



Oppositionals Can  
Sabotage Your Sales  
Force  
Arguments, Frustrations  
Rise with these  
Employees

**Unleash**  
**Your Sales DNA®**

*By Jeffrie Story*  
As seen in  
MacDonald Advertising  
Services

You know this type. They're almost impossible to coach. They argue with every word that leaves your mouth. They interrupt your meetings and take the whole group on irrelevant tangents. They disrupt your team because they always have a complaint.

You want to dive under your desk when you see them approaching, hoping to avoid ruining your day or wasting an hour hearing their tirades.

When you suggest they always disagree, they indignantly reply, "I DO NOT!" You can't teach them anything either, because they already know everything. In fact, they think they already knew everything they ever learned.

You're dealing with Oppositional Reflex behavior. A person who displays this behavior reflexively argues and disagrees with everything. This type of Sales Call Reluctance® behavior is the most recent discovered by Behavioral Sciences Research Press, Inc., for whom I am a licensee.

Oppositionals are frequently talented and skilled but they sabotage themselves and others, including you. They have high needs for recognition, but low self-esteem, so they strike first to avoid showing they might lack some piece of knowledge. They actually may not display this behavior in front of customers and prospects, so why are they so costly both to you and to themselves?

They're costly because of the ongoing time and frustration they cause you since they won't do what you ask of them — at least without a major battle and ongoing complaining — and they contaminate the attitude and behaviors of the rest of your sales force.

I have personally witnessed sales teams full of Oppositionals, usually led by a manager who feels he or she has a case of battle fatigue without knowing why. These teams probably started with only one oppositional person who cunningly recruited many more. Those they can't recruit are as frustrated as the manager.

The sad thing is that Oppositional behavior is easy to change, but usually people don't. Why?

Because most won't agree they have the behavior in the first place. In their minds, there's nothing to change!

In post-workshop coaching, I can never predict what an Oppositional will do. They might:

- Insist their Call Reluctance® assessment scores are flawed and that they are not Oppositional, contrary to the opinion of the manager
- Say, "Yes, that's me, and I'm staying that way, (expletive deleted)!"
- Say, with rarer frequency, "Yes, that's me, and I've decided to stop disagreeing and instead learn from others." And they do.

When you deal with Oppositionals who won't change, you must use their own tough style against them, even if it's not your style. Become an X-type manager when you work with them.

As an example: "Sorry Charlie, but I happen to be the boss, and this is how we're going to do it. Our discussion is closed." Then hold them to doing it your way! Uncomfortable? Yes. Effective? Absolutely. They respond to their own type of behavior.

You can also set them up with a paradoxical statement: "You'll probably disagree with me, Betty, but I think we need to follow this procedure." Betty is now trapped.

In order to disagree, she has to agree. You'll then hear Betty say, "No, I don't disagree with you!"

But the very best way to handle Oppositionals is not to hire them. Besides costing you plenty in time, sales and emotional energy, they're the ones most likely to sue you.

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Jeffrie Story is President of Unleash Your Sales DNA®. She helps newspapers drive new business through behavioral change. She combines scientific tools with her sales background and passion for personal transformation. For information, contact Jeffrie at

877-378-5580 or [Jeffrie@UnleashYourSalesDNA.com](mailto:Jeffrie@UnleashYourSalesDNA.com).