

SHANE
DECKER
ON SALES



Keep 'The Bogey' out of Your Game

Part 2 of 3 columns on better sales-floor negotiating.

On a golf course, you earn a bogey when you're one stroke over par — in other words, you're one stroke off the pace. One worse than average.

In jewelry sales, the customer I call "The Bogey" isn't just a little below average, he's way below average (average price, I mean). In other words, he's asking for a big discount. The Bogey technique is usually used by men, and it's always a bluff.

You'll know your client is a Bogey when he says, "I love your \$6,000 ring, but I only have \$3,000." A lot of sales associates fall for this and begin to discount the product.

To avoid Bogeys, your first order of business is to fully romance the



sale during your presentation. You need to romance four areas: beauty of the product, value-added statements, features-advantages-benefits, and the reason the client came in.

Romancing product beauty is self-explanatory, and even a novice

can do it. Value-added statements require more expertise. In a value-added statement, the sales associate uses her gemological knowledge and product knowledge in order to persuade the customer of an item's worth.

When romancing features-advantages-benefits, features are always facts, such as, "Diamonds are the world's hardest known substance." The advantage is always the advantage to the client, such as, "Because diamonds are the hardest known substance, they're scratch-resistant." The benefit is the natural result (i.e., "Because diamond is the hardest known substance and is scratch-resistant, you can wear it every day of your life and pass it down to the next generation").

And, of course, when you romance the reason the client came in, making it seem like a bigger deal than they even thought it was, the price becomes insignificant (see my January 2007 column, "Find the Why" on instoremag.com, for more details).

The better you romance these four areas, the fewer Bogeys and price objections you'll have.

Of course, no matter how well you romance, you may still see a Bogey or two. Instead of negotiating on price, you can answer, "\$3,000? That

would be a great down payment; let's put the rest on layaway (or financing)." Or you might reply, "That's a great payment for starters. Surely you have a Mastercard or Visa, and we'll just apply the balance."

Your other alternative is called option negotiation, which means changing the options on the item to fit the customer's budget. For example, you might ask: "Are you telling me that all you actually have is \$3,000?" His answer is "yes." You can then say, "Well, I can take out this one-carat diamond and put a half-carat of the same color, clarity, and shape into this mounting for you, and sell it to you for \$3,000." He's still getting a beautiful diamond ring, and you keep your integrity. If he comes back and says, "I don't want the half-carat, I want the 1-carat," you then say, "Well, that's \$6,000." Holding firm shows him that you're not willing to negotiate.

Your job as a sales associate is to make sure the client gets the most satisfaction with the least amount of concessions as possible. So remember: the Bogey is always a bluff. Don't fall for it!

Next month: The Krunch. **T S**

Shane Decker has provided sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. Contact him at (317) 535-8676 or at ex-sell-ence.com.

PASSIONS LIFE OUTSIDE THE STORE

Kate Peterson *Performance Concepts*



I was never much of a baker until the time came to plan my older son Kevin's first birthday party. That's when I decided I would make his cake myself, and in the process, I discovered a whole new "avenue of madness," as my kids call it. The boys are now 20 and 15, and with all those birthdays in between — as well as other special occasions and cakes for other relatives and friends — I'm guessing I've made well over 100 theme cakes since that first, weak rendition of Big Bird. Some of my favorites have been re-creations of the opening scene from *The Lion King* the Rugrats' playground, a Precious Moments doll (for my mom's 60th) and a massive stack of holiday presents for an after-school party. Each cake can take from four to 14 hours to make, and most often, the only place I can find that kind of time is overnight. Fortunately, I don't need much sleep!

The whole process — coming up with an idea, figuring out how to construct it, making it especially tasty and not quitting till it meets my standard for perfection — is not that different to a typical workday for me. Seeing the immediate, tangible result, however, is actually a form of therapy. It is an outlet for my creativity that keeps me laser-focused on one project and that produces (almost) instant gratification. **T S**

TWO CREATIONS FROM "AUNT CAKE," AS PETERSON'S YOUNGER NIECES AND NEPHEWS CALL HER.

