

# SELL SWEET



You have 30 seconds to make the right impression, says **Shane Decker**.

**[ HAS ANYTHING LIKE this ever happened to you? ¶ You walk into a store and you're greeted by someone in the back doing busy work. He doesn't get up. ¶ You walk in and**

there's nobody there. A salesperson comes out from the back room when the door chime rings, but you're already halfway in before she appears.

▶ You walk in and see salespeople on the floor, but they say nothing to you ... even though they see you.

▶ There's no one on the floor, and you have to find someone to help you.

▶ Two salespeople see you, look at each other, then one walks away. You can tell the other is thinking, "Oh brother, now I have to help *this pest!*"

As retailers, we can learn best by looking back at our own experiences as a customer.

How many times have you walked in and been immediately turned off by a store's salespeople?

How many times have you turned and said, "Let's go"?

And perhaps the hardest question of all — how often have customers said that upon entering your store?

You never get another chance to make a first impression. The customer will decide within the first 30 seconds whether to give you their money. That's not long — just half a minute!

One strategy you should always use to be sure your customer's first impression is a strong one is this: Always have a salesperson standing in the "sweet spot." The sweet spot is located on the left side of your store looking out, about 15 feet from the door. Most people are right-handed, and look to the right first upon entering a room. So,

that's where you need someone to stand, ready to greet and smile at the customer.

Customers want you to be there when they pull your door open. When they see a friendly, smiling face, they make an assessment immediately: "I like this place!"

On the other hand, if they have to go and search out a salesperson, then they feel like it's a bother for us to wait on them. This is a huge sale killer — which is why it's so unfortunate that the sweet spot is the place most avoided by salespeople!

## BREAKOUT

### How To Make a Sweet Impression

#### DON'T

- ▶ Work the floor if you're in a bad mood.
- ▶ Make a customer search out a salesperson.
- ▶ Hang back and wait.

#### DO

- ▶ Make a customer's first 30 seconds count.
- ▶ Position a smiling face in the sweet spot — about 15 feet from the door.
- ▶ Step into the sweet spot when others are busy with customers.
- ▶ Keep repair envelopes in the sweet spot.
- ▶ Have your incredible diamonds near the sweet spot.

Why do they avoid it? Many salespeople like to hang back and wait, sizing up the customer before greeting them. But that's exactly the wrong strategy, as the customer has already sized you up. You've failed the test before you even knew you were taking it.

Never let the sweet spot be vacant, and always greet each customer immediately. Here are a few strategies to help you make the most of your store's sweet spot:

1. If a salesperson is with a customer, and the spot is no longer covered, another salesperson must step into the spot. You can take care of busy work while you stand there — just be sure to put it away in a drawer as soon as the customer walks in.

2. Keep repair envelopes there, along with any tools needed for your presentation. This way, you don't have to take customers to the back of the store to take in repairs, where they're likely to be at a Formica counter instead of a jewelry showcase. Take in the repair where they can look at jewelry, and you can use the opportunity to show it off to them while they wait.

3. Have incredible diamond jewelry close to the sweet spot so you can "wow" every customer.

4. If you're in a bad mood, stay off the sales floor and definitely don't be in the sweet spot! You have to be world-class friendly to stand there — snooty does not sell.

Being in the sweet spot is a simple thing, but it's incredibly important — and it's also an easy fix that costs you nothing. So keep your store's sweet spot covered with a smile!

— SHANE DECKER

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## ZEN JEWELER

### A SIMPLE MATTER OF CONTEXT

AS A STUNT, *The Washington Post* asked world-acclaimed violinist Joshua Bell to play his Stradivarius during rush-hour in a Metro subway station. Here's what happened:

He played for 45 minutes. Six people stopped to listen (out of nearly 1,100). He made \$32 and change. *The Post* article talks about context and framing and how we have no more time for beauty. The article has led me to ask a question.

When people enter your store, can they see and feel that you are a concert hall, acoustically perfect? Does everything (from the lighting to the length of time the concert goes on before you pause for intermission) work together to show off the musicians, the dancers, and the works of art you wish them to appreciate?

Taken out of context, Joshua Bell is just another street musician. But get the context right and he is something extraordinary. Look with a critical eye at every single facet of your store. Get the frames and the context right, and your works of art will be pre-sold.

— JEFF MCCANDLESS

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