

Back to Basics

Discover your customers **Dominant Buying Motivation**

Congratulations! That ad you placed in the freebie paper or online paid off and now you are face to face with a real live prospect who is interested in buying a car. Unfortunately, she also got excited about the other 30 ads she saw and is dead set on visiting all the dealers in town. So how do you slow her down and get her to buy that cute white 2015 Focus you have on the front line when this not-so-rare little number is sitting on 50% of your competitor's lots? You've already thrown out the standard lines, "Not all used cars are the same", "We run every used car through a mechanical checklist", "We offer the best service" yet she is determined to keep on shopping. She takes your card and promises to return on the be-back bus because you've been so nice.

A week later she finally answers your call and tells you she already bought an '09 Frontier. What? How does that happen? She was a mileage car shopper and she bought a pickup?

It could be a case of missed buying signals. Every car shopper has within him or her multiple reasons for buying any specific item, be it a car, a house, a suit, whatever. Amongst that list of reasons, however, there is most often one reason, one driver that stands out above all the others and dominates the buying process. This is what's called a Dominant Buying Motivation (DBM).

There is a concept in psychiatry that says "the problem the client presents you with is not the real problem." Think that through for a bit. Salespeople like to be liked. In an attempt to ensure the prospect is happy and comfortable there can be a tendency to overaccommodate the prospect asking them to tell you what they are looking for. At first glance this may seem to make sense because, after all, the customer is the one buying the car, right? Yes, and no. You see, those of us in the car business sometimes lose sight of the fact that those outside of the business have little idea as to the available models and options available to today's car buyers. The reality is most prospects don't really know what they want, not specifically anyway. They just know what kind of a problem they want to solve.

The moment you convert from trying to sell a car to helping to solve a problem the likelihood of making the sale increases *dramatically*. This is where identifying the prospects DBM comes in.

As mentioned, people buy for many different reasons. Listing them all would be near impossible. Fortunately, we can easily categorize into four primary DBM using a simple acronym taught by sales trainers over the years, S.L.E.B. Each letter represents a motivation. Your job is to visit with your prospect, build rapport, and ask questions that lead to determining which of these is the dominant factor in their purchase decision. Once determined it is matter of demonstrating the benefits your specific vehicle has that connect with their dominant buying motivation and best solve their problem.

The acronym S.L.E.B. stands for Security, Love, Ego-Satisfaction, & Bodily comforts. I'll break these down further here:

Security - this includes price, economy, safety features, and other financial or security concerns. This prospect will tell you of how their last car left them stranded, or how poor the mileage was. They may do the opposite telling you how trouble-free their car has been and how they hate to let it go. They may

ask about fuel economy and monthly payments. Assure this prospect along the way how affordable the vehicle will be to maintain, point out safety features, and offer an extended service policy as an option.

Love – a parent buying a car for their college age daughter may pay more for a car of a specific color or body style that makes her smile. I'll share a personal story. Years ago we were car shopping for my wife. She spotted the body style she wanted and asked if it was available in black. The salesman didn't have a black one in stock so he pulled me aside and told me "you don't want black, it gets dirty too fast, you'll have to wash it weekly, and it gets too hot." I agreed. He was correct. I didn't want black for all those reasons. I then told him that she (my wife) wanted black and for that reason alone we would be buying black. My dominant buying motivation was Love. I cared about her more than I worried about washing the car weekly. When selling this prospect its best to direct your attention to the person who will be driving the car and let her express the features she wants.

Ego-Satisfaction - Believe it or not, every person who walks on your lot is not obsessed with fuel economy or cheap monthly payments. Pitching fuel mileage or a comfortable ride to a person with a DBM based on Ego does little to boost gross and may even slow the process. Think bold colors, lifted trucks, prestigious name brands. It can also be as simple as the story I shared about my wife's new black car. Though my buying decision was driven by love, hers was driven by how good she knew she'd look in that sporty black car which satisfied her ego. This buyer appreciates quality and is often willing to pay more when he finds what he wants. Don't talk price with this prospect until he brings it up, its unnecessary.

Bodily comfort & conveniences - Prospects with a handful of kids need plenty of room for car seats and soccer equipment. Built in wi-fi or DVD players, power windows and rear air are welcome creature comforts. A businessman with a long commute will appreciate comfortable seating as will the senior who suffers from a stiff back. This prospect will want to hear the stereo and more importantly feel how easy it is to operate (think controls on the steering wheel).

Implementing SLEB into your daily sales process is easy. Practice asking questions that lead to solving the prospects problems opposed to asking them about cars. They are more equipped to answer questions about their problems. Rather than asking what kind of car they want try asking them what they want the car to do for them. Ask them who will be driving the car and how they plan to use it. Ask about long commutes or any planned extended trips. A powerful, leading question is to simply ask, "If I could show you a car with one special feature, the one great feature you'd like to see is...." Listen closely to the answer and you'll be well on your way to solving their problem and closing the deal.

Go out and have the Best month ever!

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