

Mike Gorman Sales Articles “8 Proven Steps to Winning the Job” Series



Welcome to “8 Proven Steps to Winning the Job,” a series of articles and tools to help you at each step of the energy-efficiency sales process. I’m Mike Gorman, and I’m excited to share the expertise I’ve accumulated in more than 20 years of building-science and contractor-training experience. I’ve put together information that will help to make you more efficient—and effective—so that you can close more sales. I hope your business will benefit from the articles, tips, and tools that follow. Here, in brief, are eight proven steps to winning a job:

1. Polish Your Conversation Skills.
2. Use a Prospect Capture Form to Get the Right Info.
3. Set and Keep the First Appointment.
4. Ask the Right Questions to Make the Sale.
5. Tour Your Prospect’s Home and Share Your Expert Observations.
6. Work Out the Price and Present Your Proposal.
7. Set Your Price the Right Way and Choose the Right Partners for the Job.
8. Educating Your Customers About Your Services Can Create More Business.

Keep reading, and enjoy!

STEP 1—Polish Your Conversation Skills

Talking comfortably with your prospects is the key to gaining useful information, establishing trust and potentially gaining a long-term relationship.

No matter whether you’re talking on the phone or in person, the first step to winning the job is to simply start talking—and listening.

The most successful contractors practice conversational generosity—they encourage prospects to talk about themselves. These contractors know to talk less about themselves and spend more time paying attention to everything a prospect is saying.

Most people feel special when you ask them about themselves. Steer all of your initial conversations towards your prospect, but don’t rush this process. Be patient and let your prospect set the pace. Just concentrate on maintaining a friendly, but professional attitude, applying the tools available, and letting the relationship develop naturally. Here’s another tip for in-person conversation: You can build relationships faster by making eye contact—never wear sunglasses while talking to customers.

Of course, you want to keep the conversation flowing, but it’s not unusual for occasional and sometimes uncomfortable pauses along the way. Prepare for that possibility by rehearsing the list of questions found in the tool that accompanies this article. Soon, you’ll know which questions to use when there’s a pause

in the conversation with your prospect. Your questions will keep the conversation going.

What it all comes down to is taking a sincere interest in the other person and having a genuine desire to learn from them. I’ve found that everyone I meet knows something I don’t know. Once you begin to use the questions in the accompanying tool, you’ll see how it’s quite easy to find common interests with your prospects.

I learned this from Neal Kelly, a fellow contractor. He posed these questions to me one night in Chicago during a convention. I was amazed to find myself sharing personal information so comfortably with Neal. Neal showed me how quickly you can create trust and that trust is what enables contractors to close more sales.

Neal knew I was living in Denver, CO. He asked me how I ended up there and continued to follow up with a rotation of questions very like those in the tool. When you present a rotation of questions well, you may be amazed at how much you can learn about your prospects and their emotional triggers.

I’ve since gotten to know Neal well over the years and have heard him ask the same set of questions many times as he met new people. **The results were always the same: interesting conversations, shared connections, and new relationships.**

Neal built a sustainable company that's now run by the second generation of Kellys. He was eventually elected president of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. The rapport he had with his customers, and with others in the industry, was critical to achieving this success.

So, take your prospect relationships and success to the next level. By encouraging and developing effective conversations, you'll win the trust of others. One last thing—always remember to thank your prospect for their time before you leave or hang up the phone. If you've started to build a relationship, the time you've spent talking will be time well spent.

Use the Getting-to-know-you tool to start conversations with your prospects and help turn them into customers.



Tool #1: “Getting-to-know-you” Questions

Nothing helps build a relationship faster than casual conversation. All it takes to get started is a genuine interest in the other person. Here are some natural questions to try:

- ▶ **Where are you from originally?**
- ▶ **How did you end up here?**
- ▶ **How long ago was that?**
- ▶ **Are you married?**
- ▶ **How did you meet your wife/husband?**
- ▶ **Do you have any children?**
- ▶ **What kind of work do you do?**
- ▶ **How did you get into that line of work?**
- ▶ **How long have you been doing that?**
- ▶ **Is that a large company?**
- ▶ **Are there other locations?**
- ▶ **How is business these days?**

You don't have to go through this list in any order, but if you have questions like these ready, you'll be able to find natural ways to work them into your conversations with prospects.

For more sales and marketing insights, look for the Selling Efficiency Series on your NY Home Performance Portal.

Mike Gorman is the leading expert in teaching contractors how to best position and price their business to increase sales. He's an award-winning contractor, author, and consultant.