

Chris Mullins, The Phone Sales Doctor™

Great Marketing Is Not Enough If Your Prospects Don't Convert

Empathy, The Most Important Skill In Human Communication

Empathy isn't pity for the hardships of others. Empathy is putting yourself in the shoes of another. Empathy is feeling with someone, being able to put yourself in their place as if you were them and feeling those feelings. Empathy is vital in all communication. One of the reasons that I have found in the role of intake specialists that empathy is so challenging is intake specialists feel like their crossing a line. Like it is too personal, and this is business. Do not use empathy to share your own personal stories. This is not empathy. Empathy is providing compassion and **taking action to help**. Compassion is about feeling concern for someone, but with an additional move towards action to help solve the problem. Empathy does not mean that you must burst into tears alongside them. The prospect needs you to understand and sympathize with what they are going through and to either take or help them to take action to resolve the problem. Empathy is paying attention without judgement. As an intake specialist it is not up to you to decide if you feel their story is real or not. Your job is to be there for them on the spot to ask the screening questions while being a person that hears what they are saying and providing support. Judgement gets in the way. If you form an opinion of them and their situation it is dangerous. It will come through on the phone. You will lose the trust of this person. They will choose another law firm. Providing empathy will help the person to feel that you get them, that they made the right decision calling your law firm, that **you're** on their side therefore they will trust **YOU** and have a higher likelihood of taking your recommendation of signing the retainer now on the spot. When a prospect decides to make an appointment or sign the retainer, he/she is doing so because of you, the intake specialist. Its all about how they feel about you, not the law firm. They do not know the law firm yet. They do know you, the intake specialist. It is a typical mistake to try to be helpful without being empathetic. This behavior leads to unwanted help and an awkward conflict between the intake specialist and the prospect.

TRY THIS: periodically check-in with the prospect by repeating back what they said. When the prospect is sharing their story, “my leg was amputated 2 years ago because of an ulcer and now I have another ulcer on my other foot...” Say this... Wow! Did you just say that your leg was amputated 2 years ago because of an ulcer and now you’ve found another ulcer on your other leg?

If someone feels listened to, understood, and cared about, this person will be much more cooperative with you during a difficult conversation. The cooperation you’re looking for is for them to answer your screening questions, agree to appointment or sign the retainer on the spot.

Empathy feels good to yourself. Giving is better than receiving. When you make an effort and understand somebody else’s emotions you feel rewarded. It is kind of self-rewarding when you do something morally right. As intake specialists you go through so much of your own trauma every day on every call. This can help you with your own stress throughout the day.

Therefore, **LEADERS** need to focus on the Intake Specialists and the whole team to provide empathy to them each day to help them to get through the day in addition to each and every phone call.

Practicing empathy regularly in difficult conversations will get you connected to the world around you and will bring more and more meaningful personal relationships into your life.

Being empathetic to others does not mean agreeing with them. It just means you could not imagine being in their shoes and you have compassion for them and their situation.

Some intake specialists think that with one minute of active listening, with one piece of empathic mirroring they show weakness to the other person. This is not the case. You will create a bond with the prospect, they will trust you and have a higher likelihood of choosing YOU and your law firm.

Spending some time to understand the other person does not prevent you to then be assertive with him or her. It does not prevent you from being the strong expert in charge and being professionally assertive to Coach them on what they need to do next to get the help they deserve, which is to agree to the appointment with your law firm or sign the retainer today.

Providing empathy does not consume lots of time. Some intake specialists feel like it is too difficult to put the extra effort to provide empathy because it takes more time. 30 seconds of really listening to what they said and then 3 seconds of saying... did you just say you are afraid of having your left leg amputated isn't a lot of time.

Be patient and listen to what they said about their story periodically throughout the call check in and say outloud what you understood them to say to be sure you got it right and so that they know you were listening, that they matter and so that they can feel like, wow, I guess I really did make the right decision calling ABC law firm today.

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