

## When A Customer Says No

Written by Steve Marr

Thursday, 10 January 2019 13:56

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Kenny Rogers sang the old country song, "The Gambler" with the refrain:

"You've got to know when to hold 'em,  
Know when to fold 'em,  
Know when to walk away,  
And know when to run."

In business we need to understand when to stop selling to a prospect. One friend of mine had a slogan that went something like: "When the customer says no, it means they don't understand." However, the customer may never understand; and the time you spend trying to convince a poor prospect is time you could be looking for gold elsewhere.

Often on the program *Shark Tank*, a shark may say, "I'm out." It means they are no longer interested in investing in the prospect's business. Too often the entrepreneur will start focusing on the person who just said no rather than directing their pitch to others who are still potentially interested in investing in the business. At times one of the other sharks may reprimand the guest saying, "Why are you talking to the shark who's out of the picture. Why don't you direct your conversation to me who is still a possibility?"

I spend time marketing for a damage restoration business. I visit insurance agents to explain our services and why they should refer their customers to us rather than to a competitor. On several occasions I've been told not to bother returning to their office to waste their time. Others never take their eyes off their keyboard as they type while I'm standing in front of them. I could try to break through the wall they put up, but in my view that effort is much better placed in fertile soil. While I may drop a piece of information to those who are not interested, I move on quickly looking for a better prospect.

"Jesus taught that "seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." Luke 8:15]

In ministry we need to plant seeds in all types of soil, fertile or not. However, in business we need to focus on planting seeds in fertile ground rather than wasting a lot of time with seed that

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probably won't sprout.

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