

Why So Objectionable?

Overcoming a prospect's 'no' can be as easy as one, two, three

"I just want to add some good new franchises to my system, is that so much to ask?" Flies on the walls of franchise companies throughout the world hear this simple request again and again.

By Mario Altiery

Selling franchises was never an easy task, but now the economy just seems to be piling on. It used to be that you'd get a prospect on the phone, answer a few questions, send out some information on the company, wrap it all up with a decent discovery day and poof: new franchises. So why are prospects so objectionable? Could the main byproduct of our current financial marketplace be more inquisitive prospects?

In a strong economy, friends, family and the media encourage entrepreneurship while in a down market, friends, family and the media question the soundness of any decision with perceived financial risk.

What are the results of negative press and pessimistic friends and family? More questions from candidates and greater doubt during the sales process. The answers you once provided with success are no longer doing the trick; prospects are asking follow-up questions and want more validation than ever before.

It's not all bad news; many franchise systems are currently growing and some are even seeing better results than in years past. Solid franchise systems and strong franchise development people have been given an opportunity: Through consolidation of many industries, there is more opportunity and less noise for quality candidates to sift through.

To handle all these objections, franchise development professionals have to replace a candidate's lost confidence through diligent and thorough representation of their franchise models.

The three steps below will help you understand what prospects are actually asking. You will be able to provide accurate answers and eventually head off your most common objections, leading to a more pleasurable process for both you and your new franchisees.

1. Prepare yourself. Prospects come in all shapes and sizes but often with similar questions. Make sure you have a strong command of the most popular questions and detailed

Question/Objection	Translation	Follow-up
There is a lot of competition in my area. Do you think it will be hard to get new customers?	I know about the marketing but I just don't think it will work. My area is different and will require other efforts.	I would be happy to go over the marketing plan again and how we deal with competition. Would that make you more comfortable?
When do I speak to the franchisees? I'd like to talk to someone who is actually doing it everyday.	This person isn't very informative; I am not getting the information I need. I am getting frustrated and just want to speak to a franchisee to get the information I need.	Speaking to franchisees is important. I certainly want to make sure I have answered all your questions. Do you need more detail on anything to help you feel more informed?
How long does it typically take for your franchisees to break even?	I am worried about how long this will take to get off the ground because the marketing just doesn't seem like it will work as it was explained.	You have asked a lot of questions about the start-up period. Would you like more information about the grand opening system and the initial marketing push?
When I come to discovery day, will I get to see the marketing materials and can we create our own materials?	I want to see more materials because what I have seen so far doesn't look that good. I think I can make better materials, so I want to make sure I have the option.	I know you have seen our Web site and some of our marketing materials were mailed to you. Do you have concerns with the quality or effectiveness? Would you like me to provide more examples and discuss in detail how we utilize them?
Will I meet the marketing manager when I am at discovery day?	I need to talk to someone who understands the marketing because this person really doesn't, and right now I don't have confidence in the marketing program.	You can certainly meet the marketing manager when you attend discovery day. Do you have concerns with the amount of information you have received thus far on the marketing? Would it help if we revisit the tenants of the program?

responses ready. Quick or vague answers say your system is lacking, leading to more questions and objections about the value of your brand. You have the ability to reduce future objections by making sure your responses:

- Provide a non-evasive, clean answer to the question posed
- Create confidence with their depth and completeness
- Demonstrate clear benefits
- Differentiate yourself from your competition

2. Ask questions to ensure you understand what's being asked. Often, development professionals will receive an objection masked as a question. After a lengthy phone call, the prospect is still unsure and asks the questions detailed in the chart above. A simple follow-up question may uncover what your prospects are truly concerned with.

If needed, continue to ask questions until your candidates clearly state their concerns. If you have already covered a topic, prospects will hesitate to ask the same questions again, even if they weren't fully satisfied with the original answers. Asking questions can prompt pros-

pects to admit they need more information.

3. Say it first. As you begin to understand what prospects are asking and what is important to them, front-load the information. Often, when a prospect pushes you, your responses may feel like excuses, whereas if you are stating the benefits of your system prior to being asked, they seem more like reasons your system works so well.

So how to do you say it first? Make sure information is prominent on your Web site. Include detail on any Web portal copy. Include examples in mailings to prospects and highlight the information in your franchise information packet. And finally, talk about it early and often during your phone calls with prospects.

By preparing yourself, asking questions and saying it first, you can streamline your sales process, reduce the amount of questions and objections and empower top candidates to join your system. [FT](#)

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