

From the Handbook of Business, the Bible

Speaking up

My mum used to share her wisdom with us, including this gem, *"don't be a sticky beak."* While it may be a worthy motto for life, it generally isn't for business.

Here's an example of why...

I took a faulty electric shaver back to the seller who seemed annoyed that it had to be sent away for repair after he'd done all the paperwork. We did the deal, but he never actually spoke up about my real problem.

It wasn't the broken shaver; rather, what do I use in the meantime? He could have lent me a shaver, sold me a new one, even doing a trade-in. But he chose not to be a stickybeak.

- *Interestingly, this business went broke not long after this 'incident.'*

My counsel for business owners:

You're not in business to flog products or services; you're there to solve customers' problems. It follows logically, you need to know what those problems are!

Too often in a sales pitch, sellers assume customers want to buy the product or service they sell; so, features & benefits are spruiked without considering or speaking about their (real) problem.

Think of it this way: what problem was on the customer's mind 60 seconds before speaking?

Then, be like a sticky beak...go beyond what they ask for and speak about their problem and the pain it's causing, i.e., enter the conversation they're having with themselves, as I was with the shaver.

Then you've earned the right to offer the best solution to their problem...and charge accordingly.

Here's another example...

A washing machine repairer worked out that most customers had the same problem, not the broken machine, but being unable to wash until it was fixed.

He spoke to them by way of a promise: *"you'll be washing today with your repaired machine or my loan machine."* The results were amazing; no one ever queried the cost; and it made him a lot of money!

The Bible, our Handbook counsel for today, Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 7, TLB...

(1) *"There is a right time for everything; (7) ...a time to be quiet; a time to speak up"*

Other Scriptures (NKJV):

Proverbs 18:13, *"He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him"*

Proverbs 18:21, *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."*

Proverbs 25:11, *"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold, in settings of silver"*

Eccles. 10:12, *"The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool...swallow him up"*

Colossians 4:6, *"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one"*