

Pro Tips for Anticipating and Negating Consumer Objections

Sales Tactics for Boat Show Success from Jonathan Dawson, Sellchology® Founder and Dealer Week Educator

Preparing for a boat show can be both exciting and challenging. It's an opportunity to connect with potential customers and showcase your products, but it also comes with its own set of hurdles that can make sales feel inefficient and ineffective. That's why understanding common objections and knowing how to address them proactively can help maximize your sales opportunities.

We recently spoke with Jonathan Dawson, Founder of Sellchology and [Dealer Week Educator](#), to capture his wisdom and effective strategies for engaging with prospects, handling objections and creating more meaningful conversations that lead to sales. By anticipating your customer responses and practicing your approach, your boat show team will be better equipped to turn boat show attendees into satisfied customers.

Overcoming Boat Show Sales Barriers

Question: *"Are there one or two objections that you think are most commonly a barrier at sales events like boat shows that you think salespeople should focus on proactively addressing?"*

"Help, I'm going to be going to a boat show and approaching people, but what do I say?" I'm going to address two things for you that you will likely hear at your next boat show. I want you to understand how to approach somebody at a boat show so that you can maximize your opportunities! You should be prepared for a couple of things that prospective clients will likely say to you. In fact, if you just walk up to anybody and say, "Can I help you?" Be prepared to hear not right now I'm just looking if you any questions I can answer be prepared for, "Right now, I'm just looking!" If you ask, "Is there anything I can get for you?" or "Anything I can help you with?" You are probably going to hear, "Not right now. I'm just looking!"

In fact the most common thing that you'll probably hear at a boat show when you approach anybody is that they're just looking! Knowing this, you have a couple of options: Wait for it, then react. Or... Be proactive, and introduce it.

Let me address two of the most common things that you're probably going to hear from somebody and how to proactively prevent them from happening to you. If you know that someone is inclined say something like "just looking" you might want to start by introducing that idea for them. If you say what they were about to say BEFORE they do they can't really say it to you anymore! They can just agree with you. For example, if someone's about to say "I'm just looking" all I have to do is actually use the word "looking" in my opener - by introducing it! I might say something like, "It looks like you're looking at a few boats today!" or "Looks like you are looking at a couple options today?" or, "Are you enjoying the boat show and are you finding anything interesting that you're looking at?"



Just use the word looking for them, and you'll actually take it away from them. If you want to be a little bit more intentional moving the conversation towards a sale, you might try offering two choices: "Hi folks, are doing some looking today or possibly some shopping?" or, "Are you folks looking and comparing some options today or are you actually researching a future boat today?"

By presenting the client two A/B choices, you can share with them that it's OK if they're looking, and, if they're shopping, that's OK too! You will take away their tendency to push back from you with the "I'm just looking". In fact, this new approach will invite them into a conversation around what they're looking for!

The second thing to be prepared for is that some clients are inclined to tell you "they're not planning on doing anything right now" or "they're not planning on buying anything for a while". Once again, if you actually initiate this topic and take it away it won't become something to overcome! The way to initiate their buying timeline is to ask them about their timeline proactively. I typically will do that again with an A/B (either or) choice. It sounds like this: "Are you flexible with your timeline, or are you actually trying to get something pretty soon?" I also might say this, "Now are you folks looking to get something pretty early in the season, or do you have flexibility with your timeline?" When I ask people if this is something they're trying to get taken care of pretty soon or are they actually flexible with their timeline, I give them an either-or pathway! Either one they choose is fine with me, because it allows the conversation to naturally keep moving forward!

Most objections that you'll ever get are patterns! If you learn to predict those patterns you can prevent those objections!

Watch the video: <https://vimeo.com/1046850866>

Preventing Objections: Boat Show vs. Showroom

Question: *"Is there anything different in the advice you give salespeople for preventing objections at the boat show vs. in the showroom?"*

The very first thing I want to do is realize that at a boat show you will have the "looky-loos," who have no intention of shopping for boat at all. They're just there because they think boats are pretty, and one day, if they win the lottery they would like one. Then you have people who are "intenders" - they actually plan on owning a boat sometime. And finally, the current boat buyers/owners. Basically three groups!

What I would do when I approach people with one of my first initial qualifiers is to give people the permission to be in one of the groups. Describe the three most common people I talk to at the show! If I see somebody standing next to a boat and I walk up and start a conversation, I might approach something like this: "Hey Sir, Thanks for coming to the boat show! You know everybody I'm talking to seems to fall into one of three groups! Can I ask you a question?" That's my opener! "Everybody I'm talking to is in three groups can I ask you a question?" He'll say, "Yeah, sure!" And I would follow up with describing the three groups. "So far I'm talking to people that are kind of just looking around not really planning on buying anything, but they just like looking at boats and maybe if they win the lottery



– they'd get one. I've got some people that actually want to have a boat and they are kind of in the planning stage. And then I have talked to boat owners and buyers who are here to get their next boat! Can I ask you which one are you?"

Then they'll self-identify! They will self-label as one of the three groups: I'm the "lottery-guy" ... if I ever win the lottery I'll get a boat. In that case I might say, "That's such a fantastic thing! We love the fact that you're already wanting a boat. I'm curious ... Let's say you didn't win the mega-millions, but if you could get like a starter boat, is there something here that you have found that ..." I'll just start a casual conversation leading them to an option to visit about. Maybe ask, "Have you seen something of interest? What kind of boating do you think you would do? Have you been on a boat before?" I'm just going to start some conversation with them.

They may say they're an "intender," and they actually do want to buy a boat. Or that they hope to get one next year, but are planning on buying the truck first. I'd ask, "What brought you into the boating community? What made you think about getting a boat now?" Just start the conversation! If they're a current boat owner/buyer? I'm going to ask, "What do you have now? How do you like it? Has been a good boat for you? How often do you get to go out? Where do you go? What's your familiarity with our brand? Is this similar to what you have now? I'm going to start the conversation!

The opener is going to allow people to place themselves into three categories by saying, "So far I've met three kinds of people at the boat show do you mind if I ask you a question?" They're going to say, "Yes!" because if I say, "I'm talking to three types of people," their brain wants to know which one they are! It's called, in psychology, open-looping. If you open a loop in someone's brain they will want that loop closed! There are three kinds of people that show up to a boat show, prepare for all three and proactively find out which one they are!

Watch the video: <https://vimeo.com/1046854357>

Handling the Boat Show Deal Seekers

Question: "Shows are often used to create urgency through special manufacturer deals available for a limited time. A lot of salespeople aim to use the show to close prospects they've been communicating with for a while. Any guidance for these situations related to overcoming objections?"

Some people are going to come to the boat show just looking for a deal! When you're approaching somebody at the boat show it's important to recognize some people are aware that this is the official launch of the boating season, and therefore, it's the best time to buy a boat - from an incentives structure! Your manufacturer may in fact provide incentives or your dealership may provide discounts related to the boat show! They may limit the timeline of availability too! I want you to maximize the urgency that's part of the very nature of a boat show and the beginning of the season!

The way that you're going to do that is by asking your perspective clients some questions! Here a couple things to ask the next person you approach at a boat show! I might say, "Are you folks looking at boats because you're aware that this is the best time to take advantage of the incentives and programs? Did you guys come in because you already knew that?" I might ask, "Are you folks aware of some of the



incentives and some of the programs that make this timing so perfect to buy your next boat? Are you aware of those programs?” Or, I might ask, “Many people I’m talking to are at the boat show because they know they can save, in some cases, thousands of dollars by taking advantage of the current incentives that are available during the limited time of the boat show. Is that something you guys are hoping to take advantage of?”

By asking the question that way you’re planting the seed of the value of the incentive program and the inducement for them to take action now! Make sure that if your dealership or your manufacturer has incentives that you emphasize those through the form of a question that invites the customer to the next stage of the conversation! I might say something like this, Depending on which model and you are looking at, are you curious what incentive programs or discounts are available, that you can exclusively take advantage of during the boat show season?”

This is a way of informing them that there are special things that they may want to know about and cause them to want to ask that follow question, “Oh yeah... What’s going on?”

The goal is not simply to provide information but it’s to create a conversation. Simply telling people a number like, “This one has XXX dollars off!” or, “This one has an incentivized interest rate right now!” is just information! The goal of the sales professional is to create a relationship, and the best way to do that is to create a conversation! Ask questions that will invite a conversation that will cause them to ask you follow up questions. This will allow you to lead them down the road to the sale and move you both closer to making your next boat deal! Best of luck at the boat show!

Watch the video: <https://vimeo.com/1046859753>

Role Playing & Practice

Question: *“Role playing like this sounds like great fodder for boat show training sessions. Any other special boat show training tips?”*

Are you a sales manager or sales team at a Marine dealership and you’re wanting to maximize the boat show that’s coming to your area? Let me advise you that way to be prepared for the opportunity at the boat show is to prepare for the opportunity at the boat show!

Preparation means practice! There are going to be several conversations you’re likely to have with people at a boat show. Those categories of conversations will likely group into a series of questions you should be prepared to ask, AND questions you should be prepared to answer! In both of those categories (asking the question and the answering of the question) the best way to be prepared for the boat show is to prepare for the boat show! That means you need to start practicing the top qualifying questions you plan on asking. You should also practice the most common questions you’ll probably be asked. As a professional, you’ll want to maximize the opportunity that a boat show can provide by positioning yourself as an expert authority in the space! You want to come across confident and competent! As someone who could be trusted and someone who also is easy to talk to.



The way to maximize that opportunity is to make sure that you're prepared for the opportunity - and the number one, most effective way to prepare for anything is... PRACTICE the thing you want to be great at! Maximizing the boat show is making sure that you are practicing those common questions you're going to ask to find out what they have now, what they are wanting next, what is most important to them, and how they will be using it. You will also have to prepare for common questions you're going to be asked! On top of that there's also some possible objections or points of resistance that may be competitive-based, market-based, price-based, or timing-based. You know that you're going to have someone comparing model-B and you represent model-A. What are those cross-competitive comparisons you need to be prepared for? Practice, practice, practice!

Remember we don't just practice until we get it right, we practice until we can't get it wrong! Watch the video: <https://vimeo.com/1046865300> .

A Float Plan for Boat Show Success

Your boat show success often hinges on your ability to authentically engage with potential buyers and to confidently navigate their objections. Your sales team's ability to anticipate common responses to ordinary questions can separate you from the pack. By using strategic questions to guide consumer conversations, you can foster relationships and build better leads while moving prospects closer to making a purchase. Remember, it's critical to prepare through role playing and practice. Practice your approach, refine your questions and your boat show will improve because you're ready to showcase your unique value of your dealership. Use these tactics to seize the opportunities that boat shows present and drive your sales to new heights.

For more insight into anticipating and negating consumer objections, access Jonathan's full course available through March 1 when you enroll in [Dealer Week Online](#).

About Jonathan

Jonathan Dawson is a dealership consultant, sales trainer, author, speaker and coach. He helps teams improve sales, reduce turnover and adopt effective marketing strategies, and implement effective leadership practices.

Having been in thousands of dealerships across the country, Jonathan's goal is to help dealership teams learn how to out-experience their competition by creating a unique culture. This approach is a combination of customer-focused selling, community-driven marketing and people-focused leadership.

His core teaching philosophy is known as Sellchology - Selling through Psychology. This approach focuses on understanding buying behavior and why some sales approaches are more effective than others. In addition to consulting with dealers, Jonathan frequently speaks at conferences, state association events and 20 group meetings. He is known for his conversational teaching style and a commonsense approach.

