

HATE SELLING? YOU'RE JUST HUMAN.

LOW PRESSURE TIPS FOR TALKING TO PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR ASSOCIATION

Whether it's membership renewals, event sponsorship, or convincing people to serve on the Board, people in the Association world are always selling. And for the majority of people, selling is just plain uncomfortable.

Actually, if you don't like to sell, you're perfect for the job. You just have to stop thinking that sales are bad for the customer.

Try this instead: think about your new, favorite restaurant. You probably talk about the food, the service, and the atmosphere. You're perfectly comfortable (even enthusiastic) explaining why it's so great and encouraging people to give it a try.

Chances are you love your Association and believe in its mission and you know it's valuable to members.

You love the Association and you love the restaurant. When you visit with a prospective member, think of the Association as that restaurant.

It's important to go in with the mindset that you are there to help them solve a problem.

Begin by asking open questions and actively listen to the answers. Find out what their challenges are. **People like to talk, especially with someone who can appreciate what they're going through.**

After listening, you've probably identified the needs of the person you are talking with and how those needs relate to what your Association can do for them. Now rewind and think back to the favorite restaurant example. Can you think of someone else who went to eat there after you suggested it and also loved it? So now think of a member who joined the Association and loved it. Think about how that member's challenges were similar to those of this prospect. Then, share the story of how the Association was able to help that member solve some of their problems.

If you did it right, the story included some of the features and benefits offered by the Association. Summarize the benefits, not the features, for the prospective member — benefits solve problems, features are just confusing.

At this point, you've done two very important things: you've communicated to the prospect that you understand their challenges and explained how you can ease their pain.

All that's left is to **ask if they would like your help. Do this by simply asking if they think what you've talked about could help them.** If they say no, ask them why and see if you can overcome their objections. If they say yes, ask what appeals to them and calmly start talking about how to get started with whatever it is.

Selling is uncomfortable. Partnering with someone to help solve a problem is human nature. You don't have to be a salesperson, you just have to be human.

