

Q. Business development is just not my thing. It's the most painful part of my job even though I know my business depends on it. Most of the time, I think my customers could use my services, but I don't know how to come across without feeling like I'm trying to talk them into buying something they really don't need. It feels pushy and awkward. What can I do to make this feel more natural and less stressful?

A. Learning to like selling will motivate you to spend more time on business development type activities. Leading a successful business is highly dependent on good communication skills at the sales table. Developing your natural sales approach is a great idea– being yourself makes it easier for your clients to get to know you so that they feel more comfortable doing business with you.

Talking someone into doing something isn't fun, yet being persuasive is important. Instead of trying to convince your clients to buy, focus on building rapport and becoming a problem solver for them. When speaking with potential customers, what questions do you need to ask that will help you understand you're their challenges?

Build a repertoire of powerful questions you can draw on when meeting with prospects that will help you uncover why they need you. Then practice listening for their answers so that you're able to bring the right solution forward, customized to their needs.

You will feel more confident in the service you're providing, and less like those pushy sales people many of us loathe. You're primary motivation should be to ensure your customers have a great buying experience, hopefully over and over again. Great communication is the catalyst for great experiences.