

CRASH AND BURN

> Welcome back for 10 more installments of my tough love to motivate you to serve better and sell bigger! This year, I am going to shake things up, with more challenging scenarios that give the salespeople I call ample opportunity to get really creative. I'm also going to deliver more critical reviews of what these staff members say and do in response to me as a customer. I hope that, after reading the column and reviewing the audio file as a group with your team, more florists will start to realize that just plucking a random design from the website is not a great way to help customers.

My goals for 2020? I want you to stop being afraid that a customer will say no if you offer them a higher price than they want to pay. I want to put an end to this industry-standard cycle of "selling from our own pockets" or offering customers a price we *think* they want to pay, instead of one that is simply appropriate for their needs!



The Opportunity: An Awkward Situation

I explained to the salesclerk that I had accidentally hit the neighbor's car while visiting my family at Thanksgiving, and upon learning that their car was still being serviced at the mechanic's, wanted to send flowers to apologize. This is really an out of the norm situation, but on the most basic level anyone should listen to it as an opportunity for a customer to express their great regret and remorse with a large and impressive design. I hope you agree.

Thumbs Up: Not Much!

I use this space in the column to commend exceptional service, but I heard nothing here that I would want my own staff to say

to a customer, so I am going to save my words. This is a great example of a call for your entire team to listen to and discuss. What impression did she make upon the caller and how did she represent the store? Did she engage with the customer and offer something appropriate for his needs? I was underwhelmed and didn't feel as though what I was offered truly represented my intentions.

Thumbs Down: The Card Message Is Key

Surprisingly, at this huge Midwestern florist they do not take the card message before talking about flowers. That approach is as awkward and inefficient as a waiter taking your order *and then* offering you the menu. This card message in particular communicated the importance of my need to send something larger.

She made a few more common mistakes, too. After I stated that I really did not know what I wanted, she started immediately hunting around the website and trying to sell me a stock item. (Listen to what a hot mess that part of the call was!) Customers don't want to be sold "something off the shelf." Smart salespeople can make even a standard web design sound like a customized, open order. You don't have to tell the customer that you're searching the site.

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She also talked over me a few times. Telephone courtesy is vitally important. In addition, I was offered way too many choices. Customers should not have to ask, "What do you think?" You should offer your professional advice, "This is the arrangement I recommend." Finally, I had to ask her about an add-on.

The Takeaway: More Is More

You can dramatically increase your telephone sales in 2020 by following my advice here every month. You need to discuss this column as a group and play the recording to learn from the good and bad aspects of the call. And start offering higher prices! 🌸



The Recording

You're only half-done learning from this column. Next step, gather your staff 'round a store computer, read this column to them and then play the recording of my call to this shop by visiting safnow.org/timscalling.

Turn it into a group discussion: Ask your team for feedback on what they heard and have them talk about how they can make better sales moving forward.



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