

SALES STORY
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A salesman who had been with our company for about a year and a half asked me to fly in from our Dallas office and make some sales calls with him in San Antonio. He had one particular problem. He knew we had a lot of equipment to sell to school districts, but he didn't seem to be able to make in-roads in convincing the food service directors of the schools to work with him.

We went to see the director of a very large district, who had given us an appointment. She and I were chatting, catching up on old news, and I looked over at my salesman. He was sitting on the edge of his chair with a spec sheet for heated transport carts in his hand. He had an anxious look on his face.

It was obvious that he had something to sell, and was eager to sell it!

She had to leave the room for a moment and I leaned over and said, "Sit back and relax. This could take a while. Try just watching what happens."

He sat back. When the director came back, we continued chatting about kids and difficulties in balancing work and home life, general things that working women share stories about. After a while, I asked her how successful they were in keeping their pizzas hot for the later lunch runs.

She thought about it and said that it was a bit of a problem. I took the spec sheet from my salesman, handed it to her, and asked him to tell her about the carts and why they were effective in solving that problem. They talked back and forth, he answered her questions, and she ended up asking for budget pricing on the carts.

After we left, we talked about what had happened. He started laughing at himself, and admitted that he had been totally unaware that his "eager beaver" approach was a turn-off instead of the turn-on he had intended! He changed his manner, started making friends with the school ladies, and is now our top salesperson in that segment.

I didn't ask him to stop being eager. I only helped him see how to develop relationships with people so that they *want* to buy from him. Would he have acted differently if he were a woman? I don't know, but he has always expressed gratitude for having a woman boss who showed him the ropes.