

Making a Sale Even When NOT Making a Sale

By Doug Fleener

Here are five methods to increase your overall sales and profits while not making a sale. Sound confusing? Perhaps at first, but I'm convinced that if you do certain things with *every* customer you'll make more sales even when not making a sale.

1. Believe that every customer who walks into your store will buy. Run your floor as if there is no such thing as a looker. The minute we label a customer "just a looker" we've decided they aren't buying. Most customer are "just looking" because that's what they've been programmed to do. No one walks into a wine store who doesn't have some interest in wine. No one walks into a luggage store if they don't have an interest in luggage. For now on let's call "lookers" "undecided buyers."

~~Just Looking~~
Undecided Buyer



2. Try to sell something to every customer. Oh no, it's that four letter word, sell! I could change it to *try to exchange product for money with every customer*. Very few retailers try to sell something to every customer. They greet customers. They show products. They ring sales. They help people. But very few retailers try to sell the customer something. Our own shopping experiences prove that. If you're looking at two different sweaters, chances are the retail associate, assuming one is even attempting to help you, will tell you which one she likes. She might say something like "That one's cute." Or she might say "I like that one on you better." The successful retailer who is out to make sales will say, "You should buy that one, it looks great on you." That's how you try to sell something to every customer.

3. Know why someone is leaving the store without making a purchase. Obviously if you're in a high traffic store this can be difficult, but most of us should be able to engage and establish enough of a relationship with a customer to know why he is leaving without buying something. Remember, we can't say he was just looking.

4. Thank every customer for visiting the store and invite him/her to come back. Many retailers thank a buying customer and invite her back, but most don't extend an invitation to return to those who exit without buying something. Most consumers today are very busy and when they come into our store and give us an opportunity to share our products with them and present us with the chance to make a sale, it is only right to thank them for their time. Inviting the customer back just makes sense because we want another opportunity to share our store with him/her.

5. Capture the customers contact information. I'm sure I sound like a broken record to long-term newsletter readers, but getting customer contact information isn't enough of a priority for retailers. If a person is in your store you know he/she has an interest in what you sell, so doesn't it make sense to get contact information and talk to them again? Imagine how much your sales will increase if you get half of the people who walk in your door to come back within a month and make a purchase. Find an incentive for customers, both buyers and non-buyers, to share with you their contact information. Perhaps you could be something like a drawing for a shopping spree each quarter. Once a week sweep the names and then send the customer a \$5 gift card. The worst thing that can happen is they come back and only spend \$5 for products that cost you \$2.50 or so. For every customer who does that, there will be plenty of others who will spend a lot more. Getting the customer back in again will also increase the likelihood that he/she will become - and remain - your customer.

About the author: Doug Fleener is founder of the Dynamic Experiences Group. He is a veteran retailer with more than 25 years of hands-on retail experience with world-class retailers including Bose Corporation and The Sharper Image. He has also owned and operated his own specialty stores. His new book, *The Profitable Retailer: 56 surprisingly simple and effective lessons to boost your sales and profits* published by Acanthus Publishing is available at www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com or at Amazon.com.

Doug is now president and managing partner of Dynamic Experiences Group LLC, a Lexington based retail consulting firm dedicated to helping retailers create unique customer experiences that results in higher sales and profits. Learn more at www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com or call Doug at 866-535-6331.

Fleener also shares his knowledge of experience based retailing in a series of custom key notes and workshops designed for stores, businesses, corporations, non-profits, and trade associations of all sizes. His casual style and quick wit make him not just a crowd pleaser but also an incredible motivator, encouraging people to take action and deliver extraordinary experiences to customers and employees alike. Learn more at www.dougfleener.com.