

“If it ain’t broke then why try to fix it”

Overcoming the “I’m satisfied with the competition objection”

“I’m advertising with your competition and it works just fine” is one of the most challenging objections we face as sales people. Using SPIN selling techniques to develop business needs is one of the most effective ways to deal with this situation. SPIN enables you to expose minor dissatisfactions with a competing media and expand them into full-blown problems. After using SPIN to disturb the customer complacency they will be willing to consider other options.

Here are some other ideas to overcome the “I’m satisfied” objection and gain a share of their advertising budget:

- Remember if you attack the competition you are also attacking the customer’s decision to use the other media. If you go on the offensive you will force the prospect to defend that decision reinforcing their bond with the competitive product.
- Ask the customer what led them to choose the competitor in the first place. This will help you to understand what is important to the customer and to demonstrate what you have to offer in their hot button areas.
- Find out how the customer measures response. Find how they define the success or failure of an advertising program.
- Try to “read between the lines” and find out why the customer is so satisfied. There may be more to their satisfaction than ad response. They may be pleased with the service; they may have some sort of personal relationship with the competitive rep or company.
- Position statistics and testimonials very carefully. Present these materials as comparisons with the other media instead of as attacks on them. Assure the customer that you just want to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions about their advertising. Lead the customer to make his or her own conclusions about our competitive strengths.
- Be enthusiastic about your products. If your behavior doesn’t demonstrate your absolute belief in what you are selling, you will never convince the customer to try your products.

- Make sure that the customer does not see their advertising decision an “either/or” choice. If the customer is truly satisfied with the response from the other media they should continue to use it. An investment in your products will make the customer even more successful. Emphasize the differences between your products and the competitor. Show the customer the value of reaching a wider audience. Talk to the customer about the synergies of a multimedia approach to their marketing. For example if the customer is using radio, a print ad can capitalize on the name recognition generated by the broadcast advertising by spurring consumers to action with a coupon. Once you get the customer to commit to advertising with your publication you can work on increasing your share of their advertising budget.
- Remember, what the advertiser is really buying is your readership. If they are satisfied with the response from a newspaper program reaching 20% of the market, show them that you can sell them the remaining 80% of the consumers in their area. Even if you eliminate the people who read your publication and who also read the paid paper, the remaining readership is well worth their investment. Buying an ad with your publication is not a duplication but rather an expansion of their coverage.

Persistence is one of the keys to success in sales and especially in winning an account over from the competition. If you give the prospect a steady stream of reasons to try your products, consistently demonstrate your interest in learning about their business and your willingness to help them eventually they will give you an order. Once they give you a shot and they experience the response generated by your products they’ll tell the next rep “No thanks, I already advertise with the local free community paper.”