



BY RICK MCCORMICK

Find the Onion!

If you are good at discovering purpose, people will like you and trust you, and if you are selling, they will buy from you.

We have all heard the saying “peel the onion.” It often refers to gathering information in a conversation that enables us to better understand the person we are talking to. We give this ability names such as “building rapport” or “needs discovery,” while it is simply focusing on the other person more than ourselves. The most successful communicators excel in this. However, before we peel the onion, we must discover what the onion is. What is the one thing that the other person likes talking about more than anything else? If you are good at discovering that, people will like you and trust you, and if you are selling, they will buy from you — and they will buy at levels you could never sell them. Let’s break down the layers of the onion.

Focus on uncovering the one thing they enjoy talking about the most. I have seen the most resistant customer that had no intention of talking openly about themselves, talk no-stop and enjoying every minute of it, the moment they realized someone was genuinely interested in them. The key factor is the genuineness of the search for their one thing, or their “onion.” Every layer of knowledge that you peel back produces higher levels of awareness discovery.

Here are a few layers

that will get you to the core of how to help your customer make great buying decisions:

Be different than the others. Most people that do the same thing you do every day ask the same questions and are focused on getting a person buying what they feel they need to sell. Be different. Create core questions — very thoughtful questions that cause them to stop and think before they answer. A person’s instinct to escape a decision to buy causes them to rush through the process with you and answer as few questions as possible. When you ask questions that make them stop and think, it interrupts the resistance and they relax, start talking and thinking, and then ask their own questions. You will begin to build the mutual trust and respect that you must have in order move them to buy.

Find the why. The motivation for buying the vehicle is a bridge to why they may need the products you offer in connection with that purchase. Peel the layer back that reveals what their current situation is and how they plan to use the vehicle they are

buying. This must be much deeper than just how many miles they will drive each year. A new vehicle is lightyears ahead of even a three- to five-year-old vehicle in safety features, and that is important to many buyers. We are constantly distracted when driving. The computer driven features of lane-departure assist, emergency braking system, and collision avoidance systems are life savers. We never want these features to stop working, and when they fail, they are surprisingly expensive to replace. If safety is the motivating factor in their purchase, you are on your way of getting to the core of the onion.

I recently observed a customer who said “We just retired, paid off our house, and this is our retirement car. We expect it to last, and a new vehicle should keep our cost of owning a vehicle low.” I started to tear up as I saw the layers of the onion coming off. We have solutions for them.

This is just peeling back the first few layers of the onion. For some, they will have multiple layers to be peeled back. However, if you focus on discovering onions, the fun in the peeling is amazing. And the tears the onion discovery will bring will be tears of joy of helping others make great buying decisions. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick McCormick is the national account development manager for Reahard & Associates, which provides customized F&I training for dealerships throughout the U.S. and Canada. He has more than 20 years of auto retail and finance experience.

