

CENTERPIECES 101

> As we head into the holiday season I want to make sure your team is best prepared to sell centerpieces based on the customer's needs, not just a random price. Too often when a customer calls a florist inquiring about this type of design, they are flatly told, "Our centerpieces start at ..." The problem with that approach is that the customer gets low-balled and will probably not spend too much more. Furthermore, the caller really does not know what they're getting for their money if they're simply told a price and not given a great description.

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The Opportunity: Dinner Party Guest

I called this popular shop in Texas posing as a customer coming to pick up a centerpiece on my way to a dinner party. I had no budget, color scheme or design style. I was a very typical customer, calling a flower shop expecting that the person answering the phone would listen to my needs and guide me toward the best choices and options. I believe this call is indicative of the way many customers think, meaning that they're expecting to order a centerpiece but are open to our suggestions and advice. And that's a little hint of the underlying opportunities that existed in this call, which you'll hear from your customers, too.

Thumbs Up: Educated Service

The representative was friendly, relaxed and engaging — and very well educated about what the store offered. I appreciated that she was quickly able to quote colors, sizes, flowers and prices without saying, "Hold on, let me get on to our website." She was prepared to engage me, and you should be, too. You will hear in the recording that the store was running a special offer and she was happy to tell me about it (it did not lower the value of the sale, it was a freebie that I would get for spending over a certain amount). When I questioned her about the size and dimensions of the cen-

terpiece, she did not talk in vague terms of "a nice size," she used inches (smart and practical) and explained the design style.

Thumbs Down: Confusing Descriptions

She named nearly every flower in the design, which sounds like just a blur to most customers; a color scheme would have been better. When offering my size options she told me they come in Standard, Deluxe and Premium. What about Small, Medium and Large, intelligent sizing that customers understand? I had to ask about candles, and if your designs don't come with them automatically, there's a great opportunity to sell them as an add-on: "As a finishing touch we can add two slender candles to the centerpiece for just \$X." Oddly, she did not start by qualifying the size and shape that I would need and simply offered an "off the shelf design." It's much better to ask some important questions such as, "How many people will be sitting at the table?" and "Would you prefer a long and low design or a round one?"

The Takeaway: Pay Attention, Ask Questions

We tend to sell just the centerpiece and miss the chance to offer customers more flowers for other parts of the house: something for the coffee table or kitchen, maybe some small designs for the bathroom, etc. You will hear me asking about that in the recording and notice how she handled my request. As grocery stores make it increasingly easier for customers to just grab a generic design along with their turkey and stuffing, we need to elevate our level of service to not only increase the sale but also to increase the level of attention and care we're giving callers. To that end, as part of the FloralStrategies sales toolkit we have a Centerpiece Sales Chart to which you can add your store prices and make it easier for your team to upsell. To get your copy, email tim@floralstrategies.com. 📧



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 centerpiece sales moving forward.



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