

## TAKE MY ORDER, PLEASE!

> We're still adjusting to new rules and regulations about operating a flower shop during the time of pandemic; however, customer service needs to stay at the forefront of our thinking when engaging customers. And when I made my mystery call this month, the clerk showed no interest in helping me with my special order. There was a total lack of service!

### The Opportunity: Promotion Celebration!

When I called this flower shop, I explained that I had just heard the good news that my sister had been promoted to branch manager at the bank where she works. As do many customers, I just bumbled through the call, stating that I was clueless about buying flowers but wanted to celebrate this important milestone. If you heard that from a customer, I hope you would immediately think big flowers, big budget and lots of balloons to proclaim her achievement to the world.



SHUTTERSTOCK/ GAUDILAB

### Thumbs Up: Less is more

Now more than ever, there is some uncertainty about what flowers may be in the next shipment or what's available from the local wholesaler — all the more reason to sell a color or color scheme instead of asking, "What's her favorite flower?" To his credit, the clerk kept this order simple, focusing on colors instead of flowers. That way of selling is ultimately better for all: The customer knows colors but not flowers and the designer is at liberty to use what's on hand instead of special-ordering specific blossoms.

### Thumbs Down: Don't chase away business!

There was a lot that went wrong with this order, starting with the opening dialogue when the clerk pushed me to hang up and

just shop online. Really! As you listen to the recording, you will hear that he bombarded me with too many choices, not even coming up for air or giving me a chance to say, "That sounds great" or to ask any questions. He clearly did not want to take my order and when he steamrolled me with so many options it demonstrated that he did not want to give me customer service but just wanted me to pick an item. And then it got worse. I want you to listen to the call and discuss the issue as a team: Should you ever talk a customer down on size and price? He did. Basically, I was told that I didn't want to send something too impressive to the bank! Customers want to buy a description or size from you, not a dollar amount and certainly not a judgment on their idea. You will hear me ask, in somewhat perplexed manner, "How big will that be?" because when you tell customers that you "can do something for \$50, \$75 or \$100," that doesn't communicate what they're buying!



### 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 sales moving forward.

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### The Takeaway: Slow down and you will save time!

There may be fewer staff working in your shop now and you may feel that pressure, but you can get through a call quicker by following these important points:

1. When customers call the store instead of shopping online, it is because they want your advice. Pepper your conversation with phrases like "I recommend" or "I suggest" and customers will ask fewer questions.
2. Sell what you have in the cooler before taking a custom order, "I have a beautiful summer arrangement our designers just created..."
3. Make buying an add-easy, "As a finishing touch I can add a balloon to her flowers for just \$X." 🎈



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