



The CONNECTION™

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Socratic Silence Is Golden

Remember the old adage, "Silence is golden"? It's great advice, especially when selling. We think we're in control of the conversation if we're talking, but we can still control where the conversation is headed by being silent. It's part of the discipline of Socratic Selling.

After you invite your client to talk, give them a chance to respond. Wait silently. Resist the urge to fill the silence with questions or your comments. Give your customer time to switch from listening to speaking mode. Someone's going to fill that silence, and it's better for you if it's the customer. You may hear information you would not otherwise have heard.

The same rule applies when you ask questions. Some salespeople ask a question, then give a long-winded explanation of why they're asking. By the time they finish, no one in the conversation remembers what the original question was. Or they ask multiple questions: "Who will be involved in the new roll-out? Where will it be rolled out? When will it start? Is there a budget you've earmarked for this, and what about any other initiatives you've got on your plate?" What does the customer answer? Whichever part he remembers, or the part she wants to address, or none of the above.

Ask one question and stop talking. You can always ask another question if the first one doesn't give you the information you want. Remember that Socratic Silence is indeed golden. You'll be more efficient; get better, more accurate information; and make the best use of your customer's time.

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