

Counter Intuitive: Smart sales and service tactics

By Tim Huckabee



The SCENARIO:

A customer says, "I don't want to spend too much money BUT I want to get something nice!"

The standard response to this situation is to react to the roadblock the customer has placed in your path: I don't want

to spend too much. Many sales people will automatically go into super-frugal mode and let the customer know what the starting point for an arrangement is or how bud vases are priced. But you need to listen closely to what your customer is expecting.

The PSYCHOLOGY:

Did the customer ever say how much she wants to spend? Does anyone want to spend too much to get what he or she want or needs? No!

The SMARTER RESPONSE:

Acknowledge what your customer has mentioned, "Yes, Ms. Customer, we can create a beautiful arrangement for you!" Then move directly to the delivery information and then the card message. If the card message says, "Happy 25th Anniversary, love all your children and grandchildren," do you think your customer would be happy if a bud vase is sent? No, she would be upset and disappointed. Focus on the card message, make an appropriate suggestion and offer a price range based upon the occasion. "Ms. Customer, you may want to send one of our medium-sized spring vase arrangements, perfect for a coffee table, for this special anniversary. That design is priced between \$XX and \$XX."

Since the customer did not volunteer a price, it's your responsibility to suggest an appropriate price range. Once you make an educated recommendation, the customer will either choose the design and price you have described OR let you know exactly what she wants to spend (and you can then discuss items in that price range). Listen better and you can give smarter customer service!

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 about it 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

A Site to Behold: www.trustmymechanic.com

If your driver keeps mentioning squeaking brakes or a faulty ignition, check out this site before taking your delivery van in for a check-up. Skip the intro and click on one of the links below "free stuff" in the left column. Find information about maintaining your vehicle's condition, troubleshooting any problems and selecting replacement parts. If you like National Public Radio's "Car Talk," click on the "FAQs" to view others' auto traumas and solutions. Join the mailing list at the top of the screen to get daily tips on cutting back auto repair costs.

Don't Miss: The free auto insurance quote. Click on the link under "free quotes" and find out if your insurance plan is best for your business.

A Site to Behold: www.dstress.com

Is holiday stress wearing you out? Find some relaxation tips on this site. Click on the "articles" link for the goods on surviving the holiday season, managing change and retaining your best employees. Did you know taking 40 deep breaths daily helps you battle burnout? Learn more easy ways to lower stress from the "Self care/Stress: Ten Timely Tips" article. If you have trouble quieting the jittery voice in your head, consider the relaxation tapes and compact discs listed under the "tapes" link.

Don't Miss: The articles about "high blood pressure" and "chronic pain." Running a floral business isn't exactly easy on your body. Since you're on your feet, running around most of the day, back pain and high blood pressure happen. Check out the symptoms and learn tips for lessening the problem.