



Making the Emotional Sale

By Doug Fleener

I recently had an opportunity to observe four different salespeople on the retail floor. All four were good but one of them really stood out. I couldn't immediately put my finger on what made the difference so I continued to watch all four work with their customers. They were a treat to watch since all four were highly engaging and very customer focused.

As I continued to observe **I realized that the one who stood out had a deeper and more emotional relationship with her customers and as a result could elicit more emotional responses.** As an example, most of the salespeople would hold up a product and ask, "How about something like this?" The best salesperson would hold up a product and say, "Isn't this beautiful? Don't you just love this?" She really had a way of creating an emotional connection between the customer and the product.

There are several reasons she was better at doing this than her colleagues. **One is that she personally had a more emotional relationship with the product.** You could see that she loves selling the products she sells. She was passionate about the products and when she asked a customer if they loved the product it was her way of conveying her own emotions around the products.

Secondly, while all the employees were very good with customers, **the top performer took that little bit of extra time to really connect with each one of her customers.** At one point she was working with three different customers and you could actually see how she interacted a little differently with each one.

Last but most important, she used language that evoked emotion from her customer. Instead of using the word "like" she said "love." Instead of describing something as "nice" she said it was "awesome." The questions she asked her customers were also structured in a way that would evoke emotional responses from them.

While working with one customer she clearly wanted to identify some of the woman's favorite things to wear. Most retail salespeople would have asked just, "What are some of your favorite outfits?" She didn't. She said something like this: "Say it's your birthday and your friends are going to take you out for dinner and drinks. And you want to look really look sharp. I mean really sharp. I mean look at me world sharp. What type of outfit would you want to wear?" Big difference, isn't it? **One is a rational question while the other elicits an emotional response.** The emotional connection was more likely to lead to a sale.

You can do this yourself by using specific examples that conveys emotions when working with customers. Someone in a garden center could tell a customer that a plant puts out a large red flower. Or they could describe it as a beautiful fire red flower that brightens up any room. Someone who sells AAA memberships could tell a customer they offer roadside emergency service, or they could tell the customer that if they ever break down late at night in an unfamiliar area they're just one call away from help.

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So let me ask, are you making enough of an emotional connection with your customers? Those who do so will be handsomely rewarded by their customer.

About the author: Doug Fleener is a veteran retailer with over 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. In his ten years at Bose, Doug grew the Retail Direct Group from four to 100 stores and was instrumental in developing Bose's unique and engaging retail methods.

Doug is now president and managing partner of Dynamic Experiences Group LLC, a Lexington, MA based retail and customer experience consulting firm dedicated to helping retailers improve their customer experiences that results in higher sales and profits.

Fleener is the author of the book *The Profitable Retailer: 56 surprisingly simple and effective lessons to boost your sales and profits*. He is a frequent speaker around the world on retail issues and his insights has been covered in leading business media including *The New York Times*, *Entrepreneur*, and *Shopping Centers Today*. Along with partner Matt Norcia they write the popular retail blog *Retail Contrarian*.

Doug lives in Lexington, Massachusetts with his wife and two daughters, where in his free time he barbecues while listening to Jimmy Buffet music.

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