

White Paper

Selling Against DIY Companies: Pinpoint What You Offer that DIYs Don't

DIY security companies are spending millions to cast a wide net to attract as many customers as possible. While some worry about the potential threat to DMP and our network of dealers, others don't, making a strong case that DIY companies create opportunities for us by bringing new potential customers into our industry.

More importantly, says sales and leadership expert Gretchen Gordon, "We should be ready at the same time to discuss why we're different."

Gordon is President of Braveheart Sales Performance. Having been an industry lender and a former business owner of a personal emergency response systems (PERS) business, she specializes in helping security companies grow. Being ready to discuss our differences, she explains, means having a firm understanding of what you provide that DIY companies don't.

Across DMP's network of dealers, we all have shared customer service provisions that a DIY company does not. For instance:

We Take the Headaches Out of Installations

Even the most basic systems, especially when cameras and other integrated products are added, won't function as they're supposed to if all the components aren't installed correctly.

When that happens, will the customer be willing to spend their time to diagnose the problem?

And will the customer have the technical expertise to know how to fix it?

Time is a valuable commodity! Because we're all so busy, these are good questions to ask your prospects, Gordon says. "DIY companies want their customers to think they'll never run into problems and need professional help — because there isn't any, at least not the kind who comes to your home."

In contrast, an authorized DMP dealer saves its customers valuable time and effort with professional installations done by certified technicians who also are trained in installing DMP systems with integrated components.



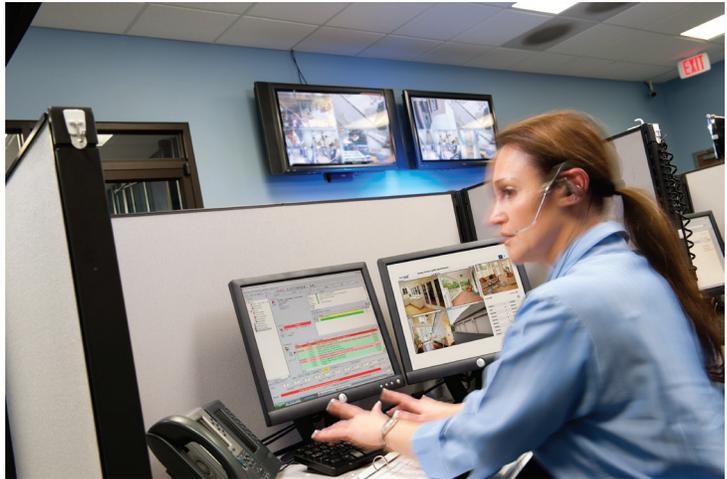
We Eliminate the Customers' Risk

While DIY companies make it sound as if anyone can easily install and monitor their systems, they also market the customization of their products, saying buyers can have exactly what they want in a system that's also affordable. The idea of saving money, particularly resonates among first-time homeowners, who are doing everything they can to save money.

But what happens if a DIY system doesn't function as reliably as it's expected to?

And what happens if the customer is unavailable to respond to an alarm?

The liability a DIY customer must accept is another difference to point out. Among some prospects, the risk is just not worth it. "Our customer is the kind of person who wants monitoring service because they're not willing to accept the liability when it comes to their family's safety and security."



Educate Your Customers About the Shortfalls of DIY Products

As an industry expert, you of course fully understand the discrepancies between a DIY alarm system and a professionally installed one. However, the average customer may not understand what they're getting — and more importantly not getting.

In case of a fire, for instance, wouldn't we all want the system that has been fully tested and is UL listed?

This testing is required by NFPA 70 for the security and life-safety portions of a system when used, and is accepted as a nationally recognized industry standard and best practice. Unfortunately, some prospects may not realize the systems they're considering haven't been fully tested to the industry's highest standard to ensure their safety. While the carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are UL listed, the system's panel, which receives the signal and activates an alarm is not!

Ensuring customers' safety is a big responsibility and one DMP and its authorized dealers take seriously — that's why every DMP system is thoroughly tested and certified through nationally recognized and independent laboratories such as UL and the ETL program.

Prospects will discover other significant differences when they understand why other questions are important to ask before choosing a system. For instance:

How secure is this system's wireless technology?

How can I be sure I'm purchasing exactly what I need in my home to best protect my family?

What's the security company's reputation?

Understandably, there's no single answer to any of these questions because each system is different. Therefore, DIY prospects have to assume the responsibility of doing their own research and relying on their own technical expertise. They'd be smart, for instance, to take the time to read online reviews of DIY products — in just the last few years, many of these products have come and gone, along with their product support.

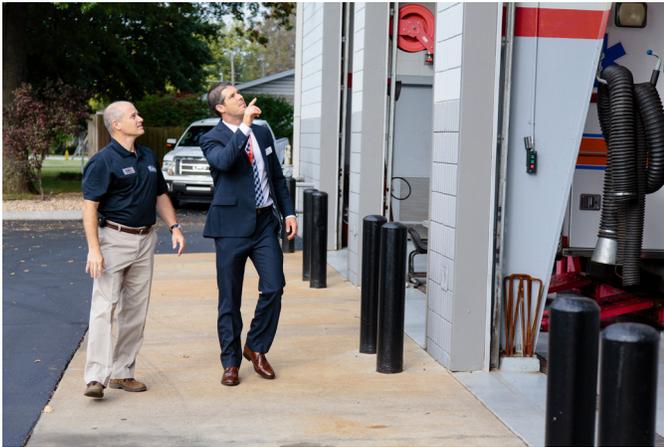
We Are Local and Work With Customers to Make Sure Their Security Needs are Met

The Internet is great for research. But some customers prefer the opportunity of meeting face to face with trusted security professionals in their communities before making security purchases. They want to meet at their homes or businesses to review their specific security needs, Gordon says. "They value the experience and insight of a security expert who can look at their specific situations and offer good advice."

Customers may also value the fact that your business is locally owned and operated and pro-

vides a product that's made in America, Gordon adds. "We care about our communities, and we give back." Tell your story, she adds — that may be about your history and any customer service features that are unique to your company and your community.

But not all prospects prefer the customer service. In fact, Gordon says, "Many buyers today want to buy online with no human interaction — they want to remain anonymous. Plus, according to the recent Trust Project*, the reality is that in-home salespeople are some of the least trusted salespeople out there, right behind car sales. It's the dealer's responsibility to earn the trust of the client to be able to effectively differentiate between their offerings and any others, including DIY companies."



For instance, explains DMP's Jon Adams, "Our dealers can help customers recognize and fix potential security vulnerabilities — that's part of differentiating ourselves by working hand in hand with customers and making sure their security needs are met."

Jon is Executive Director of Business Development at DMP. Previously he was DMP's Dealer Development Manager for the company's Los Angeles region and worked closely with dealers to provide on-going DMP support. "Based on their training and industry experience, our dealers would know where

the panels should be located for the best protection and for the best wireless range," Jon says. "A lot of customers appreciate that kind of advice because it adds peace of mind."

We Clearly Outline What Our Customers Can Expect

As prospects compare DIY products to yours, communication is another topic worth asking about. Among DIY companies who say their systems are monitored, for instance:

How does the system communicate, and does the system use a frequency that can be copied?

How often does it check in?

How quickly will I be notified if a check-in isn't received?

What sort of redundancy is in place at the monitoring center to ensure that my alarm signals are always received and acted upon?

"There's no ambiguity about what a customer can expect from us," Jon says. "We're happy to have that discussion up front, and we continue to follow through."

When comparing DIY systems to DMP's, customers may not realize another important point:

"Our residential customers are getting the same level of security and quality that's being used in the country's largest and most trusted financial institutions. The products our dealers offer are designed for the highest commercial security."

Jon Adams

In summary, as an authorized DMP dealer, you offer the technology and the support to implement highly integrated systems, both wired and wireless, that combine multiple facets of protection in a single, highly effective solution. Incorporating intrusion, fire, access control, cellular and network communication through a single, integrated approach provides stronger protection in a system that is both more cost effective and simpler to manage.

When given an opportunity, remember to describe how your company not only eliminates the

headaches and hassles of installing and managing a system, but how you also eliminate your customers' risk — from your sales representative sitting down with the customer to make sure they're getting exactly what they need before it's installed to the operators at the monitoring center who also are trained to help protect their customers and prevent costly false alarms.

Even if the customer isn't available, you give them peace of mind because in the event of an alarm, your staff will respond on their behalf. "It's pretty simple when you ask your prospect, 'What's going to happen if you're not available?'"

If that isn't a concern, Gordon adds, "That's probably not your target customer." To that end, the traditional dealer would be wise to focus even more precisely on who their target market is, she encourages. "Those who care about the services and expertise their dealer brings to the table, and those who value the ability to pick up the phone and talk with the president."

Explain the Differences Then Let Them Decide

Some prospects, however, will choose the DIY route, and that's OK, Gordon adds. "You have to determine why they're comparing you to a DIY. Find out what is important to them. Tap into their emotion of their buying decision."

There's a good chance some DIY prospects won't become your customer at this point in their lives, she adds. Although at some point, "They may."

"When they've reached a level where they can invest in things they know make the biggest differences, they're going to want a professionally installed system. Saving the money doesn't add up to all it was expected when they get to a certain point in their life and they understand the differences."

This taps into a very powerful and compelling strategy: "We need to develop our value proposition to outline those differences."

Master the Ability to Focus on Your Customers' Problems You Can Solve

DMP dealers and their professional alarm technicians bring a tremendous amount to the table in the way of knowledge, experience and equipment options. But remember, Gordon says, "People don't buy products — instead they buy because they want solutions to their problems. You've got to be able to translate your benefits into issues or problems you can solve, and use your products and services as a centerpiece."

Editor's Note:

In this article, Gordon refers to the Trust Project written by Dave Kurlan of Objective Management Group, which is a nationally recognized pioneer and industry leader in sales force evaluations and sales candidate screenings. A complete copy of that white paper is available [here](#).

In this article, Gordon also recommends having a clearly developed and defined Value Proposition. As part of Gordon and her team's in-depth sales training program for security professionals, she provides a portfolio of resources, including the Value Proposition course, also available [here](#), compliments of Braveheart Sales Performance.

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