



## Episode 17

**How to integrate sales  
into your design process**





**Jason: [00:00]**

Hello. Welcome to Designer Discussions. Today we're going to talk about how to integrate sales into your design process.

**Intro: [00:20]**

Welcome to the Designer Discussions podcast. Tune in each week where we discuss marketing, branding, PR and business advice for design professionals.

**Jason: [00:25]**

Hello, everybody. Today we are joined by Joyce Johnson, an eight time author and a sales expert. How are you doing today, Joyce?

**Joyce: [00:35]**

I'm great, Jason. Thank you. Thank you guys for having me.

**Jason: [00:38]**

So one of the reasons we wanted to have you here today is because a lot of designers, they don't always view themselves as sales people. But as a business owner, we all have to know how to sell because if we do not know how to sell, we don't have a business.

**Joyce: [00:56]**

Absolutely. Everything in the global economy begins with a sale.

**Jason: [01:00]**

If you could just tell our audience just a little bit about who you are.

**Joyce: [01:04]**

I am Joyce Johnson, an author, speaker, sales champion, coach and founder of Why Sales Network, which is a global sales training organization. I like to share a little personal note about myself. Always. I grew up in Galveston, Texas, which is a small Island South of Houston, Texas, where I currently reside. And then also, I went to College at Purview University, which is a smaller College 45 miles north of Houston, where I currently reside. So I love everything sells from I'm teaching College students to sell professionals to small business owners the importance of sales and how to build revenue in their business.

**Jason: [01:41]**

Awesome. So if you could tell us why sales, why did you get into sales?

**Joyce: [01:45]**

You know, one reason I think that everyone should have go to College, even if you don't finish but preferably finish. We go to College and experience because during College, I learned about so many different professions. I went in as a journalism student. I worked in a sports information Department, and I learned in that sports information Department that we have to sell. We have to sell tickets, we have to sell sponsorship, we have to sell our marketing partners. And I also realized that I was a natural added. I was very good. And then I began to study the sales process because I wanted to make sure I was doing it the right way. Right. And what I love about sales, Jason, is, as I say, the time. It's a profession for anyone, no matter what your educational background is, no matter what your skill set is, sales is an opportunity where you can go into the sales profession, earn great money and have a great life. And I love it.

**Jason: [02:41]**

And so now you have the Why Sales Network. Why did you start that?

**Joyce: [02:45]**

I started to yell network to be able to help sales professionals build and develop and become better leaders. Right. So I have been mentoring College students for 15 plus years, and I initially was going to create something for students only. And so when I went back to talk to them and surveyed them and things. And they were like, Well, Joyce, we're grown now. We're in the workplace. We need help now. We're adults now stop treating us like kids. We're adults. Let me regroup. Let me figure out how I can do this and help them along, help them to be able to navigate right? I want to help sales professionals navigate in the corporate and business space. And I also want to make sure that they are clear on the process because we also a lot of us have natural sales skills or things about us that make us. We can do small talk, we can ask questions and things, but it is definitely a process. And I want to be able to teach that to individuals and teach them how to move that along for better success in sales.

**Mirjam: [03:56]**

Joyce, I have a couple of questions here from Maria, who can't be with us today because she is on vacation. But she is an interior designer, and she knows what kinds of questions her peers have. And her first question is, some interior designers don't view themselves as salespeople. So what tips do you have for designers that are not naturally good at selling their services?



### Joyce: [04:23]

Begin to study the process of selling. You have to do it. And designers, I love designers. You guys know I'm a big LG TV fan. I can watch it like it could be on all day. I watch it on the plane. But here's the thing. We have to learn the sales process in order to secure business and more business and move forward. We have to get a study sales, read books on sales, take sales training. I just wrote a sales training program on how to win and sell. So there's different courses you can take. If you're not strong at pitching or proposing or closing all those things, there's ways to do that but become familiar with sales desires. I love because I sell the time. Many times people start businesses because they have a hobby of something they love, right? And most people that I talk to in that design business, that's how they got started. So now you go and you build all the website, you have a business plan, you have all these things in place, but now you got to go sell it. So it's important to really understand the sales process and how to go out and sell your business. I had a friend I was helping. That was doing a remodel, and he said, I want you to talk to look at what the proposal they gave me. First thing I asked him. I said, Well, who actually asked you for the business? They gave you these quotes. Who asked you for the business? Who said, Alex, I love your home. I love working with you. We've created this design together. Will you work with me? Will you choose my company as your design team? What's your process? For making a decision. When will you make this decision by have we left anything out that we should have covered with you on this design? And how can we make this design better? Right. So there's some trial closes in there and dinners actually closed statement. And I told him I said, Anyone who didn't ask for your business, let's just scratch them off the list.

### Jason: [06:31]

I love that.

**Joyce: [06:23]**

Yeah. Right. Absolutely. Because what I've been interviewing sales professionals. I've interviewed so many sales professionals in my career. And if you don't ask me for the job, you're not going to get it because I feel like you don't ask me for the job. You're not going to ask the customer for the job. You're not going to ask the customer for the business. Right. So I think a lot of times that designers may lose out on opportunities just because they didn't ask for the business and they didn't follow up on the ask. Right. And I could be wrong. But have you experienced anyone going out and proposing business and leaving a bit and maybe not leaving a bit with you or something and maybe not really trying to close your business?

**Jason: [07:31]**

That's true. Yeah. And then just as a designer myself, I know a lot of times, mainly in the architecture realm, a lot of us have egos. And so we believe that the jobs will come to us. So we don't practice as much on the sales side because we believe we design these beautiful buildings and we're in Architecture Record and all these magazines. So all of the work is going to come our way. And it does not always happen that way.

**Joyce: [07:48]**

Yeah. Because you're not the only one. You're not the only one that created a beautiful design. I've always worked for top tier companies, number one in their industry and what they did, right. And so with that, we also were never the low cost provider either. We never were the lowest cost editor. Right. And a lot of times those regional companies and smaller companies, they can really kick our butt on some of those different services. Right. But I have to sell them that value. And I have to ask them multiple times. What can I do? Because I needed to understand what my competitor was offering without saying what my competitors offering. What can I do to make this a win for both of us? And I would also ask them, what is your budget? And then if I couldn't get within that budget, what are you willing to spend over that budget to have a relationship with Joyce, to have me as your salesperson, to know that I'm going to drive this opportunity for you that I'm going to help you meet your target. I'm going to help you meet your business goal, your install goal, and what it takes right now. This isn't just my company. I got a big old company behind me, but I'm that person that's going to get up early. I'm always going to be responsive. Right. And I'm going to be your internal advocate. So what are you willing to pay extra for that peace of mind.

**Jason: [09:12]**

I love that.

**Joyce: [09:13]**

Yeah. I actually have a related question to that. And for me, being in PR, I feel like there are some similarities to sales because I'm always pitching, too. Right. And one of the things that I noticed with a lot of interior designers that I've spoken to is they're very hesitant because they're afraid of being rejected. And I think the same thing is true for pitching your actual business in sales. So do you have any tips from a mindset perspective how they can set themselves up for success? Maybe go read the four agreements because one of them don't take it personal. Right. And that's why I'm such an advocate for sales because I sell get a bad rep sometimes because people are afraid of hearing the word no, right. And then when some people are selling, they can be a little bit more aggressive than others. And that makes people uncomfortable. But I tell you what's more uncomfortable is not closing any business at all.

**Jason: [10:19]**

You can repeat that again. That is so true.

**Joyce: [10:25]**

The thing is more uncomfortable than selling. And hearing the word no is not closing any business at all. Right. So we have to become comfortable with that. And you mentioned PR. In the past, I've had a PR company in business. It's actually business consulting that I named it PR because people love the buzzword PR. But they didn't really understand what PR is. Before you get PR, you need to make sure that your business is intact, that you're ready for that PR, that you're ready for that exposure and that you're ready to close the amount of business that could come with that PR.

**Joyce: [11:06]**

Right. So they would come in. And we did offer PR services. Mostly, it was about consulting fees and closing them as being a business consultant, because the last thing you want to do is there is a company once that went on to get more in America, one of the large platforms, and they sold dresses or something. She had a friend that was in that rim. So they got her on the show. And so I'm watching it. And myself and millions of other women in America go onto their platform and it crashes and they didn't have inventory or the platform, and they didn't have inventory. The platform couldn't handle it. They weren't ready. So a lot of times in my courses that I have now people say, Where are you selling what I said? Well, it happened on the website right now. I'm testing it. I'm sending it through. But I need to make sure that it's ready, right. I know people in places I can make a phone call, but I need to make sure that when that phone call is made, that we're ready to close that business. We're ready to serve those customers, and we're ready for them to have the best customer experience possible.

**Mirjam: [12:09]**

I have another question from Maria. She wants to know, how can interior designers view sales as an act of helping people find what they're looking for through their services, as opposed to being a person that tries to push their services?



### Joyce: [12:23]

It's a fine line. So sales is service, right. And we need to look at it that way. Whenever you're selling something to someone, it's because they have a need, right. In most cases, they have a need. Sometimes it's a want. But either way, if they want it, they need it right. If they want it, they need it. And so we have to approach them just that way. As a service, it is a service. But where it becomes, the sales process is you're not pushing, but you're asking the right questions along the way. Why is this important to you, Mr. And Mrs. Customer, why are you remodeling your home? Why do you want the room over here first, over here and the design that I was speaking in my mind that I would give you right. So why do you want this bathroom here? Why do you want the washroom on the first floor versus the second where the rooms are? You're helping them along the way? And that's a part of the sales process, because what happens is if you give them that design and you haven't been going through the sales process and asking the right courses to prepare yourself to overcome those objections. But you invested a lot of time and money, and then you get to the end and you don't get the business and you don't understand why. And then you say, oh, well, they didn't choose me because I didn't put my design, my bath in the right place. I didn't do this. Now, had you been focused on the sales process, you asked the questions along the way to know that you should have put that bathroom in that place. You've already overcome that objection. So by the time you get to the end and you've given them a design that doesn't work for them and their family, and you want to go back and redo it, they're like, no, because this is the timeline which I need to make a decision by.

**Joyce: [14:23]**

And you maybe didn't know that timeline, because, again, that's a part of the sales process understanding that timeline. And you didn't ask that question either. So don't look at it as being pushed to look at it as helping to manage the process along for the customer.

**Mirjam: [14:35]**

I think that's really interesting because I feel like a lot of people and a lot of designers look at sales only at closing, but they don't look at the entire length of the process.

**Joyce: [14:47]**

They don't look at the entire list of process, and they're not just designers, everyone. I share people all the time. I have how to win an appointment setting an appointment. Someone asked me what's the most important sales training that you offer for your online program. And I said the appointment setting. They said why? I said, because your first close is the appointment like that, right? Your second close is the next appointment. Your third close is the closing appointment.

**Jason: [15:16]**

I like that by viewing it at one, you have those small wins, and that's giving you confidence. So when you head for the big clothes, you've already had these small wins. And so now it's a little easier.

**Joyce: [15:23]**

I love that it's a late because you know what? Because you're not going to close that appointment if they're not interested, if you haven't said anything to keep them in. So now you ask them, Mrs. Customer, what did I present to you in this appointment that makes you want to go to the next step? Are you ready to go to the next step? And then they're going to tell you why. And when they tell you why, that's a win for you because you can write down. Okay. I'm doing these things great. If there's a reason you wouldn't go to the next if they say no, I won't go to the next step. Why won't you go to the next step and you get to fix it up front and then close for the next? If I fix this, if I make these changes, are you willing to meet with me again so that I can show you the new plan? And now you're getting your yeses versus your no. So you're looking for that? And that's how you look for the yes. May I meet with you? We have this appointment? Yes. May I cover your house and do this? Yes. May I propose the design for you? Yes. With this design. Look this way to you. Yes or no, right. Well, if it's a no now you know what you have to do to get to the next. Yes.

**Jason: [16:40]**

I love that. So with all of your experience, if you had to do it all over and you were to open up design firm today, what would you do or what would you advise your younger self on how to go about the sales process?

**Joyce: [16:59]**

Well, my younger self in the sales process could think about this, Jason. The sales process, the strategy. The process doesn't change. But the strategy changes, right? The strategy is generational. The strategy is ecommerce versus, not ecommerce. I grew up in by my date myself, but I grew up when the Internet was making millionaires all day every day. Right. And so for me, I think my young self, it was to build that stronger automated system in place like I'm doing now with my course is taking the time to build that automated system in place that allow people to see what they want to see. See the creations that they want to see, see how I do my work, give them that great information like you give them on your site that I love, right? If we were doing some of those things early on, those things would have maximized our sales opportunities. We still have to go close them, but they maximize our sales opportunities. So it's not so much changing the sales process. The process remains. But sometimes we do need to tweak our sales strategy.

**Jason: [18:12]**

What happened last year with the Coronavirus? How have you seen sales strategy change from 2020 to where it is now and where it may be next year in 2022 and beyond?

**Joyce: [18:25]**

Oh, my gosh. It's so changed between there, and I think we all have to kind of juggle and figure it out to mirror them with the PR side. And you with the market side. Jason, me with the sell. We all had to figure that out. And I tell people that now patience is the key. We can't push the people to make quick decisions right now. Some people are going to make quick decisions, but most of them are not. And that's because people have so many other things on their mind.



### Joyce: [18:59]

I also share with individuals the first time you meet with someone, you may want to get to that next step, faster. That first call may not have anything to do with your service. That first call may be a mental health check for that person, a mental health check for you. And the great thing about that, Joe, is because a good friend of mine, my mentor and publisher Darren Farmer, says all this time, the difference between contact and contract is the R. The relationship. It's the R. It's a relationship. And when we build stronger relationships with our customers, it's to our benefit. A lot of times, sales professionals, I've coached they go through that first meeting, Zoom through it. And if I'm in a meeting, I'm like, hold on, slow down. I'm like kicking them onto the table. Let me find a connection between myself and this customer. Let's build this relationship, because when you build that relationship with someone, when you go back for that next call, they're going to remember that they're going to give you a little bit more time, even if you mess up a little bit, they may got you on the way. They may say, you know what, Miriam? I really was looking for this, and I apologize. I apologize if I didn't say that. I know we were talking that day, and I was sharing a lot about the family and different things. But what I should have said to you is this, do you think you can go and tweak that? And if you can, I think that we can work together on this. So you really have to take that time right now to allow people, as we say, to be vulnerable and really work on finding that connection and building a relationship. I think in some cases, our sales process is getting longer because of it, but we need to check and adjust on that. But I was talking to my godson because he's coming to work and me in the business. And I said, but if we take care of the people, we will always have the calls, and we will always have the referral because they will appreciate that we spent the time.

**Jason: [20:59]**

One of the things that you had talked about relationships that we have when we do social media marketing for our own clients is we like to emphasize that it is a relationship driven platform. So a lot of people, they look to get a lot of leads off of social media, but we have to build up that relationship, build up the rapport for them to know, like and trust you before we can even market to them in that way.

**Joyce: [21:24]**

Absolutely. I launched my business. I started thinking of this business in 2017, and it's funny because I don't know why, but I wasn't planning on launching into 2022 and I sell network, and then I decided to leave corporate in June 2019. I launched it in January of 2020. And so I said, it's going to take two years for me to build a relationship with my audience. You're not going to find many people that are going to say that, especially sales professionals like myself, because we all want it fast. We all want it yesterday. Right. And although I have my own relationships and following a brand of my own that I've been working on since 2017, I still knew no matter if Kobe would have come or not, Kobe just allowed me to have a more loving relationship with my audience. Right. But I said it's going to take two years for us to build a relationship with our audience to build that trust factor.

**Jason: [22:23]**

I love that. And I had talked about this. I believe in episode one on how we transition because in 2020, we actually had a marketing plan to go heavier in the market. But 2020 actually slowed this town. And then the Coronavirus had us step back and rethink everything. And where we went was to actually interview over 400 designers and remodelers in the industry all across the US just to understand what the real issues were. And that helped us really position ourselves to understand what their issues are and how to really market the right way.

**Jason: [23:05]**

And if we hadn't had that, we went and went out there and market and wasted a lot of time and money.

**Joyce: [23:12]**

Absolutely. We keep an ongoing survey about what we're presenting to you. What can we do different? Is it what you're looking for, right. An ongoing survey. And our first call center for the business was events conferences. We were scheduled on the Bimini Island, Bahamas, so we had to pivot in a very short time frame, had to pivot and create a virtual conference. And we were supposed to go to Mexico this year. We did go for the mastermind to Mexico, but I think we only have twelve people join us in person and then everyone else's virtual. So it's very different. But the people that did join us had a great experience, right. So we're scheduled to go to the Bahamas, the Atlantis, because it's always my vision for why sales network to build global sales organization. Right. I want to make sure I touch the US, Canada, Europe, the Islands, because I do a lot of work on different Islands. And I want people to be able to really just not leave home and go somewhere for a conference. But I want them to leave and go to the beach. And in our conference, we would have the scheduled in morning meditation. You go and you can hang out the yoga instructor on the beach and then come in. We weren't going to start the conference at eight in the morning. Right now, the comfort go all day long and you're exhausted. Then you're down there at 08:00 in the morning, 700 in the morning for classes, trying to get coffee. We weren't going to do that. We're going to start the first class at ten. So yeah. So, hey, you guys join us?

**Joyce: [24:53]**

If everything in the universe is the same, we will be in the Bahamas on the Atlantis property next year. We did decide to move our mastermind meeting in February from Cancun, where we were this year to Miami. So we'll be in Miami for the mastermind courses. But then we will definitely if everything falls in place, be in the Bahamas. We're looking forward to going to Bahamas. It'll be a virtual program. But for those of you who join us in person, we'll be in the Bahamas.

**Jason: [25:22]**

I was going to say, let me know when I mean, how you explain how the conference will operate. I may want to be there.

**Joyce: [25:30]**

Yeah. Our conferences are always in June, and we always have great speakers, a great line of the speakers. And this year, it is going to be about our small business customers. And our entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs, right? Because we want to help them to be able to understand how important sales is building revenue and value for their business, and especially when they're doing the B to B cells. I'm talking a lot about building your B to B sell strategy now, because when you have that B to B customer, you obviously have a customer that the revenue deal is larger. The contract is longer, and now you can plan for your business. And when you go to the bank, your business is worth more value wise, because you have that B to B relationship. So that's what we're going to focus a lot on right now. That's why I created the how to Win a Sales training program. We're going to take that to the Mastermind in February, and we're going to take it to the Bahamas.

**Jason: [26:26]**

Joyce, you're an eight time author. So what will the book be about?



### Joyce: [26:31]

Well, I'm actually releasing the 8th book on October 23. You have to come join me. I'm going to send you that. You have to come in person. I've started to do a brunch and lunch just so you know, I know that it's still covet, but I figured I can get 25 people together in a room, have an amazing brunch. But it's the first time I'm co-publishing a book. And the co-publishing book is color outside the lines. Extraordinary stories of leadership. And so I took a group of people and said, Tell us about a time when you're in leadership or leadership experience is something that you can share. And I didn't want it to be a book of all CEOs. Right. I do have Steve on there, who is a CEO of a Badger mapping. I have sales leaders but also have sales leaders that are influenced without authority. And because sometimes those are to have the greater influence over the people and immediate part of the business. And I wanted everyone to share a story. So that when you're reading a book, you're just not hearing my voice and what Joyce experience were. But you're hearing what happened with Jeremy. You're hearing what happened with Jasmine Dion, different bridges and HR space. She's been in HR and government space for a long time. No one ever talks about leadership in that government space in our day sales books. And so that's what that was about. I used to love reading Jay California Cooper books because every story was different. And the most famous one, the chicken soup. Right. You get a different story every time you're reading it. And that's what I love about these co-author projects. And that's why I decided to move forward with them. Now we will have another one. This is our first one, but I do want to put out a volume of this book every year.

**Jason: [28:18]**

This has been an amazing session. So if anyone wants to know more information or get in contact with you, Joyce, how do they do?

**Joyce: [28:27]**

So they can always contact me on LinkedIn? I'm on LinkedIn quite a bit. At least I tried to not as much lately, but yeah. And then our social pages, [www.whysalesnetwork.com](http://www.whysalesnetwork.com). You can go to [whysalesnetwork dot. Com](http://whysalesnetwork.com), reach out. You can go to our social is that [whysalesnetwork](http://whysalesnetwork). And also my personal brand is at I-M-I-A-M. Joyce Johnson.

**Jason: [28:54]**

We have appreciated your time and we hope to see everybody next week on Designer Discussions.

**Outro: [29:03]**

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions. What was your takeaway care to share your thoughts and tag Jason, Maria and Mirjam on social media? You can find them on all platforms at [designerdiscussions.com](http://designerdiscussions.com). Don't forget to like subscribe and leave a review or comment for this episode from wherever you are listening.



# DESIGNER DISCUSSIONS

DIGITAL MARKETING,  
PR & BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT

