

ON SALES

BUCK STOPS HERE



Shane Decker sorts out the chain of personal accountability.

ACCOUNTABILITY: IT'S COME to be a dirty word that no one wants to hear. People don't like to think about having to answer to anyone — or having to hold anyone to his promises. But maintaining accountability could turn your store's business around. And on a personal level, it makes the workplace and the job a lot more fun for everyone.

As a salesperson, you must be accountable to the following people, in this order:

1. THE CUSTOMER

Many customers don't buy based on who has the best product, but rather who offers the most incredible shopping experience. If your location is the totality of your experience, then you have an experience problem. If it's your advertising, you have a closing problem. And if it's your merchandise, you have a salesmanship problem. The salesperson is the one who has to deliver the experience — the person who has to exceed, not meet, expectations. You do that by possessing an extraordinary amount of product knowledge, by greeting them with a warm smile that lingers, by offering excellent refreshments, getting repairs back to them ahead of time, and the list goes on and on. Whatever it takes, your first responsibility is to "wow" your customer.

2. YOUR FELLOW SALESPeOPLE

If the one or two salespeople in your company who hit their goal each month would help everyone else, they'd still hit their goals and so would the rest of your team. As a strong salesperson and team player, you should be helping your teammates close sales, but let them put their name on the ticket. Lead by example. It's amazing how much we can accomplish if we don't care who gets the credit! We have too many "I" players in our industry — people who think, "If I can't close this sale, there's no way I'm helping anyone else close it!" The fact is, when we T.O. or team sell for the good of the customer, everyone starts making goal — and then the store makes goal. And when customers see awesome teamwork, they feel good about being in your store.

3. YOUR MANAGER

No one likes to be micromanaged. It's up to you to make sure that doesn't happen. You do it by being to work on time, getting the cases set up properly, cleaning the glass, contributing during sales

meetings. If your manager expects that everything will be handled right, everyone wins. It makes her job easier if you do your job so well that she can count on it, without having to look over your shoulder. Don't be known for stealing other people's sales. Don't be known as the one your manager can't trust. Do things right when she asks. Your manager will like her job a lot better, and so will you!

4. YOUR STORE OWNER

Your store owner has entrusted you with his or her integrity, customers and the very name on the front door. Essentially, the owner has trusted you with everything he has. He believes in your ability to serve each customer as if he were doing it himself — with the same integrity and care. Study, and make sure you have the same knowledge of products and salesmanship that he has. Be smart in every category. Be worth more than you're getting paid — that way, you always have job security. If you work this way, the raises will come.

5. YOURSELF

We know who we are — what we like, and what our weaknesses are. Raise your own personal bar! No one reading this column is awesome at everything. So, always work on self-improving. Never allow yourself to say, "I can't," or "that won't work" or "I don't want to." I've been in more than 3,000 stores and I've never once seen utopia — there will always be something you don't like about your job. Deal with the tough things first. And always live by this mantra: Never let "good enough" become the enemy of being your best.

The lesson of accountability is not about salesmanship, but it affects it in every way. When you're accountable in the way I've described, you'll not only close more sales, but you'll be happier, you'll have a better attitude, and you'll have a cooler workplace. And you'll be on a winning team — one that you helped to create. With rewards like that, who wouldn't want to be accountable?

SHANE DECKER has provided sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. For more information about products and upcoming seminars, visit www.ex-sell-ence.com. Shane can be reached by phone or fax at (317) 535-8676, or by e-mail at sdecker@ex-sell-ence.com.

Jan Howes  **HOWES**
Diamond Jewelers
LACROSSE, WI AND REDWING, MN

"It is very easy to sell this line because of its great design and workmanship. Clients appreciate that it is exclusive to only one store in an area. The company is very accommodating, provides marketing material and does stock balancing. We are happy to have something different to show our clients."

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