



How well do you listen?

Krista entered the car dealership ready to buy her first car. She was excited, she was eager and she was scared. We all have a negative stereotypical image of what some car salesmen (or women) can be like – and Krista found one. This guy oozed slime. He was all about the sale. And, he wasn't about to let Krista's preferences get in the way of him making the sale.

He was the type of guy that likes to listen to his own voice. Silence obviously scared him and he felt that if he talked faster and filled up all lulls in conversation with his attempt at wit and humor that the chances of closing the deal increased. Little did he realize that it actually has the opposite effect. He knew a lot about cars but very little about people.

His biggest flaw as an effective salesperson was his lack of listening skills. He figured he knew what was best and if you happen to disagree with him and had slightly different preferences, then obviously you knew nothing about cars and he was have to educate you. Krista found this exchange to be the clincher that made her go to another dealership.

She had narrowed down her selection of vehicles to two – both vehicles were at this same dealership. Her goal was to test drive both cars and after that decide which she felt was the better deal. Upon returning from the test drive she was quite happy with how both cars handled and she figured the determining factor would be price. That's when our salesman decided that Krista's best option was the more expensive one and he was determined to convince her of it.

He went on and on about how much better the one car was than the other. So what if it was more expensive – it was the better car. "This one has a very nice sound system. It has eight speakers ..." Before he could finish Krista interrupted him.

"Thanks, but all I want in the car is a simple radio, the rest of that stuff is useless to me."

"But," he said, "it also has a built in MP3 player."

Again Krista insisted, "All I need is a radio!"

"This has a radio and it has a subwoofer ..."

Krista cut him off, "Perhaps you are not listening to me. I am NOT interested in a fancy stereo. You may think you are 'selling' me on this when in fact you are annoying me." Krista promptly left the dealership and ended up purchasing her vehicle from another dealership.

When you are selling something to others, whether it be a product or service, or whether you are selling yourself in an interview - are you helping them buy what they want? Or what you want? By learning to really listen to what others are communicating, you can help them make the best buying decision for them. Selling is much more about the buyer than it is about the seller. Selling is about helping people make a buying decision and the best sellers know that sometimes that decision is not you and not now. How well do you listen?