

FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT!

> In keeping with this month's wedding theme, I called a store in Denver offering a unique situation: the need to impress my future mother-in-law with flowers.

I intentionally reached out to a shop where I trained the staff so I could check on their progress and hopefully inspire you to rethink how you handle customers. Flower sales won't increase until we get over the insane habit of only offering what we think customers want to spend, or worse, what we can personally afford. Listen to the recording of this month's call to hear what a difference some training and a little new thinking makes.

The Opportunity: The Chance to Wow with Flowers

I laid it on thick, telling the clerk that I was coming all the way across the country to meet my future mother-in-law for the first time and needed to impress her. She knew I was calling from New York City (where we are used to paying too much for everything!) and maybe that factored in to what she offered me. Do you think your staff would have picked up on these cues or still headed into the call asking, "How much do you want to spend?" or diving to the bottom with the tired phrase, "Our arrangements start at ..."



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Thumbs Up: Listening Pays Off

The woman helping me asked if I knew the recipient's favorite color or flower. I demurred, leaving it up to them, but insisting that I did not want the arrangement to have a romantic feeling. She responded confidently, assuring

me that it would have more of a spring feeling. While she did not use the most precise language to communicate size (just say "large"!), she did tell me roughly how tall it would be, helping me to justify spending more money. Finally, for the first time in months, someone started me OVER \$100 for a non-funeral order!

Thumbs Down: Hurry Up and Slow Down

I am always concerned about the energy level of the person answering the phone. I like to hear someone upbeat and engaging because that sends a positive message to customers (and makes for an easier sale). But too much energy isn't good, either.

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At some point I wanted to tell this young lady to just lay off the Red Bull! Seriously though, when you listen to the call you will hear that she kept using the same phrase over and over, and it became quite annoying. My advice is to shake it up and have a rolling list of comments to reassure customers such as: Of course/ Gladly/My pleasure/Easily / Absolutely/Definitely, etc. Also, I had to chase her for the add-on; she did not naturally segue into offering me some creative way to personalize this important order. Why are we so bad at remembering this important element of the order? Interestingly, while your staff may not sell lots of add-ons, your website does. What does that tell you about your customers' needs and wants?

The Takeaway: Stop Fearing Customers

What you and your team will hear in action, while not perfect, is the smarter, better way of dealing with customers: listening to their needs and making an appropriate suggestion, not fearing rejection but firmly understanding that if the customer does not want to spend as much as you suggest, they'll tell you. 🌸



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. And join us each month for **Tim's Calling... Live**, a regular webinar available free to SAF members. The next session is March 18 at 4 p.m. EST. Visit safnow.org/webinars.



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