

After decades of personal selling and observing others sell, I am convinced most buying decisions are based on emotions rather than on a rational basis. The ratio of the two motivators varies with the individual buyer and the circumstances at the time, but clearly the seller must always be aware of the emotional component of the decision process. Having the best product, service, price, warranty, etc. does not ensure a sale.

Here's a sampling of some of the non-rational reasons I have observed buyers employ in their buying decisions.

- They like salesperson personally.
- They have something in common with salesperson, like attending the same school.
- Seller is friendly with their boss, or boss told them to buy.
- The previous buyer bought from current vendor.
- They perceive seller is friendly with someone in top management.
- Something in your offer positively impacts their bonus. (This may be rational from their personal viewpoint, but their job is to find the best deal for their employer.)
- They receive some personal gain from the seller.
- The seller is great looking.
- The seller is a stylish dresser.

There are an infinite number of emotional decisions involved in buying decisions. The buyer may be unaware of them.

So, if you are a seller and you know that your product or service is clearly superior to the one being currently bought by the buyer, do not assume he will switch to you. Do your homework and try to determine everything you can about your buyer to understand his/her emotional buttons so you can put them in play in addition to your rational approach. Your persistency can eventually overcome a buyer's emotional bias.

If your many attempts fail, you might approach the buyer's boss with your strong rational arguments that can trump the buyer's emotional decision-making.

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