

Dave Anderson

How ^{to} Deal with Difficult Customers



10 Simple Strategies
for Selling to the
Stubborn, Obnoxious,
and Belligerent

Contents

[Preface](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1: Understand the Ten Truths
About SOBs!](#)

[Let's Start With Straight Talk](#)

[SOB Summary for Chapter 1: The Ten Truths
About SOBs](#)

[Chapter 2: Toughen up; Sharpen up; Grow
up & Go up!](#)

[Let's Start with Straight Talk](#)

[SOB Summary for Chapter 2: Toughen Up;
Sharpen Up; Grow Up & Go Up!](#)

[Chapter 3: Don't Just Be Better, Be
Different!](#)

[Let's Start with Straight Talk](#)

[A Lesson from Larry](#)

[SOB Summary for Chapter 3: Don't Just Be Better,
Be Different!](#)

Chapter 4: Take the Fight Out of the Sales Process!

Let's Start with Straight Talk

SOB Summary for Chapter 4: Take the Fight Out of the Sales Process!

Chapter 5: How to Face and Finesse the SOB "Quadruple Threat"!

Let's Start with Straight Talk

SOB Summary for Chapter 5: How to Face and Finesse the SOB "Quadruple Threat"!

Chapter 6: Shovel the Piles While They're Small!

Let's Start with Straight Talk

SOB Summary for Chapter 6: Shovel the Piles While They're Small!

Chapter 7: Create a Cult!

Let's Start with Straight Talk

SOB Summary for Chapter 7: Create a Cult!

Chapter 8: Create Urgency to Buy Today!

Let's Start with Straight Talk

SOB Summary for Chapter 8: Create Urgency to Buy Today!

Chapter 9: Learn to Read an SOB's Mind!

[Let's Start with Straight Talk](#)

[SOB Summary for Chapter 9: Learn to Read an SOB's Mind!](#)

[Chapter 10: Be Prepared to Walk Away!](#)

[Let's Start with Straight Talk](#)

[SOB Summary for Chapter 10: Be Prepared to Walk Away!](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Praise for *How to Deal with Difficult Customers*

“Dave has done it again! The application of the 10 key strategies in this book will help every sales professional learn how to deal with the *truly* difficult and how to avoid creating *unnecessary* difficulties. It is written with the same wit, humor, and inspiration that have made Dave’s prior books so effective.”

—Margaret Callihan, President, Chairman, and CEO of Sun Trust Bank, Southwest Florida

“Dave Anderson knocks another one out of the park with *How to Deal with Difficult Customers!* The problem is real; Dave’s solutions make sense; and, as always, he makes you laugh in the process.”

—Mike Roscoe, Editor-in-Chief of *Dealer Magazine*

“I could not put this book down. It is a salesperson’s bible offering clear and concise how-to advice. If you are in the selling profession and want to sell more, you should read this book . . . twice.”

—Warren Lada, Senior Vice President, Saga Communications

“An individual executing the ideals within this book will change their own life and their organization. No one has the gift like Dave Anderson to articulate the importance that character plays in maximizing potential.”

—Mike Tomberlin, CEO, The Tomberlin Group

“Throw out all your other sales manuals. Dave Anderson’s new book will change the way you look at customers, the way your salespeople look at themselves, and quite frankly, the way you look at the sales process.”

—Dan Janal, President, PR LEADS.com

“What are you waiting for? We all have difficult customers. If you are tired of leaving money on the table because you can’t handle them, read this book. If your good customers are turning into difficult customers, read this book. If you want to deliver results year-in and year-out, read, re-read, and apply the lessons of this book.”

—Randy Pennington, author, *Results Rule! Build a Culture that Blows the Competition Away!*

“Dave Anderson does it again! Implementing the ideas in this book will add up to higher sales, margins, and profits.”

—Bob Farlow, Market President, AutoNation

“This is not a book about selling theories; rather, it’s a ‘how-to’ manual on proven sales techniques. Dave Anderson writes with authority because he really has been there . . . and succeeded! It will be required reading for everyone on my sales team!”

**—Charlie Polston, Dealership Profitability Consultant,
BG Products, Inc.**

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Selling to the Stubborn,
Obnoxious, and Belligerent

Dave Anderson



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This book is dedicated to the many SOB's (stubborn, obnoxious, and belligerent customers) I've had the privilege of selling and teaching others to sell over the years. Thank you for forcing us to get better at what we do. Unfortunately for you, your gig is up. You're not that tough. In fact, from this day forward, we're going to earn even more of your money—and make you like the process in spite of yourself.

Preface

Since time is money for everyone in sales, I'm not going to waste it rambling on through the preface and introduction explaining why I wrote this book. In short, *How to Deal With Difficult Customers* is written for every salesperson on the planet who wants to start making the sales he or she regularly loses to stubborn, obnoxious, and belligerent customers. I can say this with utmost confidence because, regardless of where you sell, what you sell, or how you sell, if you're in the sales profession for more than a few hours you'll encounter a stubborn, obnoxious, or belligerent (from hereon out referred to affectionately as SOBs) customer and have an opportunity to earn his or her business. This book will teach you to sell them more easily, more quickly, and for higher profits.

What inspired this book? Frustration and disgust. Let me explain. I've sold everything from car wax to insurance to carpet cleaning services to automobiles, and it seems that every sales class I ever attended skirted the real-world issue of how to sell to a jerk. Their rationale was, since the vast majority of customers were respectful, pleasant, and professional, why expend time learning to sell someone you may encounter on only 5-10% of your sales calls? Frankly, I needed that 5-10% of the business I was missing as a result of being unprepared. Over a lifetime, we're talking about a ton of money, and I got sick and tired of wimpy trainers, authors, and managers who didn't seem to think that this segment of the populace was worth learning how to sell or, if the truth be known, didn't know how to sell them. I knew that someone was selling these people and that it should be me. In addition, I wearied of dreading SOBs. They made my life miserable even when I wasn't dealing with them; just anticipating them drained me! What's worse is that I never

knew that my own deficient sales skills turned otherwise nice, normal folks into SOBs! In fact, one of the key premises of this book that every salesperson must grasp is that most SOB customers are made, not born, and they're "made" by sales mistakes that can be prevented by applying the strategies in this book.

Over time, I developed a strategy for both preventing normal prospects from turning into SOBs and for selling to genuine SOBs that built my confidence, increased my sales, and made my income skyrocket. Here's a quick sneak preview of what you can expect to find in each of the book's 10 chapters:

Chapter 1: Understand the Ten Truths About SOB's!

Sales professionals must understand some background on what an SOB is and is not if they expect to develop a successful strategy for selling to them. It's also vital to avoid the sales errors that turn Dr. Jekylls into Mr. Hydes. These 10 points set the stage for fully leveraging the other nine strategies.

Chapter 2: Toughen up; Sharpen up; Grow up & Go up!

You cannot grow your career or income bigger on the outside than you are growing on the inside. To sell more SOBs you've got to become mentally tough and drastically improve your skill level. In other words, you must look in the mirror first.

Chapter 3: Don't Just Be Better, Be Different!

If you're no different than most other products or other salespeople your only closing tool will be to have the cheapest price. This is a lousy strategy for anyone making their living on commission. You'll learn how to become not only better than your competition but successfully differentiate yourself from them as well in order to sell SOBs.

Chapter 4: Take the Fight Out of the Sales Process!

Some SOB's want to fight. Others don't want to fight but expect one anyhow because they've become so accustomed to dealing with amateur salespeople. There are key words, phrases, and actions you must use—and avoid using—if you want to remove the fight from the sales process and create a more profitable, amicable closing scenario.

Chapter 5: How to Face and Finesse the SOB “Quadruple Threat”!

There are four common threats posed by SOBs that we'll acknowledge and strategize on how to overcome. These are real world sales inhibitors that aren't going away so you must arm yourself to deal with them effectively and turn them to your advantage.

Chapter 6: Shovel the Piles While They're Small!

When something goes wrong during the sales process or after the sale is made, you need to deal with it quickly, professionally, and humbly. This retains your current customers and brings in referrals as it preserves your own passion and self-esteem. Even when things get totally out of hand and you are assaulted by the most obnoxious of SOBs, this chapter has tools to help you face them down and win.