



davidpenglase
trust impacts everything!



The Sales Mastery Special Report Series

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.
(The true meaning of the power of questions in sales!)

by David Penglase
B.Bus(HRD), MBA, MProfEthics, MScAPP
www.davidpenglase.com

Note:

The information provided in this special report is of a general nature and is in no way a guarantee of specific results. Application of the information should be considered in alignment with your personal contexts and individual industry, client situation, marketing, and sales environment.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.



Where it all began.

Her name was Doreen Ong. She was a middle-aged sales assistant in a jewellery store in Singapore.

Despite the many hours of sales training and coaching that I have personally received throughout my career, my personal buying experience from Doreen Ong still remains one of the greatest sales lessons I have ever learned.

In this Sales Mastery Special Report, you will learn the story of Doreen Ong, and I am excited about the opportunities that you will be able to create for yourself and your clients when you apply this powerful lesson in sales and communication.

The 'Sameness-Syndrome'.

Before I get to sharing with you the great lesson I learned from Doreen Ong, let me set the stage with some context around sales success.

In today's highly competitive markets, there is a 'sameness syndrome' that can creep in, fester and infect your motivation and success ... and this can happen without you even being aware of the cause or effect.

The sameness syndrome occurs because in competitive markets, most products and services can usually be produced and sold for about the same price, delivered in the same timeframes and at the same level of quality.

Not only has the sameness syndrome created situations where it becomes increasingly difficult for salespeople around the world to differentiate from their competitors, it has also been the cause of a major shift in the psychology of consumerism and the way people buy.

A major shift in the psychology of buying.

The major shift in the psychology of consumerism has occurred because of this increasing level of choice that consumers now have for most products and services.

This increasing level of choice has taken the focus of the purchase away from the product or service price and even away from the product or service features and benefits.

Stop and read that last point again!

If you haven't considered it before, what this means is that if you're still selling the way you did three or five years ago, you're probably finding it extremely difficult to compete and may be even losing sales that you have traditionally been able to win.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.



Why The Shift?

Before we address exactly what the shift of focus for consumers has moved toward, let's consider in a little more depth for a moment just why it has shifted.

First of all, what is not being suggested here is that price is no longer important.

To suggest such a thing would be nonsense. Of course, price is and always will be important.

People today, because of the greater level of competition which creates greater opportunities of choice understand and just expect to be able to buy their products and services at the best price they possibly can.

As a dominant deciding value of consumers, price will always be important.

However, because the difference between the competitive prices of most products and services is usually not that significant, it will be some other dominant deciding value that will be the driving reason behind a customer making a purchasing decision.

So, it must be the features and the benefits of the products and services that will be the main focus.....right?

Wrong!

Well, at least not always, and increasingly so.

Why?

Again, because the differences between the features and therefore benefits of most products and services today are becoming less and less.

In other words, the sameness syndrome abounds!

This means that most consumers realize that when they buy any product or service, it will more than likely have the features and benefits that they will be looking for.

So, this raises a couple of questions for you.

1. Where has the focus for consumers shifted and
2. How does this impact you and the way you sell

A Shift Of Focus To The Buying Experience

For many buyers, whether in business to business or consumer to business, whether they're buying a product or a service, the reality is this: When a client is about to make an important buying decision, their focus has shifted from price, features, and benefits ... and is now more to do with the buying experience.

Now before you write that off as not applying to your type of business, sale, product, or service offering, challenge yourself for a moment to at least be open to the hypothesis.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.

What if this is correct?

How might this affect the way people buy from you? How might this affect the way that you need to be selling and what can you do about it?

Here's the interesting and potentially uninspiring answer to where you need to become even more proficient.

In fact, you need to go beyond just proficient, and you need to be passionately inspired and deeply motivated to want to practice this key element.

And it will be in being passionately inspired and deeply motivated to want to practice this key element that is going to help you connect emotionally and intellectually with clients.

It will help you create an environment that will differentiate you from your competitors.

It will create an environment where your prospects and clients will become comfortable, confident and inspired to make wise decisions and purchase from you.

So, what is this key element of communication that is going to be your saviour in this world where the sameness syndrome abounds?

Unfortunately, as this key element is revealed, your immediate reaction may be 'there's got to be more to it than this'.

So, again, reserve your cynicism and doubt for the moment and treat this as a continuation of a hypothesis for you to either prove is correct or to prove is incorrect in your situation.



The Challenge To Craft And Ask Value-Discovery Questions

The key element is in becoming an expert in crafting and asking value-discovery questions.

This is not just about knowing what questions to ask and when to ask them. It is so much more than just completing a good and thorough 'fact find'.

This is about you developing a deeper and more profound understanding of the value that you can create for your prospects and clients when you ask one or more value-discovery questions.

These value-discovery questions, when considered, crafted, and then asked by you, will have the capacity to comfortably disturb your prospects and clients into realizing, seeing, and discovering the creation of value opportunities that they may not have even considered when they first thought about making a purchase.

It is the power of a well-placed, and well intentioned, value-discovery question that was this great lesson that Doreen Ong taught me all those years ago.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.



Doreen Ong's Lesson.

The year was 1980, and I was on a trip to Singapore. I had decided on this trip that I would buy myself a new wrist watch.

I set out early along Orchard Parade, one of the main shopping roads in Singapore, and entered one of the jewellery stores.

Now these were the legitimate jewellery stores ... not the ones out the back through the maze of corridors that lead to all of the fake watches.

As I entered the store, a sales assistant came out from behind the counter to greet me.

"How may I help you?" she asked.

"I'm interested in buying a watch". I replied.

"Well," she answered a little too quickly in a very rehearsed way, "we have many watches here for you to choose from. Why don't you have a look around, and if you see something you like, let me know and I will help you from there."

So, I started to inspect the hundreds of watches that were beautifully presented behind the safety of the crystal clear and cleverly lit glass counters.

That's where the difficulty for me started.

There were too many to look at - too many to choose from.

At this point, the sales assistant was talking to another customer, and with the thought in my mind that this was all too hard, I decided to leave.

And Then A Differentiated Buying Experience

Somewhat disappointed, I was still keen to keep trying so I apprehensively entered the next jewellery store.

A sales assistant came from behind the counter to greet me, just as in the last shop.

"Hello, my name is Doreen. How may I help you?" she asked.

"I'm interested in buying a watch." I replied.

"Well, we have a lot of watches here ..."

I thought to myself, here we go again.

But, then she said, "So do you mind if I ask you some questions to help me help you in your purchase?"

I was immediately and pleasantly surprised as this was already a different buying experience from the first shop.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.

"That would be fine." I replied and continued with "ask away".

The sales assistant then said, "I'd like to say first, if I may, what a lovely gold rope chain you are wearing."

Now, stay with me here ... it was the eighties!

"Thank you" I replied proudly.

"May I ask where you bought it?" she asked.

"Sure," I said. "I bought it in Sydney."

Then she asked me this: "It's a lovely chain, do you mind if I have a look at it, because we don't stock anything like that here?"

"Sure" I said, and I took the chain off and handed it to her.

Now, I can't say for sure, but I'm fairly convinced that the first thing that she looked at when she held the gold rope chain in her hands was that little stamp on the clasp that revealed the carats of the gold ... and in this case, it was 24 carats.

"Well, that is indeed a lovely piece of jewellery" she said again and handed it back to me after a brief inspection.



It was the eighties ... don't judge me.

I put the chain back on and she then asked me a question that caught me by surprise, and it was that question that became one of my greatest ever lessons in sales.

Here is what she said next, and while not an exact account, the words are fairly close to hers.

"There's a question that I like to ask each of my clients when they are thinking about buying a watch."

She paused and held eye contact with me, then continued.

"Because people are looking for many different reasons to buy a watch."

Again, she paused for a moment, and continued. "And the question is ... "What image or statement would you like to make when you wear this new watch?"

Wow!

Now that's a question that I didn't expect, and more importantly, that's a question that I hadn't even considered, until that very moment.

I had thought I was just going in to buy a watch.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.

But now, I'm thinking to myself, hmm ... what a good question ... what image or statement would I like to project when I wear the watch in front of my friends, family, and business associates?

So, I replied with "What a good question, and now that I think about it, I reckon I'd like for people to go wow, nice watch, where did you buy it?"

As I heard myself saying these words to the sales assistant, I still vividly remember how connected I was with this feeling about the image that I would now like to project from a watch when I returned to Australia.

Over the next few minutes, the sales assistant asked me a number of other questions, all related to this first powerful question that had changed my reason for wanting to buy the watch.

It was no longer about a watch that could tell the time. It was a watch that would create an image and make a statement.

The sales assistant then said, "I'd like to ask one more question that will help me make a recommendation." Again, she paused, and then asked "Do you like the look of old things or new things?"

Now in the early eighties, digital watches were becoming the rage. Plain square digital time displays that you wore on your wrist and personally, I just didn't like them.

"I like the look of old things, traditional and classic is nice." I replied, but then added, "However, although I don't like the look of the newest technology in watches, I do like to keep up with trends."

With that, the sales assistant went behind the counter, and she picked out two watches and placed them in front of me.



A recommendation

"Either of these two watches would be ideal for you" she said as she placed the watches in front of me. "However," and she picked up one of the watches to show me, "this is the watch that I am recommending that you buy."

The sales assistant then explained her reasoning for me to buy the recommended watch.

"This is a watch that will make a statement when you wear it. It matches your gold rope chain beautifully. It has a traditional roman numeral face. It has a classic and timeless appearance."

She continued, "And it has the best of both worlds because it also has a small but functional digital display that has a stop watch, alarm, two time zone settings and of course, the date and time display. But most importantly, I just know that this watch will look wonderful on you."

At this stage I'm thoroughly engaged in what Doreen is saying and completely in agreement and really liking the look of this watch, and I had not seen anything like it anywhere else on anyone I knew.

"Here" she said, "let me help you try it on."

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.

As the sales assistant helped me put the watch on my wrist, she made the comment "Look how nice this looks on your lovely tanned skin"

O.K., so it sounds a bit cheesy now, but you had to be there.

"Yes, I really like it" I acknowledged.

The sales assistant then reassured me by saying "This is the watch you need to buy."

And I replied, "You're right, I'll take it."

You've probably realized by now that I had made my buying decision and hadn't at that point asked the price.

The sales assistant then told me the price.

\$AUD250.

Now at that time I was probably earning about \$90 a week as a bank employee, and it was more than I had intended to spend.

But I now wanted the watch and bought it.

You may be thinking there's a sucker born every day!

But here's the thing.

That watch is still my favourite watch, and I wear it more than any other of the watches that I have purchased or been gifted over the years.



The True Meaning Of The Power Of Questions In Sales

The sales assistant had shifted my focus from the price, from the product, from its features and even from its benefits.

Through one or two well placed value-discovery questions, beginning with "what image or statement would you like to make when you wear the watch?" the sales assistant created a buying experience that positively differentiated her from any competitor.

What a great question.

And here's the more important lesson.

When the sales assistant asked that question, I could tell that she was passionate, inspired and motivated to ask the question because she knew that it was an important consideration that most clients probably had not considered.

What about you?

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.

How passionate, inspired, and motivated are you about the value you can create from the questions that you're currently asking?

Many of us tend to go through our sales calls, visits, meetings, and appointments almost on remote control.

We just ask the same questions, we present the same information and it all starts to sound the same to our prospects and clients.

Here's an opportunity to really connect with your prospects and clients and more importantly, an opportunity to build on your personal motivation and enjoyment when you're out selling what you sell.

You see, it's not what you sell, it's how you sell it and on a much deeper level it's why you're selling it.

To what extent do you believe in the value you create when you sell what you sell?

Buyers today can get what you sell from your competitors for probably about the same price and with pretty similar features and benefits.

So, here's your challenge.

How prepared are you to dig deep and move from any potential 'habitual' sales strategies that you could be just on remote control with, and create deeper, more profound and meaningful value-driven conversations with your prospects and clients?

All of us in sales need to have at least one question that we are inspired and deeply motivated to ask. And that motivation and inspiration will come from our belief in the capacity that asking that question will have to help our prospects and clients to discover potential value that they may not have considered.

The Lesser-Known Greatest Salesperson In The World.



Do you have such a question?

If not, that's your call to action from this Sales Mastery Special Report.

Oh, and by the way, for at least a decade after I bought that watch, I received a 'Thank You' card, signed by Doreen Ong, Sales Assistant on the anniversary of me buying the watch.

Now that's a buying experience worth repeating ... and I hope you enjoyed me sharing it with you and more importantly, that you'll take some action.

I welcome any comments or feedback that you might have on this or any Sales Mastery Special Reports you might access.

Drop me an email – david@davidpenglase.com

If you've got a Conference, Professional Learning & Development day scheduled, give me a call on +61 0418 400 369 to explore topics I could present to help you achieve your goals.

Until next time.....my very best to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David." with a stylized underline.

David Penglase

B.Bus(HRD), MBA, MProfEthics, MScApp.