

Title:

Aikido and The Art of Selling

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Summary:

What's your first instinct? Unlock The Game and the philosophy behind Aikido have many similarities. Traditional cold calling and selling are designed to focus only on the "close" by presenting -- or in too many cases, "pushing" -- your solution onto prospects, sometimes even when they're not interested.

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Article Body:

<p>What's your first instinct? Most of us will do one of two things. We'll either try to step away, or we'll raise our arms to deflect him and fight back, which can result in harm to you or to your attacker.</p>

<p>But if you were trained in Aikido, the Japanese martial art that focuses on diverting an attacker's energy, you could quickly diffuse the situation by immobilizing him without harming him in any way.</p>

<p>In essence, you're diffusing the energy that he's using to try and attack you in a way that takes the conflict out of the situation.</p>

<p>Unlock The Game and the philosophy behind Aikido have many similarities.</p>

<p>Traditional cold calling and selling are designed to focus only on the "close" by presenting -- or in too many cases, "pushing" -- your solution onto prospects, sometimes even when they're not interested.</p>

<p>But if you focus only on your goal of making the sale before having a discussion about the problems that you can help your prospects solve, something happens.</p>

<p>They start feeling that you're "attacking" them. After all, you're a stranger to them, and when you start talking about yourself and your solution rather than

about them and their specific issues, you immediately trigger their suspicion and cause them to start "pushing back."

This pushback is the resistance or energy that Unlock The Game teaches you to diffuse. Then both of you can quickly "get on the same page" and open a natural dialogue that will let you determine whether it makes sense for you to work together.

Let's look at two real selling scenarios -- cold calling and "get-you-off-the-phone" objections:

Scenario 1: Cold Calling

Suppose you're at your desk and you receive a call from someone who says "Hi, my name is Jack Johnson, I'm with XYZ Company, and we're a full-solution provider of..." Is your first reaction to welcome and be open to his call? Or do your mental defenses immediately kick in and you shut down against this stranger "salesperson"?

Probably the latter, especially if you sense that the caller is focused on his interests and not yours.

That's why this old-school cold calling approach triggers the resistance and negative energy that prospects immediately throw your way.

The Unlock The Game way to make a successful cold call -- "successful" being defined as not triggering rejection -- is by beginning your call with, "Hi, my name is Jack, maybe you can help me out for a moment?" That simple question is a very natural way of beginning a conversation with a stranger.

But you can't just read this word for word, like a script. It won't work. That would be like an Aikido instructor teaching a first-time student the physical movements before he or she has learned the philosophy necessary to carry them out.

The same applies here. First you need to integrate a new Mindset that changes the goal of your call from making the sale, or getting an appointment, to engaging the person in a natural two-way dialogue.

To do this, your voice has to be low-key. You have to avoid communicating any hint of typical "salesperson" enthusiasm, or any sense that you're trying to direct the conversation to an end goal. Once you integrate the Mindset, all this kicks in naturally.

<p>So, if you want to succeed in prospecting and cold calling, become aware of how you might be triggering the resistance or energy that instinctively causes prospects to push back against you.</p>

<p>Scenario 2: "Get-you-off-the-phone" objections</p>

<p>Here's another example. Forget the idea of "overcoming objections." Doing that only triggers more resistance from prospects that's very difficult to diffuse.</p>

<p>Think about it for a moment. When prospects give a reason why they don't want to proceed --when they "put up resistance" -- you've been trained to "overcome" their objections rather than to diffuse their resistance by acknowledging that what they're telling you is their truth.</p>

<p>By applying the Unlock The Game Mindset™ and skills, you diffuse that resistance and remove the conflict from the situation, just as in Aikido.</p>

<p>Here's the Unlock The Game™ process for dealing with objections:</p>

<p>1. Diffuse the objection with "That's not a problem... (Pause)"</p>

<p>2. Acknowledge the truth of their objection (see the sample language below).</p>

<p>3. Reopen the conversation with "Would you be open to..."</p>

<p>For example, suppose a prospect says, "We already have a vendor." The path of diffusing and reengaging would go like this:</p>

<p>1. "That's not a problem...(Pause)"</p>

<p>2. "I wasn't calling to replace the vendor you're currently using." Here, you're addressing their suspicion that your only focus is on making the sale and on ripping out their relationship with their current vendor. You're simply asking whether they would be open to different ideas that might help them solve a problem. This diffuses the tension.</p>

<p>3. "Would you be open to some different ideas that you might not be using now?" After the tension is dissolved, this lets you reopen the conversation in a natural way because they clearly understand that your goal is to help them. Then, if things are a match between you, you can decide where to go from

there.</p>

<p>Keep in mind that this process will work only if you fully integrate the Mindset so it feels as natural to you as breathing.</p>

<p>In short, if you're using any form of traditional selling, you could be triggering a resistance every time you communicate with your prospect.</p>

<p>But if you learn this new Mindset, along with words and phrases that remove any conflict or tension from the relationship, you'll have taken your first steps toward your black belt in unlocking the cold calling game!</p>