

## TRUE TALES

STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINES OF RETAIL



**A couple came** into the shop for an engagement ring. The man, speaking to anyone who was listening, commanded: "We need to find my girlfriend a big diamond engagement ring!" I directed

the young lady to our engagement rings and worked with her for an hour. She finally settled on a ring and marched it over to her boyfriend, who was talking on the phone near the entry. They spoke for a few minutes. Then the man came over to me. With a stern tone, he said: "This is not big enough! I want bigger!"

With this, I enrolled the help of another sales associate. We all worked for at least another hour to find a ring that met the boyfriend's approval. When we finally settled on the proper ring, he slaps his credit card on the counter ... "Sold!" Upon hearing this, the woman smiled from ear to ear. I scooped up the credit card and began to process the transaction. The other sales associate cleaned the ring and prepared the packaging. I then brought everything over to the couple, making sure to have the ring box open, just in case he wanted to seize the moment ... and slip the ring on her finger.

The man plucked the ring out of the box and strung it on his gold necklace. He said: "I don't need all that packaging. Keep it." Puzzled, I asked: "Aren't you going to put that beautiful ring on her finger?" "No," he replied. "I ain't going to give it to her until she starts acting right!" — BILL MATHES, GRAHAM JEWELERS, WAYZATA, MN

## LINE TIME

JUST THE RIGHT WORDS

"Hi, *this* is Julie Potter from Stoneworks, and *this* is a cold call. I bet you get millions of these. Bite your tongue — here's another one. I wanted to follow up on *that* cute little stone we sent you ..."

**When you telemarket, you've got 30 seconds to establish rapport. Humor is the fastest way to do that.**

## SHANE DECKER



➔ You are a sales **ARMY OF ONE**. Never forget that.

COMMENTARY / ON SALES

# Always Be Selling Yourself

**W**hen any customer comes into your store, you must sell three things: your product, your company and yourself. The hardest of these to sell is yourself, but it's absolutely necessary to cultivate repeat business and referrals.

Today's customers will test you. But they all want to believe you're the authority on jewelry, and they want to enjoy working with you. To make that happen, you need practice, patience and an understanding of who you are as a salesperson. You should know your sales profile (see my column in March 2003). It includes:

- **Are you serpentine, a missile, or a sneak?**
- **Are you impatient or patient?**
- **Are you a talker or a listener?**

Comprehending who you are and how you deal with people goes a long way to making you a better salesperson.

The best way to pass "the test" from any customer is to ask questions that get the customer talking about himself. Many will be caught off guard when you show that you're interested in who they are, not just what they want to buy.

Never, ever make the presentation about you. There will be places in the conversation to make integrity statements like "I'm a graduate gemologist," or "I've been selling jewelry for the last 10 years." Sprinkle them in unobtrusively, and you'll slowly build a strong case for yourself as the customer's salesperson of choice.

Another way you sell yourself during the presentation is to simply be glad you're there. Take pride in your store and in your product. Passion is defined as a love for something that is so strong and intense, others can feel it. When you sell with passion, your customers can tell, and they'll gravitate towards it. If selling jewelry is just a job, then you need to quit.

Product knowledge also establishes you as an expert. "Wing-it salesmanship" won't work with 21st century customers. You have to know your stuff.

Next, be a part of your customers' lives. To do that, you have to be proactive (they're not going to invite you in right away). Know what's going on with each customer, and send congratulatory cards for graduations, anniversaries, and birthdays, as well as holiday cards. Sending a card not only impresses on customers that you care



(especially if it's handwritten!), it also serves as a reminder that they should think of your store to commemorate the occasion.

Sell yourself outside of your store too. When you're at a restaurant and you receive great service, give the server your business card along with an invitation to come see you. When you're at the doctor's office, hand out your cards on the way out and encourage the staff to ask for you by name this Christmas. Be proud of where you work, and sell yourself even when you're not there.

Your pride should show in your appearance. Formal business attire is a must. Customers will often decide who will wait on them by who looks most professional. You can tell who that is by which staff customers approach the most.

Finally, one of the best ways to prove yourself is through over-the-top service. If a customer's repair wasn't done correctly, offer to bring it by their home so they won't have to make another trip into town. When you sacrifice yourself for a customer, you earn huge points. Just make certain you *always* do what you said you were going to.

Salespeople can't own customers, but a customer can own a salesperson. They'll ask for you by name when they walk in the door. To earn that, you have to earn integrity — and that comes one sale at a time. Once you've established a relationship with integrity, you've got a lifelong customer.

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

Extend your subscription today! Sure, **INSTORE** is free, but you have to ask for it to keep getting it. Go to [instoremag.com](http://instoremag.com) now! Or better yet, fill out that pesky card that keeps falling out of the magazine.