

## Turn 'brick-wall' prospects into customers

In sales, we often find ourselves in frustrating situations. Our reactions to those situations often make the difference between closing a sale and burning a bridge.



### MANAGING PERFORMANCE

Mary Elizabeth  
Murphy

Frustration is a natural part of the sales process, whether it comes in the form of a stonewalling prospect or a vendor who won't budge on price or quantity. Many sales careers are stunted by salespeople who rammed their heads into a brick wall rather than finding a way to get past it.

Most of us have never actually rammed our heads into a brick wall. We know the wall would win that confrontation. Why, then, do we expect any difference when the brick wall is figurative in nature? The outcome will be the same: a lack of progress and a surplus of pain.

Some clients and prospects are just one big headache. We call them high-maintenance, but that label is inaccurate in many cases. We should probably call those folks "button-pushers." After all, what they do and say really pushes our buttons, doesn't it?

With many "brick-wall" clients, having a wide range of options is often a good counter to a pushed button. Knowing you can offer homeowner Joe more than two or three plans for lawn care, for example, means that when he rejects your first offer, you have several more options that might suit his needs.

Make sure you ask for and pay attention to Joe's problems with your initial offers. Having

several options to fall back on means the panic button - which often triggers the frustration button - won't come into play.

In the end, if Joe rejects every single one of your offers, there is an easy solution. Simply walk away. Thank him for his attention and ask him to keep you in mind, should his needs change in the future.

---

**No matter how hard the prospect pushes your frustration button, your reaction determines whether the encounter will end in a headache or a handshake.**

---

Quite often, new client relationships are initiated by the prospect after a failed sales pitch, based solely upon how the salesperson reacted to rejection.

No matter how hard the prospect pushes your frustration button, your reaction determines whether the encounter will end in a headache or a handshake.

Mary Elizabeth Murphy is managing director of S.T.A.R. Resources, a performance-management consulting, coaching and education firm. She can be reached at (704) 535-5610 or [info@starresources.biz](mailto:info@starresources.biz).

This article appeared in the March 21, 2008 issue of the *Charlotte Business Journal*. Copyrighted 2008 by American City Business Journals, 1100 S. Tryon St., Suite 100, Charlotte, NC 28203, (704) 973-1100.