



SHANE DECKER
ON SALES
STRATEGIES

SHANE DECKER has provided sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. Contact him at (719) 488-4077 or at ex-sell-ence.com.

DRESS REHEARSAL

MAKE ROLE-PLAYING FUN, EFFECTIVE AND FREE OF CRITICISM.

If you ever want to make a room full of sales associates cringe,

just say the words, “It’s time to role-play.” As important as this activity is, no one wants to do it because it’s intimidating and often embarrassing. But the truth is, role-playing is very effective and can be fun when done correctly.

Unfortunately, rather than practice on each other during or after sales meetings, many sales associates practice on their clients. Their opening lines are terrible; they say “What can I help you with?” or “Hi, how are you?” Their presentations have become rote and do not make customers feel special. Their closes are just as bad. They say, “Can I wrap this up for you?” “I’ll size it while you wait,” or “How do you want to pay for this?” Your clients get tired of hearing the same things over and over everywhere they go.

Only practice through role-playing gives sales associates the proficiency they need to give cli-

ents a truly special experience.

But most stores (if they role-play at all) do it in a way that humiliates participants. They ask sales associates to stand up in front of everyone and role-play a scenario. Then, after the sales associate is done, everyone else picks it apart and talks about what

pairs — that way, you don’t have an audience watching you. One sales associate plays the client. You have a list of 40 objections in front of you, along with appropriate answers. The “client” throws out each objection, and the other salesperson has to handle it. Go through all 40 objections. Then,

They call this “constructive criticism,” but in my view, there’s nothing constructive about criticism.

the associate did wrong. They call this “constructive criticism,” but in my view, there’s nothing constructive about criticism.

Role-playing should be a fun part of sales meetings and most of all a learning experience. During the sales meeting, after the training information for that day has been delivered, it is time for role-play. This is how it works:

Break sales associates into

reverse roles: The salesperson who was the client is now the salesperson, and vice versa. For any objection you can’t handle, put it aside — now you know what you need to work on.

Role-playing can work for improving greetings, closes, selling company benefits, delivering value-added statements and pretty much any other part of the sales presentation. Role-playing allows you to sell yourself much more effectively, which is the key to selling more product.

If you want to take it to the next level, role-play a scenario. It could be a young man coming in to buy a diamond for an engagement. You can discuss price and how to close if he’s technical or if he isn’t, if he’s researched it. These scenarios can last 15 to 20 minutes.

My wish is all of you role-play because it’s the most powerful learning experience for preparing you for success on the sales floor. Don’t be critical — be a leader. Help each other succeed.



TIPS: MANAGEMENT



BRING YOUR BEST SELF TO NEGOTIATIONS

→ To get the best out of negotiations, be more open and less defensive, says Shirli Kopelman, a professor of management at University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business. “Negotiations are about creating value and being cooperative and competitive at the same time,” says Kopelman. One of the first things to do is learn how to bring your best self to the table, she says. “People tend to adapt quickly, and using an approach where you frame yourself as a profit architect and help everyone rise above the fixed-pie view quickly becomes contagious,” she says.

CLERK OR DESIGN SPECIALIST?

→ Sales clerk? Salesperson? Sales associate? Not at The Diamond Galleria by Rogers in Evansville, IN. The people who assist shoppers there are known as “design specialists.” Explains the store: “We believe in many cases our people are helping customers create a certain look for every day or for a special occasion like their wedding, not just selling them a piece of jewelry.”

SALES MOTIVATION

→ The question of whether to use everyday low prices or markdowns should be decided by the motives of your customers, says a study by MIT’s Sloan School of Management. For you, that likely means markdowns are best, because of the potential regret a shopper will feel about missing out on an emotionally charged piece of jewelry (as opposed to, say, their desire to buy a men’s undershirt). A short-term price cut in such situations will prompt action.

FRESH IDEAS TO BETTER YOUR BUSINESS