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INBOOKS

IS THIS BUSINESS BOOK FOR YOU?

EVEolution

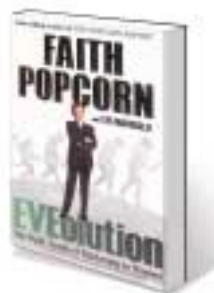
BY FAITH POPCORN

DETAILS: Hardcover, 368 pages, 2000 | AMAZON.COM PRICE: \$15.97

IN A NUTSHELL: Futurist Faith Popcorn, called the “Nostradamus of marketing” by one dribbling business magazine, argues that while women are the most important force in consumer business today, almost *no one* is marketing correctly to them.

THE KNOWLEDGE: Popcorn says that, in marketing to women, your goal is not to get them to buy your brand — it’s to get them to *join* it. If a woman merely buys your brand, she’s gone as soon as the register receipt prints out ... but if she joins it, she can support your business ... for generations. So far, so good ... especially for jewelry retailers. As tools to create that emotional bond between woman and the companies they buy from, Popcorn presents eight key principles that range the quality scale from “I’m hearing you, sister!” to “Say wh-a-a-t?” Among the former variety are the principles that women need to feel like part of a community (building social connections amongst your different customer groups is a powerful idea); that women appreciate subtle approaches rather than hard sell (think product placement and word-of-mouth marketing, rather than loud “Big Sale!” or “Show Your Love!” type advertising); and that women care about the details of your product — *all* of them (don’t you think many women, given the choice between any old gemstone or one that was guaranteed as conflict-free and mined in an environmentally-sensitive manner, would pick the latter — even if it cost more?) And among the less-great principles is the one that says women will only join brands that serve *all* their needs (wouldn’t that mean that *everybody* sells everything ... can’t women just mix-and-match?); or the one that women will only work with companies that go to them (sure, anyone would love the *occasional* living-room presentation, but all the time?) Another weakness is that some of her assertions, even in the short four years since this book was published, have been determined to be patent nonsense (e.g. *all* consumer purchases will be web-based in 10 years? Maybe Popcorn was thinking in dog years ...)

OUR TAKE: The author’s got more than her fair share of sweeping opinions ... you’ll buy some, and won’t buy others. But there are enough hot, fresh ideas here to make this book worth reading ... if you take your Popcorn with a pinch of salt.



ON SALES

RETURN TRIP



The sale is closed. So your job’s finished, right? Wrong, says **Shane Decker**, it’s just beginning.

WHAT YOU DO for a customer after they leave is more important than what you do when they are standing in front of you. Think about it. When you buy a car, or a new home, you get a phone call (and sometimes even a nice gift) from the salesperson, who just wants to make sure you’re happy with your purchase. It feels *great!* And yet in jewelry, we make the sale and think our job is over. Far from it.

The fact is, the long-term success of your store is based on customer loyalty. It’s not about getting a big spender to come in every now and then ... it’s about getting them (and every other customer) to return again and again. How can you make sure that happens?

Start by becoming a great “private investigator.” When you strike up a conversation with a new customer, be sure to ask questions that will allow you to follow up later. None of us like to be handed a sheet that asks for our names, addresses, special dates, etc ... so *don’t* do it! If you can’t remember a customer’s information long enough to write it down later, then carry a classy pad and pen (you don’t sell cheap things, so don’t carry a cheap pen) and write it down immediately.

Let’s say a customer walks in. You shake hands and get his name. Now you ask him, “What is your wife’s name?” You write both names down.

You ask, “Are you looking for something to celebrate a special occasion?”

He answers, “Yes, my anniversary is coming up.”

You ask, “Oh, when is it?”

He answers, “A week from today.” You write down that date. He adds, “Yeah, it’s our 20th anniversary.”

Again, you write it down. And as you do so, you say, “Good for you. Women love diamonds and jewelry on their anniversary!” (This is a great close.)

Now, after you’ve made the sale, you can write all this information under the customer’s last name in your client book, and cross-reference it by date. As

time goes by, you should always work three months ahead, so when you see a customer’s anniversary coming up, you can mail a card seven days in advance.

If he’s forgotten his anniversary, he’ll thank you. Even if he hasn’t, he’ll see it as an extremely thoughtful gesture. And finally, you’ll be reminding him to buy jewelry. You win all around!

Another reason to file cus-

Please see **RETURN** on Page 49



The trick is being a great private investigator — getting valuable customer information you can use to follow up ... without appearing to.

DO YOU OR DON'T YOU?

DO YOU BUY OFF THE STREET?

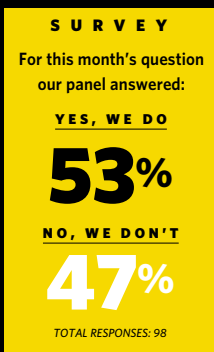
YES, WE DO

I only buy big diamonds, and scrap gold. Why? Because I can get both cheap! — PAMELA J. ROSSI, ROSSI JEWELERS

Rarely. I prefer to sell things for people on commission. We do take old gold in — we offer the customer more for a trade in or store credit than we will pay cash for the gold. I am not wild about buying off the street because we are in a small town and it can bite you in the butt. If you get a really good buy on something and mark it up to make a good profit, then the seller gets mad, etc. etc. — CLIFF YANKOVICH, CHIMERA DESIGN/LOWELL FINE JEWELERS

We buy estate jewelry off the street. One precaution ... we always take-in the item at least a day and are careful about identification. — H. LEE KROMBHOLZ, KROMBHOLZ JEWELERS

For us this is a win-win for us and our customers. Many of my best customers



love to "freshen" their jewelry wardrobe by trading. — PHIL SYKES, TREASURE ISLE, LTD.

Great source! Never quote a price, ask the customer what they want and say "yes" or "no". Otherwise they think you are trying to rip them off! — GARY HILL, LEO HAMEL & CO FINE JEWELRY

We do a large volume of "buys off the street". Tips: Selling jewelry is often emotional for people, so treat them with the utmost respect and don't ever "knock" what they have to

give yourself a better buying position. — JEFF VIERK, VIERK'S FINE JEWELRY

NO, WE DON'T

We strive to present an upscale image, and feel this would introduce doubt in customers' eyes. — EVE J. ALFILLE, EVE J. ALFILLE, LTD.

Too many consequences. Most people are just trying to make a quick buck and it's so hard to protect yourself from buying stolen goods and from questionable divorce related items. — CASEY GALLANT, STEVEN GALLANT JEWELERS

We are in a city of approximately 200,000 and there are at least 10 pawn shops and coin places that buy off of the street. Even though they are all supposed to be aboveboard, they still end up contributing to home break-ins and sales of stolen jewelry. We just never wanted to be associated with that. — SUE FREEMAN, FREEMAN JEWELERS

RETURN

Continued from Page 46

tomor purchases by date is that you'll be able to tell each customer's buying habits. Every time they purchase, you enter what they bought under the date. Soon, you'll have a set of "habit customers," or loyalists, and you'll know when they buy, what they buy, and how much they usually spend. If you find out they're collecting a certain type of jewelry, you now have a good reason to call them when you get new shipments in.

Finally, you will be able to really impress your customers by inviting them in for service. For example, you may call one of your female customers and say, "Six months ago, you bought a gorgeous diamond ring. We want you to bring it in so we can check, clean, and polish it for you — free of charge, of course!" She will think you're great, because you didn't call to sell her anything, you remembered her purchase, and you had her welfare in mind. She'll be far more likely to buy from you in the future, and as a bonus, you get her back in the store!

Always remember: customers don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. When you go the extra mile to remember not only their names, but their special dates as well... when you send cards and make phone calls with the sole purpose of building the relationship... these actions breed enormous loyalty among customers. You're letting them know you won't forget about them. And when it comes time to buy again, they won't forget about you.

Shane Decker has provided much sought-after sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. He can be reached at (866) 424-2472.

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