hand-picked groups of interested business owners who want to ***increase revenues fast (sometimes within weeks), in a fun, easy and relaxed manner without working extra long hours or doing lame things like bothering to sell to customers who have no desire to buy.***

Others who have learned these strategies...

“Implementing one idea made me R400 000, from just 2 clients. Previously I would have needed 40 clients to achieve this.”

- L. Daniels, East London

“I got my money back within the first hour.”

- D. Wingate, Joburg

“Indeed a blessing you have been to me. R485 000 from just one client! Selling has never been the same, it truly has become second nature, no longer a foreign concept.”

- Marang M., Joburg

“This helped me grow my business to R2.5million in a little over 12 months, part-time. I even quit my full time job.”

- Warren C., Joburg

“I made all my money back plus a 50% return on investment - in just 24 hours. And in less than 30 days I closed 7 deals worth R1.1million. This changed my life. WOW!”

- G. Sesinye, Joburg

“Thank you so much Siya. This year my company made over R3million. I even bought a new house and a new SUV. Not bad for my age of only 22.”

- Neo M., Joburg

Visit: www.closethatdealsa.co.za

About the author: Siya Mapoko



Siya Mapoko is a businessman, best-selling author and investor. He is the author of *The Best Advice I Ever Got* and *Conversations with JSE AltX entrepreneurs*. He started his corporate career at Investec Asset Management in 2005. He was part of a 4-man equities trading team; making over R1Billion worth of trades on the JSE every day.

Today Siya is the CEO and Chief Research Officer at MRI, a boutique revenue and growth research agency. He helps companies of all sizes achieve faster revenue growth by closing bigger business deals. After graduating from UCT with BSc in Biochemistry and Honours in Chemistry, Siya enrolled for MSc and was seconded to GlaxoSmithKline in England to research drug development for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Contrast Agents. Siya also has qualifications in Investment Analysis and Portfolio Management.

Since 2007 Siya has interviewed, advised and worked closely with over 250 CEOs and top executives of JSE-listed companies and multinationals. He occasionally lectures Business Science and MBA classes. As a speaker Siya has addressed diplomats (US, Austria, Belgium, France, Monaco and others); members of IoDSA; ACCA; JSE CEO Forum and conferences internationally. Siya has tested and used over 30 different ways to raise capital for new ventures. He has served on boards of companies and he currently serves on the Amy Foundation Trust board. Siya has donated over R1million worth of books to schools and non-profits. In 2010 he was honoured by the Johnny Walker Striding Man Society as one of 30 South African Striders. You can connect with Siya via email – siya@siyapoko.com

As seen in the media:

