

12 IMMUTABLE LAWS OF RELATIONSHIP SELLING

CONVERTING CUSTOMERS INTO CLIENTS

There is a critical difference between customers and clients. It is generally understood and accepted that the word customer and client is regularly interchanged, as it means different things to different people. The concept of “**customer service**” is far more recognised as a business process, however, there are some businesses that refer to this process by the term “**client services**”. Regardless of the term you may use "**The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling**" is a relevant methodology on differentiating types of customers. This range of business interaction commences with a **customer**, grows into a **client** and ideally matures into an **advocate**.

To commence this learning it is important that you differentiate levels of business interface, starting with the difference between a customer and a client. The information contained in this document will provoke your thought on what difference you may feel there is, and how you can sustain the development of clients through relationship marketing. The document commences with a powerful statement that makes the following observation.

Consultants cannot consult with customers. A consultant must have a **client**. Customers and clients are very **different** people. A customer only purchases a system, first off, on price alone, whereas a **client will be loyal to the seller** and buy a system on value and not price. Converting customers into clients is a major task of the modern day sales professional.

If the seller allows a buyer to remain a customer, the seller will be put at a serious disadvantage. The **customer** will treat the seller as an alternative supplier, seeking other sellers with better prices. As such, the customer will create a competitive position with other suppliers. The seller will then be forced to persuade the customer that the seller's system delivers the best benefits. Prominent amongst these benefits will have to be the “**best price**” from the customer's point of view.

The chief distinguishing characteristic of a **client** is a **value-to-price** orientation that favours **value**. A customer, on the other hand, is generally focussed towards **price**. The **trade-off** a client makes with a consultant about accepting a higher price in return for added value can be expressed something like this:

“I accept that your **higher price is proof of your added value**. However, for the extra initial cost that I will incur, I want something extra. I will insist, therefore, that you support our relationship in ways that exceed my expectation. Exceeding my expectation will prove to me that you understand the importance of **“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling”**.”

The best way to convert a customer into a client is to respect and implement **“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling”**. A relationship seller who wants to achieve a consultant's position has to implement a process that from the client's point of view sustains and proves the value of relationships.

“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling” described below are an exceptional and proven method of building quality relationships with any buyer over a continuous period of time. Understanding and using **“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling”** in everyday business interactions will sustain and **widen the gap** between you and your competitors.

“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling” also enables professional sellers to regularly analyse their existing business relationships and should a particular relationship be no longer as good as it was, then referring back to **“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling”** will in most cases uncover where a breakdown has occurred and how to rectify and relaunch a new relationship.

As you read through this document you will find that it is not “rocket science”. The process is a very simple, effective and a sustainable method of gaining, maintaining and developing relationships in all walks of life. You will find that the **“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling”** is completely relevant even in the relationships you have in your personal life where no commercial process exists.

For many professional sellers sharing the **“The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling”** with their business associates is a way of sustaining the process of exceptional **“sales culture”**. Creating a culture with these laws will mean that the process will become natural to everything you do.

The **Sales Institute** values and respects the process referred to as "**The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling**" and it is the mission of the institute to sustain the quality of its members activities by regular education based on these principles.

Traditional sales training methodologies have been primarily based on gaining the sale with little recognisable methods of how to sustain and build relationships. Based on the reality that "**the next sale starts when this one is closed**", it would seem extremely valuable to have a method that builds on this first sale in order to create sustainable long term relationships.

Traditional sales training has focussed its attention on training the seller to maintain control of the sale through a series of planned methods. The "**The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling**" on the other hand will change the communication from one of selling to one of consulting. This can be best expressed in how you communicate with your Doctor, your Lawyer, your Accountant or any other professional you interact with each day. Yes, they sell their service, that's how they maintain their business, but do they sell, or do we buy from them? You will rarely meet people who think that their doctor sells them services. Doctors do not attend sales training programs, they do however, spend an extraordinary amount of time learning how to help people overcome physical and psychological obstacles. This is how a doctor moves from being a seller to a professional consultant and it is the same methodology as "**The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling**". The system has 12 unique points of relationship activity.

1. **"Understand my needs and issues"**

Get things done - respond to my needs.

Produce results fast because I have more needs.

2. **"Communicate with me in simple terms"**

Speak to me in value creation terms.

Let me know you clearly understand the issues.

3. **"Don't surprise me/Level with me"**

Tell me the truth.

Criticise if you need to, but let me know what's working as well.

4. **"Work with me"**

Become a part of my team.

Show me you're interested in what I'm doing. Ask questions.

5. **“Give me the best you’ve got”**
Give superior value.
Your higher service makes your price extremely reasonable.
6. **“Be 100% professional”**
Be a real professional in everything you do.
7. **“Keep me informed”**
Continuously share some of your experience and expertise with me and my people.
8. **“Lead and own the process”**
Get out in front of my problems.
Roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty in my business.
Compromise with me once in a while but don't give in on what you know is vital.
9. **“Worry for me”**
Think hard about my problems.
Let me know what you think even without being asked.
Give me immediate access to you when I am worried - be available.
Put my needs first - never mind anyone else.
10. **“Be creative/Inspire me”**
Apply yourself in a way that transcends normal boundaries.
Offer me options.
Show a strong desire to achieve our objectives.
Don't leave a single stone unturned in looking for solutions.
11. **“Be faithful”**
Keep our business confidential.
Make your relationship with me personal and continuous - don't pass me along to others.
12. **“Treat me like a person, not just a client”**
Treat me like an equal - deal with me one-to-one.
Don't talk down to me.
Throw in a few "little extras" every now and then.
Advise me on closely related matters even if you're not being paid for them.

What **"The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling"** amounts to is an expression of a customer's concern for an investment in a system, of the need for visibility of commitment, and of the dependency that must be placed on the seller's expertise.

A consultant must be sensitive to the buyers needs to receive these rights, and also to demonstrate that they will diligently adhere to them.

Along with the profit-improvement benefits of the consultant's system, the recognition of **"The 12 Immutable Laws of Relationship Selling"** is the most important contributor to outstanding sustainable relationship selling.

The quotations listed below further reinforce the importance of relationship selling as a way of gaining, maintaining and developing quality business partnerships. These partnerships are primarily based on the relationships between people.

"People buy from us not because they understand our products and services, but because they feel we understand them as people."

**"The relationship
is more important than the sale"**