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IN YOUR STORE | COLUMNS

# HOW TO SELL TO TODAY'S BRIDAL CLIENT

WHILE THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SALES HAVEN'T CHANGED, THE CLIENT - AND THEIR EXPECTATIONS - HAVE.

By Shane Decker

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF selling haven't changed and never will. But what has changed is the amount of competition, how you present your product (especially to younger clients), and the expectations of your clients (especially in higher-end stores).

Old-fashioned salesmanship has never died. All clients, young and old, still want to be respected, have professionals take care of all their needs, know they're going to receive fantastic service and quality, and so on. Building the relationship is more important than any other

part of your sales presentation — and always has been.

That said, you have to adapt to the changing expectations of today's bridal client, which include the following:

**1** They want a professionally trained staff waiting on them. They don't want to know more about diamonds than your staff.

**2** They want you to have a decent amount of diamonds over a carat in stock. They have redefined the size of the starter diamond and are buying ovals and cush-

ions at an unbelievable rate (the princess shape is getting dethroned as the most popular fancy shape). Clients also want to see more diamonds available online.

**3** Many clients are brand-minded. You need to know what clients are buying and asking for in your area.

**4** Clients want comfort and privacy. Make sure you have a private (or semi-private) well-lit and organized selling area where your clients can be comfortable.

**5** They want to feel like your top priority. Make sure other associates do not interrupt the presentation unless they are called in by the salesperson.



**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](mailto:ex-sell-ence.com).



ASK INSTORE

**I struggle with telling my jewelers that their work is not up to snuff. Any ideas?**

→ Try invoking the “god of jewelry art” and use this imaginary entity as a source of strength. Tell your jewelers that this authoritative third

party has weighed in and won't let this piece leave the shop in its current condition. (It will also help if you can provide at least one specific point you want improved.) Your jewelers will think you're a little nuts. But they'll also know you have uncompromising standards.

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**6** Clients may not consciously know that they need guidance in the purchase decision, but they do. When showing their choice of diamond and mounting, cover the rest of the case up with scrolls. Take their sight off all other choices and focus on the one they want.

**7** Clients expect you to be prepared. Have all tools ready before your presentation. You may need the scope or the lab report when showing loose diamonds. Do not hand a diamond to clients in a tweezer; it's intimidating and creates the fear of dropping it. Always show

diamonds in a four-prong spring-loaded diamond holder.

**8** Clients want to know what your company can offer them. Discuss policies on sizing, setting, trade-ins, warranties and so on. Selling company benefits increases your closing ratio and allows the client to realize they're in the right store.

**9** They expect you to remember their names. Write them down if you need to.

**10** The client expects to purchase a ring from you. They are happiest when they give you money and leave with a bag.

**11** Clients expect to hear from you after the sale. Clienteling and follow-up shows you care. Ask them to come in and clean and polish their ring every six months.

When you're selling bridal, have fun and laugh, but be professional. This is one of the most important purchases of their lifetime; make it feel that way.

Get the client to talk. Do not talk about yourself. Ask them how they met. Get them to talk about important moments and fun times, their future lives together. This makes them feel more important. If they've been



**WHEN YOU'RE SELLING BRIDAL, HAVE FUN AND LAUGH."**

married 30 years and it's an anniversary purchase, get them to talk about what it's like to be married 30 years.

Finally, compliment and congratulate them on one of the greatest days of their lives. You may do this every day, but it's a very special day for them.

**I just lost my third big diamond sale in a matter of months. Why?**

→ Without knowing the details of the sale, that's hard to judge. When you lose a big sale, it can be tempting to try to banish it from your mind. But a better strategy, says sales

trainer Dave Richardson, is to heave its offending carcass onto the cold slab and call a sales inquest. "You want to examine what mistakes were made, what you could have done differently, and how you could have reacted to certain comments and objections brought forth by the



buyer," says Richardson. Perhaps there was absolutely nothing you could have done to save the sale. But if you review it with advisers or other staff, you may well learn one of those lessons that only failure seems to teach.

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