# Stop Fighting Objections

## How to neutralize pushback before it happens

by: Kate Kingston, Kingston Training Group

If you sell office technology for a living — copier/MFPs, managed print, IT services, workflow software, document management or cloud solutions — you already know this truth: Prospecting is not difficult because you cannot find people. It is difficult because once you do get someone live, he (or she) throws the same four objections at you repeatedly:

- "We already have a vendor."
- "We're all set." (Or however he says: "No thank you.")
- "Just send me some information."
- "We just purchased."

Most salespeople spend their careers trying to get better at responding to these objections. That is a mistake. In my work as president of Kingston Training Group and as a sales trainer for the office technology industry, I teach something very different: Do not just handle objections. Make them irrelevant by addressing them before your prospect ever says them.

This technique is called "preemptive objection handling" or "inoculation." When you do it correctly, your calls become smoother, your credibility jumps and you book more meetings with far less resistance. This article will show you exactly how to do that, step by step, using the four objections you hear every day.

### 'Vaccinate' Your Calls Against Objections

Let's talk psychology for a minute. When a prospect answers the phone, his mental script sounds like this:

- "This is a sales call."
- "I need to protect my time."
- "I know what to say to get off the call quickly."

So, he reaches for one of the four safe phrases: "We're all set," "We have a vendor," "Just send me something" and "We just bought."

These are not thoughtful responses. They are automatic defense mechanisms. When you wait for him to throw those walls up and try to argue your way around them, you put yourself in a defensive posture. You are reacting, but he is in control and the energy shifts from curiosity to conflict.

Preemptive objection handling changes that completely. When you bring up his concerns before he does, you:

- Lower his guard; you are not pretending those issues do not exist
- Reframe the objection as a reason to meet rather than a reason to end the call
- Position yourself as a trusted advisor, not a pushy sales rep
- Maintain control of the flow of the conversation instead of getting derailed

You are essentially saying: "I know how firms like yours think, I respect that and this meeting is designed with that reality in mind." That is incredibly calming to a busy executive.

### The Four Big Objections & How to Neutralize Each One Early

We are going to take the four most common objections and move them from defense to offense by embedding the response right into your opening pitch.

**(1) "We already have a vendor."** This is the king of shutdown lines. In our industry, almost everyone already has "a guy" or "a company" handling their technology. Most reps wait until the prospect says it and then respond with something like, "That's fine. I'm not looking to replace your current vendor." By that point, it is too late. The prospect has already mentally ended the call.

Instead, bring it up first — right after you say who you help. For example: "I work with mid-sized law firms here in the city that are looking to tighten security and reduce document-related expenses — all of which have current technology partnerships in place — but still wanted to identify hidden costs and strengthen security around their technology workflows."

You have just:

- Acknowledged that the prospect likely has a vendor
- Normalized it (using "all of which ... ")

Now if he tries to say, "We already have a vendor," it does not feel like a mic drop. You have already calmly addressed it.

**(2) "We're all set."** This is the cousin of "We have a vendor" — same instinct, different words. It is just a way of saying "no." You neutralize this one by adding a second sentence immediately after the vendor inoculation: "We partner with other [insert vertical — banks, manufacturers, schools, law firms] that think things are mostly working, but still want a second opinion to make sure their technology is truly driving the business forward."

If you lead a sales team in the office technology space ... this is not just a "nice idea." It is a repeatable process you can build into your culture.

Now you have reframed the meeting as:

- A smart, low risk double-check, not a desperate fix
- A "best practice" used by other organizations like his
- A way to confirm that "We're all set" is true — not just a comfortable way of saying "no"

The prospect hears this and thinks, "OK, this doesn't mean I'm admitting something is broken. I'm just being thorough." That is a much easier "yes."

**(3) "Just send me some information."** This one is often the "polite goodbye" line. It sounds cooperative, but what he is really saying is: "I don't want to give you time on my calendar." The key here is to define how you work before he can use this escape hatch. You do that just before you make your ask: "As I shared in my email, my firm doesn't just send generic marketing information. The way we save our clients time is by spending 20 to 25 minutes looking at how your current infrastructure supports your compliance, security and profitability goals, and then giving you a short list of recommendations you can use with your existing provider or with us."

Now, when he thinks, "I'll just ask him to send something," his brain already has a different frame:

- You do not send generic information.
- You protect his time with a focused, consultative conversation.
- The outcome will be practical recommendations, not a brochure.

You have gently taken "Send me information" off the table before he can play that card.

**(4) "We just purchased."** This objection is especially common in copier/MFP, printer and hardware-heavy environments. The lease is new, the boxes are shiny and the prospect thinks his company is off the hook for years. Here is the truth: a recent purchase is not a barrier. It is an opportunity.

You neutralize this one by describing who you meet with and why, linking it explicitly to technology he already owns: "We meet with organizations that want to leverage more results from the technology they've already leased or purchased — things like MFPs, printers and document management solutions — and turn what they've already paid for into stronger security, better workflows and lower operating costs through software, automation and service."

Now, "We just purchased" becomes:

- Exactly why a meeting makes sense
- A way to maximize ROI on an existing investment
- Not something that disqualifies his company, but qualifies it

You have turned a stopping point into a compelling reason to keep talking.

## How It All Sounds In a Real Prospecting Call

Let's put this together as one flowing pitch. Adjust the vertical, outcomes and timing to fit your world, but pay attention to the order:

(1) Who you help
(2) "We already have a vendor" inoculated
(3) "We're all set" inoculated
(4) "Send information" inoculated
(5) "We just purchased" inoculated
(6) A clear, confident ask

**Example:** "Hi Jordan, this is Alex with [Company]. I look forward to coordinating a time to stop by because my company represents 127 other prominent law firms here in [State]. They all had a current technology partnership in place where things were working mostly well, but they had a second opinion to ensure technology was driving every billable component possible through their case matter. We were able to uncover opportunities for better compliance case archival, reducing document review, interrogatory costs and timelines. I would welcome the opportunity to share with you what your colleagues are doing to accomplish these goals. Would Tuesday the 15th at 9:45 work for me to stop by?"

Read that again and notice:

- Any potential objections have already been acknowledged and reframed.
- The prospect never has to stop you with "We're all set," because you already said it.
- You sound like someone who understands his world, not someone trying to bulldoze on his reality.

That is the power of inoculation.

## How Sales Leaders Can Use This

If you lead a sales team in the office technology space —

a dealership, VAR, MSP, SaaS or service provider — this is not just a "nice idea." It is a repeatable process you can build into your culture. Here is how to implement it:

**(1) Identify your top four to six objections.** For most technology organizations, the four we have covered are universal. You may also hear:

- "We handle that in-house."
- "We're in a contract."
- "This isn't a priority right now."

List them all and then commit to never waiting to hear them again.

**(2) Write your inoculation lines.** For each objection, answer this question: "How can we acknowledge this concern up front in a way that makes the meeting more logical, not less?" Your lines should:

- Normalize the situation ("Other firms like yours ... ")
- Connect their reality to the value of the meeting
- Reduce risk and fear ("second opinion," "maximize what you already have," "time-efficient," etc.)

Then decide where each line belongs in the flow:

- After "who we help" ("We have a vendor."/"We're all set.")
- Just before the ask ("Send information.")
- When describing who you meet with and why ("We just purchased.")

**(3) Script, practice and refine.** This is where many teams fall. They draft language and then never make it muscle memory. I recommend:

- Every rep writes his version of the pitch using this structure.
- You run role plays where the prospect is not allowed to give objections — because they have already been addressed in the script.
- You record calls and listen for whether the inoculation lines sound natural, confident and conversational.

If it sounds like legal boilerplate, rewrite it. If it sounds like something you would say in a real conversation, you are there.

**(4) Measure the impact.** Within a few weeks of consistent use, you should see:

- Fewer "We're all set," "We have a vendor," "Just send information," and "We just purchased" responses
- A higher conversion from live conversations to booked meetings
- Shorter, smoother prospecting calls with less arguing and more exploring

Have your reps track:

- How many calls included the full inoculation script
- How many of the "big four objections" they heard that day

You want those objection counts dropping as script adherence goes up.

> Do not wait to get better at fighting objections — get better at preventing them. And when you do, you will ... have a stronger, more confident sales force ...

## A Mindset Shift From 'Defender' to 'Trusted Guide'

The real change here is not just the words. It is the identity shift behind them.

Most salespeople on prospecting calls see themselves as defenders, where the prospect attacks with objections and the rep defends with clever comebacks. That is exhausting for both sides. When you use preemptive objection handling, you step into the role of trusted guide:

- You know the terrain.
- You know where the fears live.
- You proactively say, "You're going to see this up ahead — here's how we'll handle it."

Prospects feel that difference immediately and are far more likely to stay with you and explore than to shut you down.

## Your Challenge

If you are a sales executive or a sales manager in the office technology industry, here is my challenge to you:

(1) Today, sit down and rewrite your prospecting opening using this structure.

(2) Build in inoculation for: "We already have a vendor," "We're all set," "Just send me some information" and "We just purchased."

(3) Practice it out loud at least 10 times, until it feels like your natural voice.

(4) Use it on every prospecting call for the next two weeks.

(5) Track the change in objections and meetings booked.

I have trained thousands of office technology sales professionals across the country and I can tell you: The reps who master inoculation move more quickly, close more and feel more in control of their days.

Do not wait to get better at fighting objections — get better at preventing them. And when you do, you will not just have smoother prospecting calls, you will have a stronger, more confident sales force driving better results for your entire organization. ■

*For more than 25 years, Kate Kingston has been exclusively educating office technology sales executives on every type of prospect across 60-plus industries and how they proprietarily use technology. She is a recognized authority on lead generation, recruiting new hires from a prospecting skill-based perspective and new business development. Join Kingston at BTA IGNITE Kansas City for a breakout session on how to drive more net-new meetings without burning out your sales managers. Register at www.bta.org/IGNITEKC. She can be reached at kkingston@kingstontraining.com. Visit www.kingstontraining.com.*