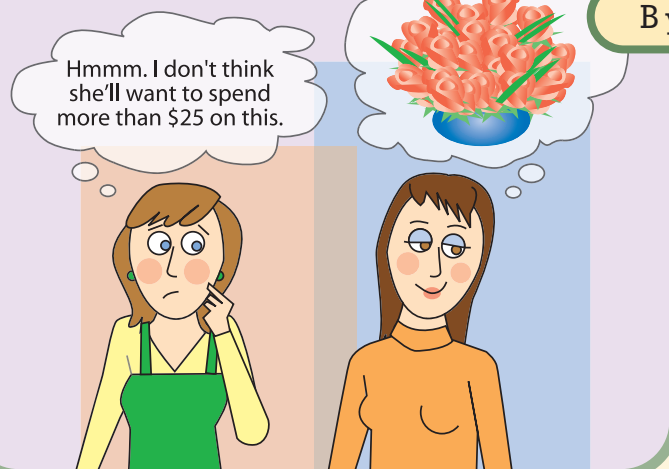


Counter Intuitive: Smart sales and service tactics

By Tim Huckabee



Boost Your Average Buy

Problem: Average Sale Decreasing

Your newest salesperson is uncomfortable suggesting price to customers. She says she doesn't want to offend or embarrass a customer by suggesting something too high. The last time she suggested a \$50 arrangement — which she felt was appropriate for the occasion — the customer snapped, "Do I look like I'm made of money?" Consequently, she has retreated back to asking, "What would you like to spend?" and the average sale at the shop is trending downward (her predecessor was a successful up-seller). One customer, unhappy with the size of the arrangement, even commented, "If I had been told that I needed to spend more money, I would have."

Solution: Paint a Picture of the Product

Re-train your staff not to sell from their own pockets —

based on what they think is affordable — but instead to provide options to the customer and paint a visual picture of each option. Here are references that customers will appreciate and your staff should feel comfortable using (the prices indicated are national averages; you'll need to adjust them for your store):

■ **A small arrangement** is perfect for a desk or bedside table. It's priced between \$35 and \$50.

■ **A medium arrangement** is perfect for a coffee table. It's priced between \$50 and \$65.

■ **A large arrangement** is perfect for a dining room or kitchen table — our most impressive design. It's priced between \$65 and \$80.

If the customer does not commit to a price, you need to do two things:

■ **Ask permission.** "Can I work with \$\$ (the highest price in the range) . . ."

■ **Justify.** ". . . so I can add more flowers for a fuller look!"

The Bottom Line: Paint a picture and your customers will be more satisfied — and may even spend more. Contact me for a color copy of my Sell by Color sales chart.

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 or call (800) 983-6184.

Just Browsing Online Sources for the Floral Industry

www.WordSpy.com

Looking for a way to build business during the slower fall months before Thanksgiving? Why not celebrate "Falloween" — an extended celebration of Halloween, beginning a few weeks before the holiday and ending before Thanksgiving? Never heard the term? Check WordSpy.com for more trend-revealing words and phrases. Keep your vocabulary current by clicking on the "subjects" link at the top and searching from the eight categories of words. If you're looking for a particular word's meaning, enter the word in the search box and the site offers a definition and examples of word usage.

Don't Miss: The latest retail buzzwords, such as "kidfluence" — the influence kids have on their parents' purchasing decisions. Click on the "retail" link under the

"business" category in the subject index to find out the meanings of the other 40-plus phrases, including "lipstick effect" and "retail leakage."

www.FgMarket.com

Having trouble finding that wholesaler's business card that you met at a recent trade show? Wondering what vendor has the particular ribbon you're looking for? Check out this site for a floral and gift directory with contact information from various suppliers across the country, including fresh flowers, balloons, candles, sympathy and wedding supplies.

Don't Miss: The easy-to-use search bar at the top. Rather than navigating the entire site, use it to quickly find the specific product or company name you're looking for.