

Sell the Big Three

Have you ever done a good job of selling, but the buyer did a lousy job of buying? One of two things happened: You sold the right thing to the wrong person, or you sold the wrong thing to the right person. Either way, the result was no joy.

Buyers have needs, wants, and fears—the big three. *Needs* reflect objective buying criteria. They have an organizational focus. Needs state quality and service requirements. These include product specifications, logistics concerns, and financial interests. *Wants* and *fears* reflect subjective buying criteria. They are personal. Wants are personal wins. These are things that buyers want to achieve. Wants include ease of use, greater support, and safe alternatives. Fears are things to avoid. They include backorders, unsafe products, or financial risk.

Needs are rational. *Wants* are emotional. Consumers need transportation, but they want nice automobiles. They fear paying too much. Manufacturing people need to produce quality goods. They want something to make life easier. They fear unsafe solutions. Purchasing agents need materials to meet specifications. They want easy ordering and fear backorders.

Your strategy is to ask questions that help you understand rational and emotional buying criteria, and then listen fully. Draw out the big three—needs, wants, and fears. When it is time to present your ideas, sell buyers what they need; give them what they want; and help them avoid their greatest fears. Then, you will be selling the right thing to the right person for all of the right reasons.

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