

The Daily Communicator™

Real Estate Sales StrategiesThat Work

Hard Sell Or Soft Sell?

It's the oldest question in the sales world: which works better, a hard or soft sales approach? The answer is... both. The skill of a truly great salesperson comes from knowing when to use which tactic, being able to shift gears from soft-sell to hard-ball, and then shifting back again, as sales relationships, dynamics of the marketplace and the many different factors that affect the sale come into play.

How do you know when to shift? Here are some suggestions:

- Hard sell works when you have to cut through misinformation that holds up a sale. In real estate, a homeowner who hasn't seen an offer in three months is ready for the aggressive approach.
- A soft sell is great during the learning curve, when you're building rapport. When you are gathering information on a client's needs, budget, time frame, office politics, etc., that's the time to listen and soft-pedal the sales talk.
- The hard sell works when there's only one piece of the puzzle missing. Get the deal in ink, and offer a contingency clause for that one piece, whatever it may be.

- Try the soft sell when your client needs to feel in control of the final decision. Be willing to back away for a defined amount of time, and create a deadline that's realistic but not freewheeling, twelve or twenty-four hours. Letting them make that final decision, even when it's apparent to you and the client that it's a win-win deal, leaves room for another sale in the future.
- Don't be afraid to hard sell when you know that doing the deal is the right thing for the customer. Some people need a little nudge to put them over the top. If you are always looking out for your customers' best interests, they will be happy that you pushed them once the deal is done and they see the benefits.
- Soft selling is more comfortable for all salespeople. But remember that you can easily soft sell yourself out of a commission if you don't get aggressive at some point in the sales process.

By Ralph Roberts, www.realtytimes.com



Carolyn Behrens

949-916-9282

**For Our
Success Partners**
Carolyn@OC-RealEstate.net



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www.OC-RealEstate.net



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