



## How to Be Persistent in Sales Without Being Pushy: Mastering the Line in the Sand

### Description

Every sales professional and many non-selling professionals who still need to develop business know there's an invisible line in the sand. On one side, you're a confident, professional salesperson. But cross it and suddenly you're the stereotypical pushy used car salesman type that no one wants to deal with.

For many, the fear of stepping over that line is so strong they stay far away from it. They give up too soon, avoid going for the close and miss opportunities that could have been theirs.

At BDU, we've seen firsthand that the most successful salespeople and business developers know exactly where that line is and can walk right up to it without going over. They're not ten steps behind and nervously pacing on the safe side. They get right up to the edge, and that's where their success begins.

#### The Myth of the Pushy Salesperson

Everyone has experienced a salesperson who's made them cringe. The overly aggressive timeshare rep, the cold caller who just won't stop talking or the networking contact who pitches you before you've even finished your handshake.

These encounters create a lasting impression. Many salespeople overcorrect, determined never to make someone feel uncomfortable. But in trying to avoid being pushy, they swing too far in the other direction and their results suffer.

[BDU's CEO Lisa Peskin](#) had an experience herself with a salesperson so scared to cross the line that she didn't even approach it, losing her a guaranteed sale.

#### The Telemarketer Who Had the Sale and Lost It

Lisa rarely lets telemarketers schedule in-home appointments with her, but there was one woman on the phone who was phenomenal. She was engaging, articulate and had such a compelling reason for the call that Lisa agreed to meet with her.

When the day came, the telemarketer arrived with her manager. Within 15 minutes, Lisa had already decided she was going to buy. The offer was good, the pitch was solid and everything aligned.

An hour and a half later, however, they walked out without the sale.

**Why? They never asked for Lisa's business.** Not once. They didn't even follow up with her afterwards.

Why would they even bother scheduling the meeting or putting in all that effort only to stop short of the finish line? It wasn't that they couldn't sell. It was that they were so afraid of coming off as pushy that they never even asked for Lisa's business.

Defining the "Line in the Sand"

So, what exactly is this line?

Being pushy means applying pressure without regard for the prospect's needs or boundaries. It's talking over them, dismissing objections and making them feel cornered.

Persistence, on the other hand, means focusing on how you can help instead of trying to sell something. It's about staying engaged, continuing the conversation and guiding the prospect toward a decision all while respecting their pace and preferences.

The "line in the sand" is that moment when persistence starts to feel like pressure and when the prospect shifts from feeling supported to feeling cornered. The key is recognizing that shift and stopping just before it.

Pushy feels self-serving, but persistent feels service-oriented. When you're persistent, the prospect still feels in control but you're clearly leading the way.

The Cost of Stopping Too Soon

Fear of being perceived as pushy is one of the most expensive sales problems out there because it costs you deals you could have closed.

Here's how it might play out:

- **Missed opportunities:** The salesperson never actually asks for the business, assuming the prospect will let them know. Spoiler alert they probably won't.
- **Networking with no ROI:** Some professionals attend dozens of early morning and evening networking events, yet at the end of the year they can't trace a single deal back to those hours. Often, it's because they never articulated who good introductions are for them or clearly asked for the referrals. ([Download BDU's Networking Meeting Checklist](#) from our BDUtensils library now to help you squeeze the lemon and maximize your networking opportunities!)

- **The objection quitter:** When prospecting, salespeople often make it past the greeting and deliver a solid benefit statement. However, many give up as soon as they hear the first objection. It's important to remember that many deals require handling multiple objections before you finally secure the appointment.

At BDU, we believe that one of the differences between an average performer and a sales superstar is often just this: the superstar will go above and beyond to do what the average salesperson won't. They'll go right up to the line without crossing it.

#### Real-World Examples

- **The Telemarketer:** Had the sale in 15 minutes but never asked for it. Result: no deal.
- **The Networker:** Attended dozens of events but never requested introductions. Result: no measurable ROI.
- **The Cold Caller:** Stopped at the first objection instead of handling two or three. Result: fewer appointments and missed opportunities.

In every case, the problem wasn't skill. It was nervousness and fear.

#### Mindset Shift: Persistence as Professionalism

To master the line in the sand you have to change the way you think about persistence.

Persistence is not harassment or nagging. It's a service to the prospect. If what you offer can truly help them, it's your responsibility to make sure they have every chance to say yes.

Here's the mental reframe:

- **Pushy** = I need this sale for me.
- **Persistent** = I'm committed to helping you solve your problem.

Sometimes the fear of being pushy is really fear of rejection in disguise. A prospect saying "no" doesn't make you unprofessional it just means it's not the right fit right now. Plus, [every "no" you receive gets you that much closer to your next "yes."](#)

#### Strategies to Get Close to the Line Without Crossing It

##### 1. Ask for the Business Clearly and Directly

Hoping the prospect just "takes the hint" is not a strategy. If you've earned the right to ask, then ask.

Example: "Based on what we've discussed, we feel confident we'll be able to help you. We can get you started as soon as this week. Or, would you prefer starting next week?"

##### 2. Handle Multiple Objections Calmly

Most salespeople give up after the first objection, but top performers know it often takes addressing two or three concerns before a prospect is comfortable moving forward.

The key: Stay curious. Ask follow-up questions, dig deeper and make it a conversation instead of a standoff.

Looking to sharpen your objection-handling skills? Check out the following BDU resources:

- [Top 4 Tips for Overcoming Objections](#)
- [ASI Webinar - Lisa's Tips for Overcoming Objections](#)
- [Keeping an Objection-Handling Diary](#)

### 3. Ask for Introductions and Referrals Naturally

Your best referrals often come from your existing network. But if you don't ask, you won't get them.

Tip: Frame it in a way that feels collaborative but also make sure your ask is specific to your target market. For example, if you are in manufacturing, you might try saying something like this:

“What other CEOs do you know who have over 100 employees in the manufacturing space?”

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### 4. Follow Up with Purpose

As Lisa says, you should always set the next step at the current step to save yourself a step. Be sure to set your next meeting at the end of the current one. However, if you do find yourself needing to follow up, keep in mind that reaching back out isn't bothering someone. It's about adding value and keeping the conversation alive.

Try it out: Share a relevant article, send an updated proposal or reference a past discussion. Each touchpoint should move the relationship forward.

**Self-Check: Where Are You in Relation to the Line?**

Here's a quick self-assessment:

- **10 Steps Behind:** You avoid asking, you give up quickly and you wait for prospects to initiate.
- **On the Line:** You ask confidently, handle objections calmly and know when to stop.
- **Over the Line:** You push for the close without listening, talk over objections and pressure for a yes at all costs.

If you're 10 steps behind, aim to take just one step closer in your next conversation.

**The Final Word**

Persistence in sales isn't about being aggressive; it's about being committed. The top performers know exactly where the line is and approach it with confidence. They don't stop short out of fear, and they don't cross over into pushiness.

The question isn't whether you know where the line is. It's whether you have the courage to walk right up to it.

**Want More Guidance on Prospecting with Confidence? We Can Help!**

Let us talk you through some additional prospecting strategies while you work on getting right up to the line in the sand! Just send us your contact information through the form below and we'll get a time on the calendar to chat.

Your Name (required)

Company Name (required)

Your Email (required)

Additional Message

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