

# Top 3 Reasons Why Phone Skills are Most Important in Sales

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As a professional sales/customer service trainer, I work with many businesses that sell (or have opportunities to sell) both face-to-face and on the phone. Of course, from a development perspective, both of these point-of-sale areas need to be addressed with an effective methodology and a process institutionalized to maximize selling opportunities.

But what area is more important, face-to-face or on-the-phone? I can attest with unwavering certainty, that for businesses where the same employees sell both ways, the phone is by far the more important of the two areas. In fact, I often paraphrase Sinatra's famous line when speaking about telephone relations to my training clients: *"If you can make it here, you can make it anywhere."* Why are phone skills most important?

Here are my Top 3 Reasons:

## 1) Resistance is Greater

Simply put, selling face-to-face is easier. When a prospective customer takes the time and effort to visit your store or office they have made a higher level commitment to buying from your business than they would have simply phoning in. More often than not a prospective customer's visit is premeditated, they have determined in advance that you can provide what they need/want and arrive with the intent to buy.

That's not to say that salespeople don't lose face-to-face sales opportunities as this is a regular occurrence in companies where the salespeople are not well trained and/or don't follow an effective sales process. It's just easier as face-to-face customers' resistance is typically much less than the phone-in prospect that is often just 'calling around' for pricing and specifications.

## 2) Escape-ability is Higher

When a customer is face-to-face they cannot easily do anything but interact with you and other members of your team. When a customer phones the business expressing purchase consideration in your products and/or services it is extraordinarily easy for them to disconnect and call one of (or all of) your competitors at light speed if they are not effectively engaged.

Human nature plays a role here too. There's an emotional element when two people interact face-to-face that doesn't exist on the phone. Accordingly, it's considerably easier to hang-up and end a phone interaction than it is to walk out on someone face-to-face.

Add in the fact that (to point #1) they took the time and effort to visit your location, most customers are far more willing to stay put and try to make a deal even if the interaction with their salesperson is less than a high quality experience. Contrast that to a phone interaction where if the caller is not engaged and/or doesn't feel they're receiving the best service to meet their needs they can swiftly move on to the next service provider with a few clicks.

## 3) Communication Deficit

While number one and two have a major impact, the single biggest reason phone skills training is most important in sales is in communication itself.

As you may know, there are 3 elements that compose communication; words, tonality and body language. In face-to-face interactions, salespeople have all of these communication tools at their disposal to maximize their selling capability. Conversely, on the phone, the single biggest component of communication, physiology (body language) is absent and the salesperson must rely only on what they say (words) and how they say them (tonality).

For these reasons, any business that has salespeople that sell both on the phone and face-to-face should emphasize phone skills training and development to offset the disadvantages and maximize their sales opportunities!