



## Why Sales is So Bad At Selling “Trust”

By Susan Saldibar

*“If someone you’re trying to influence doesn’t trust you, you’re not going to get very far.”*

Talk about an understatement. This quote caught my eye from an article written by Alex Fisher, Chief Creative Officer for [Sherpa CRM](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner). The quote, incidentally, is from a book referenced by Alex and written by Amy Cuddy called *Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges*.

### **Do your sales reps trust themselves?**

As we know, trust is huge in senior living. And Alex makes several important points in her article about the need for sales to build trust from the very beginning of the relationship. And here’s a thought she raises that you may not have thought of – the need to first build trust within ourselves before expecting anyone else to trust us.

### **Stop talking at me! I just want you to listen.**

The problem, of course, is that instead of focusing on building the relationship and listening to the prospect, sales reps tend to move quickly to their comfort zone – selling features.

As Alex states, “We tend to start with what we’re selling: our product. We list features and floor plans and monthly prices before we build trust with the prospect.” She goes on to say, “Why is it that we continue to get this part of sales so wrong? Especially in senior living, where our prospects are in an emotional place where they really need someone to listen, not dump features on us!”

## So how do we turn this dinosaur of a sales approach around?

Alex shares her 5 strategies for building trust in the article. I've taken them directly from the article as follows:

1. **Start with you.** Why should your prospects trust you if you don't have trust in yourself? Know that you have the skills and abilities to guide prospects in making their own decisions. Whether they buy from you or not, trusting in yourself helps you maintain confidence through the tumultuous sales process.
2. **Trust the prospect.** Prospects have the answers, and it's our job to help draw them out. Don't feel put off or frustrated when they resist. Every prospect is just trying to navigate a difficult path to an important decision, and resistance is a natural expression of fear and uncertainty. Acknowledge how they feel and celebrate that they trust you enough to tell you.
3. **Be upfront.** During your first interaction with a prospect, state your intentions right away and mean it. Here's what that sounds like: "Mrs. Jones, my intention is to get to know you and to help guide you in your search, regardless where you choose to move. Or perhaps you'll decide to stay at home. That is very much your decision." Or, "Karen, thank you for calling. My intention is to help guide you and your family through this decision, regardless of where your mom ultimately chooses where to live."
4. **Listen.** This is the most effective way to establish trust, but it's hardly the easiest. When you ask a question, shut off the voice inside your head that is dying to fill space with answers. Listen, actually listen. Stay curious. When it's your turn to speak, ask a follow-up question based on what you heard.
5. **Ditch the script.** Search inside yourself for the authentic desire to get to know the person on the other end of the conversation. Don't worry at first if they're AL or IL, if they're a prospect or a family member, if they're "ready" to move or not. Connect with them as a person. You'll be amazed at how this foundation of trust will help you understand the most effective way to guide the prospect toward a buying decision.

## How do you hire for "trust"?

So what do you think? Should we hire based upon an individual's ability to trust himself or herself? How do you even detect that quality in an interview? If you could, it would certainly be something to look at and take seriously. Especially as we move towards a more proactive, relationship-based approach to selling.

Here's a crazy idea. What if we let a resident's family member interview a prospective sales rep before we hire? What would that look like?

We need more articles like these. They make me think about how senior living communities sell and who is doing the selling. Hopefully they do you, as well.

There is a lot more detail on this topic in Alex Fisher's article, which you can read [here](#).



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