

Don't Take **NO** for an Answer:

OVERCOMING SELLERS' OBJECTIONS

When even the sellers' eyes say no, these scripts can help you secure the listing.

By William H. Pivar

Why are some salespeople so lucky when it comes to getting listings? You make as many listing presentations as they do, yet they always seem to walk away with the signed agreement. You, on the other hand, walk away wondering what went wrong.

You do everything by the book. But then you hit a brick wall—the objection.

You can scale that brick wall if you understand what's at the root of sellers' objections and have prepared yourself through role-playing. In fact, objections can become *opportunities* rather than *barriers*. So let's take a look at some of the most common objections and how you can prevent them from casting a shadow on your success.

1. "I'd like to list with you, but I have a friend [or relative] in the business."

When sellers raise this objection, you know one important fact instantly: The friend or relative must not be taking the real estate world by storm, or you wouldn't be there in the first place. So this "objection" is more a delaying tactic than a true obstacle.

When you do encounter the dreaded friend-in-the-business line, avoid being negative or argumentative. By pooch-pooching the sellers' idea, you may inadvertently insult the ability of their friend or relative. Instead, ask the following questions:

- Is this home one of your more significant assets?
- Do you consider the amount of money you make from

the sale of your house and the length of time it's on the market to be important?

- Do you want the best representation possible?
- Have I demonstrated that I understand the current market in your area?
- Have I shown you that I'm prepared to properly market your home?

Those questions should elicit positive responses. After the last positive response, hand the owners a pen.

2. "We want to think it over."

These owners are probably saying, "Things are going too fast for us." Patience is the approach to use now; you mustn't rush or pressure the owners. Also, keep in mind that there may be an unspoken objection. If so, you won't get the listing until you've discovered the objection and overcome it.

One strategy is to say, "Let me help you." Then take out a piece of paper and draw a line down the center. Above the left-hand column, write, "Reasons Laura Listingpro should represent me"; above the right-hand column, write, "Reasons Laura Listingpro shouldn't represent me." Now fill out the left-hand column by asking the following questions:

- Have I shown that it's in your best interests to be represented by an exclusive agent? If their answer is yes,



write, "Best interests in engaging exclusive agent."

- Have I convinced you that I understand the market? If they agree, write, "Knowledge of market."
- Have I convinced you that a listing price of \$—— — would be appropriate? If they agree, write, "Realistic price."
- Have I shown you a realistic marketing plan? If they agree, write, "Realistic marketing plan."
- Have I demonstrated that I've successfully met the needs of other owners with similar problems? If they agree, write, "Record of success."
- Have I convinced you that a listing agreement for —— months would be in your best interests? If they agree, write, "Realistic listing period."
- Have I shown you that a commission of —— percent

is both reasonable and in your best interests? If they agree, write, "Reasonable fee."

After you're done, ask the owners to list their objections in the other column. This process will defuse the I-want-to-wait syndrome by rooting out the *real* objection.

3. "I'd give you the listing, but your commission is too high."

One variation on this objection might be the owners' claim that another salesperson has offered to charge less. You might approach the commission-cutting issue by saying, "Mr. Jones, I could represent you for a lower commission, but you wouldn't want me to, because that could delay the sale of your home."

"There are more than 600 salespeople in our MLS who earn their living by matching properties with buyers. Salespeople may show reduced-commission property only out of desperation, so it's in your best interests to pay a fair compensation. To offer less could run the risk of excluding hundreds of potential buyers."

4. "We want to sell our home ourselves so that we can save the commission."

This is the objection of every FSBO. To obtain a listing, try the following dialogue:

"Mrs. Clyde, selling your home without a salesperson isn't going to save you a commission, and it could lead to unexpected problems. Most buyers work with salespeople because they control the inventory and can show buyers property that meets their needs."

"Buyers who answer FSBO ads are generally bargain

hunters. They expect not only to pocket any commission you save but also to whittle your price down to a bare minimum. They usually decide on a minimum price and then deduct a figure to cover the commission you won't be paying.

"At best, you'll save a minimal amount. Is that worth the longer sales time, aggravation, and risk? Doesn't it make sense to have a professional represent you?"

5. "I don't want to put my home on the market until I find a new one."

You can overcome this objection with some common sense. Say, for example, "If you put in an offer to buy contingent on the sale of your existing home, you'll probably have to pay top dollar for your new home—and even then many sellers will refuse the contingent offer. Buying without contingencies gives you bargaining strength.

"And if you buy before you sell, you could end up with two properties and two mortgage payments. If that happens, you may panic and be inclined to accept an offer that's not in your best interests. You don't want to have to sell under pressure.

"Considering all that, isn't it in your best interests to list now and sell before you buy?"

6. "Another salesperson said we could get a lot more for our home."

Owners' expectations sometimes bear no relationship to the marketplace. When that happens, it's up to you to bring those expectations back to reality.

Say, for example, "The CMA I prepared for you justifies my recommended offering price and is based on current listings and sales data. You know the neighborhood; have I left out any recent sales? Could I please see the CMA that the other salesperson prepared?" Chances are that there won't be one.

You might add, "Mr. and Mrs. Bishop, do you feel that the CMA I prepared for you portrays the recent market activity in this area accurately? On the basis of that data, don't you think the price I've recommended is reasonable?"

Emphasize that *buyers* determine value, and explain that if the sellers price their home above market value, they'll discourage other salespeople or prospective buyers from seeing it. Point out that if sellers reduce their price later, buyers may perceive it as an act of desperation, and any subsequent offers the sellers receive will very likely be for far less than the price you now recommend.



I have a friend in the business.

7. "Your company is too big. With so many listings, you won't have the time to properly market my home."

Are sellers *really* concerned about how much time you'll have to market their home? Or did they have a negative experience the last time they listed with a large company?

Perhaps the salesperson they dealt with never returned their calls, and they attribute that problem to the size of the company. As with *any* objection, discover what's at the root of it.

If the sellers simply don't like big companies and there seems to be no concrete foundation for their objection, here's your opportunity to turn a perceived disadvantage into an advantage. "Mrs. Neville, we'll successfully market your

home precisely because we have so many listings. Buyers call us because of the number of FOR SALE and SOLD signs we have in the area and because we constantly advertise our listings.

"You may be surprised to know that many people buy a property other than the one they first inquired about. So you can benefit not only from the ads we run for your property but also from our ads for other properties. If you want to sell your home, Mrs. Neville, you should be represented by someone who has the most inventory in your area. Doesn't that make sense?"

8. "Your office is awfully small. It would be better to deal with a large company that has many salespeople."

Again, find out *why* the sellers think it would be better to deal with a different-size company, and address that issue.

If the objection doesn't seem well-founded, turn it around by pointing out the advantages. "Mr. Smith, our office specializes in a small number of properties. We want to stay small so that we can provide maximum service to our sellers. With our company, your home won't be just one of hundreds of listings. We can provide the attention that leads to a successful sale."

You might also mention that the sellers will benefit from the MLS: "That means you'll also have _____ offices and more than _____ salespeople working on your behalf."

9. "I don't want _____ to show my home. I don't trust that salesperson."

What is it about the other salesperson that the seller doesn't trust? Perhaps he listed the seller's house previously and made promises he didn't keep. Probe for the real reasons why the seller raises this issue.

You might go on to explain how exclusive representa-

tion helps the seller. Point out that although you cooperate with all licensed salespeople, you're obligated to protect the seller's best interests. You could say, "We'll warn you of any dangers in offers received and recommend necessary safety measures. We won't recommend the acceptance of any offer that we don't believe will be in your best interests. My job is far greater than just procuring a buyer. I'm here to protect you against unscrupulous operators, no matter who they are."

10. "We've changed our minds; we want to wait until the market improves before we list."

"Don't you agree that the time to sell is when a buyer is available? I believe that our office can find that buyer.

Keep in mind that we don't need dozens of buyers for your home; all we need is one—and our office is dedicated to finding that buyer for you."

If the owners plan to buy another property after they sell their current home, you could point out that they'll be

in an advantageous position. Say, for example, "You'll be a buyer in what's considered a soft market. You should be able to buy far more house for your money than if you wait until market conditions improve."

Just understanding those approaches isn't enough. "Lucky" salespeople have learned that luck is simply the collision of preparation and opportunity. Therefore, prepare yourself so that overcoming objections will flow naturally. Then as you improve your presentation, you'll be surprised at just how "lucky" you are. ♦



We can wait until the market improves.

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