



## **Coping with rejection**

*No one likes to be told “no”. Rejection leaves us feeling uncomfortable and reluctant to put ourselves in that situation again. While a fear of rejection can be paralysing, for salespeople it's a fact of life.*

### **There is no failure, only feedback.**

Knowing the value of feedback, however it is derived, is crucial if you are to recognise when something needs to change for the better. If you react emotionally to failure, you may look for fault in the wrong places and assign the result to what you assume your weaknesses are, rather than basing your assessment of cool reflection.

Perhaps it's not your techniques, attitude or product that are at fault, but the way the product is packaged. It might be that you need to better research your competitors and prices. Maybe the price is too high and competitors are offering more for less. It's all too easy for managers to overlook problems that stem from the root. This is why it is crucial to ensure feedback is being gathered on all levels, at all times, and is evaluated and acted upon.

### **Reflect constructively and systematically**

Whether facing success or rejection, every call should be followed by a period of reflection.

Think back through the whole process, asking yourself:

- What did I do well?
- What did I do badly
- What could I do next time to make it better?

If the outcome was indeed rejection, ask yourself:

- Was I always in control of the call?
- Is it my approach that needs changing, or was there a particular problem with the product that meant it didn't do what the customer needed?
- Was I trying to sell to a segment of the market where my product is not needed?

These are just a few of the questions you can ask to help improve your chances of success next time around. And reflecting rather than dwelling on your performance should also improve your confidence, since you can go into your next sale feeling better informed and more experienced.

### **Feedback from others**

If you find that you are really struggling to glean useful insight from your experiences of rejection, it may be worth asking for the feedback of another team member or manager. Ask them to listen in to your calls or accompany you to sales meetings and take some notes on your performance. The thought of receiving criticism from colleagues can seem daunting, but if it is given constructively, it will only serve to improve your performance.

You could also talk to colleagues about their own experiences. Sharing anecdotes of what has worked well or badly for them in certain situations, or how they overcome a personal barrier to success, could help you to shape your own approach.



### **Keep yourself motivated**

When failure occurs, it is easy to mentally create a quick rule of thumb: “Two people have now said they can’t afford my product in this climate, so I’ll have to cut my prices or I’m not going to make any more sales.” But, of course, while shrinking under the weight of rejection may feel like playing it safe, failing to go after your goals can ultimately result in greater failure.

Some people assume that lowering their goals will soften the blow of failure but in fact, if you set aims high, this will help motivate you to learn and move forward from rejection. Of course, with the current economic climate putting pressure on budgets, sales simply aren’t as easy to secure as they used to be, so talk to your manager about how to balance realism and motivation.

If you keep reflecting daily on your performance, speaking to others about your experiences, and learning from, rather than dwelling on, rejection, you should be able to push through periods of failure, and become a better salesperson in the process.

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