

## THE BIRTHDAY BLUES

> Birthdays are happy occasions, reasons to celebrate and technically a fun and easy sale. Agreed? Then why do we so often flub such a golden opportunity to offer a BIG arrangement to customers? That question has vexed me since starting FloralStrategies in 1997.

In this month's call (available at [safnow.org/timscalling](https://safnow.org/timscalling)), I want you to hear how a salesclerk can drop the ball even on a "no-brainer" sale if that person doesn't pay attention, listen to the customer and offer something different! After you read this column and listen to the recording, ask yourself if your staff would have done any better?

### The Opportunity: An epic birthday

This is truly my favorite and by far easiest sales scenario: a BIG birthday from a BIG group. For this call, I shared that I was calling for my sister's important birthday. Since I couldn't be there, the flowers had to carry my message. I even handed her a *golden ticket* by saying that the shop came highly recommended. (FYI, this is the customer's way of saying "I will essentially buy *anything* you show me.")

### Thumbs Up: Speedy service

The rep was quick, efficient and not too chatty. She asked a great qualifying question about my sister's favorite color (*not* her favorite flower). Here's a thought, though: Why do we always just stop there and offer only flowers in that color? Why not use that as a chance to upsell? "If she likes pink, we have some great pink vases too, and we can upgrade to one of those for just \$X more."

I also liked her demeanor. When I speak with someone as friendly and engaging as she was, it puts me at ease as a customer. It also gives her sway over me, making me more likely to spend more .... if she would only let me!

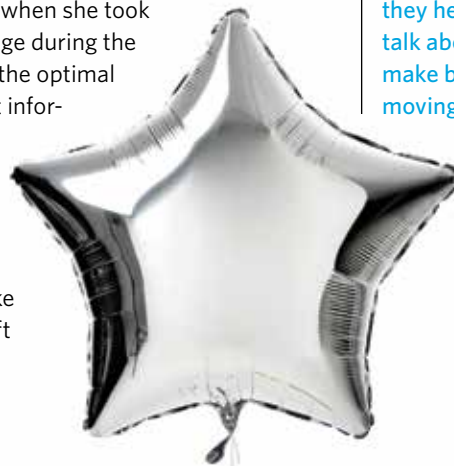
### Thumbs Down: Who's paying for it anyway?

I would love to see your face if you walked into a furniture store, barber shop or bakery and a salesperson greeted you by asking, "How much do you want to spend?" You'd probably laugh and think to yourself, "What a silly way to start a sale!" I sure would. Yet that is the approach she took with me. (Listen to exactly how she deals with price points when you play the call.)

Here's another related scenario. How would you feel if you were buying a TV at a big box store, or you sat down to dinner and the waiter jumped in and said, "Just want to let you know that there is going to be tax!"? Again, we'd laugh and think, "Who cares? I am going to eat dinner anyway or buy that TV regardless of tax." But listen to how, on more than one occasion, the salesclerk nearly shouts, "There is a \$10 delivery fee." It's as though she was warning me that I was going to have to pay that outrageous fee. Ugh!

Rounding out the trifecta of typical flower shop mistakes, I was not offered any type of add-on. Come on, why not some "over the hill" balloons or at least a box of candy to ease my sister's entry into middle age?

And notice when she took the card message during the call. That's *not* the optimal time to get that information if you want to learn from your customer and position yourself to make an educated gift suggestion.



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### The Takeaway: More is more

A birthday is a life celebration and worthy of big, exciting design, one that has been personalized with a finishing touch (balloon, candy, etc.). But a customer can only buy what he's offered. If you don't like the idea of selling, couch your advice by telling customers what other people order: "A very popular arrangement to celebrate a birthday is a large design filled with our best flowers in rich autumn colors. They're priced from \$X to \$Y." 🌸



### 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](https://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 birthday sales moving forward.



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