

## Counter Intuitive: Smart sales and service tactics

By Tim Huckabee

Of course...  
No problem.



### The SCENARIO:

A customer calls at 11 a.m. and says, “I need flowers delivered by noon!”

Many customers think florists are like pizzerias — with a van always idling, ready to whisk an order on its way. Here’s how to respond.

Upon hearing that there will be an extra charge for rush delivery some customers may suddenly no longer need that order delivered right away. Don’t be surprised to hear, “Oh, just as long as she gets the flowers by the end of the day.”

### Here are questions you may encounter:

“Why do I have to pay extra?”

The Express Delivery charge enables us to give your order priority treatment — so we can design and deliver your flowers within a short time.

“You never did this before! Why do I have to pay now?”

This modest fee enables us to maintain the high level of service that you expect from (Flower Shop name).

“The flowers are going just down the street. Why do I have to pay extra?”

Our vehicles are always on the road making deliveries. The Express Delivery fee covers the costs of scheduling a van just for your flowers.

**The bottom line:** Don’t be afraid to offer — and charge for — extra service!

\* This is just a guideline. You will need to adjust the time and price parameters for your store.

### The KNEE-JERK RESPONSE:

1. “I’m sorry sir; we just can’t get flowers there that quickly.”

- You may lose the sale because you told the customer that you can’t accommodate him.

2. “I will try my best.”

- All the customer remembers is you said you’d “try your best.” This answer is vague, sets the stage for potential problems and lessens your chances for repeat business.

### The SMART RESPONSE:

“Yes, I can deliver your flowers by noon with our Express Delivery Service for an additional \$10! \*”

If you keep your voice **upbeat and confident**, the customer is more likely to pay to get the service he wants. Sound apologetic, and he’ll likely decline because he’ll sense he’s being overcharged.

**Tim Huckabee** is president of Floral Strategies, a one-on-one sales and customer service training company exclusively for florists. Got a customer service challenge? Tell Tim and he’ll tackle it in an upcoming column. E-mail [tim@floralstrategies.com](mailto:tim@floralstrategies.com) or call (800) 983-6184.

## Just Browsing Online Sources for the Floral Industry

### A Site To Behold: [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

Is figuring out how to cut back on payroll amid Mother’s Day planning stressing you out? Why not chat about it with people who know exactly how you feel — other florists in your area. This site organizes meetings for local interest groups all over the country to discuss topics ranging from beekeeping to political activism to petal pushing. To learn where florists meet in your area, click on the “work & career” link, and scroll down the alphabetical list for the link to “florists.”

**Don’t Miss:** The links for “African Violets” and “gardening” meetings under the “hobbies” page for a chance to meet other flower lovers.

### A Site to Behold: [www.onlinewbc.gov](http://www.onlinewbc.gov)

If you’re one of the 9.1 million women-owned businesses, check out this online women business center, organized by the U.S. small business administration. Click on “business basics” and find information about starting, expanding and marketing your business. Have questions about banking online or whether you qualify for a loan? Click on “accounting and finance” under “business basics” for answers.

**Don’t Miss:** The chance to meet other women business owners. Click on the “networking” link to find information on mentors, counseling and women-business organizations.