

O N S A L E S

# TECHNICAL FOUL



Smart salespeople know when to shut up, says **Shane Decker**.

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.** But as Spider-man says, “With great power comes great responsibility.” And that’s never more true than when you’re on a jewelry sales floor.

In our industry, there are four types of knowledge: GIA knowledge (the properties of precious gems and metals), product knowledge (brand benefits, the history and construction of individual pieces of jewelry, etc.), knowledge of store procedures, and knowledge of salesmanship. To be the best salesperson you can possibly be, you need to know everything you can about all four.

But that *doesn't* mean you need to share this knowledge with every customer.

If your customer is an “information junkie,” then they’ll want more technical selling. If not, then it can be a major sales killer. The trick is to know when — and when not — to be technical. It’s what I call being “information smart” — or knowing how much information to give your customer. Here are some things to consider:

► **THE GENDER RULE:** Generally speaking, women purchase jewelry based on sentiment, style, and fashion. Men buy peace of mind and freedom from risk. Therefore, your technical selling to male customers should usually focus on company benefits, as well as the stability and longevity of your product. In contrast, many women will be more interested in technical information that heightens an item’s sense of style and sentiment.

► **THE GENERATION RULE:** Customers over the age of 40 won’t generally need as much technical information before buying. However, those in their twenties and thirties are part of the “Information Generation,” and will want (and expect) more.

► **THE HOLIDAYS RULE:** During the December selling season, you’ll see fewer “technical” customers in your store. People come in to buy and buy quickly. The holidays are a time for romance — it’s a festive season, and love is in the air. So, don’t get caught up in a two-hour 4 C’s presentation while other customers are waiting. That’s a big-time sales killer for those waiting. They’ll want to beat you over the head with a bag of money! I’m not saying to



brush people off or be rude — just romance more and “tech” less.

While these rules are helpful, the #1 way to find out how much technical information to give a customer is to simply ask them how much they want. Do it like this:

- “Do you know about the 4 C’s of a diamond? Would you like to know more?”
- “Would you like to see this under magnification?”
- “This diamond comes with a lab report. Would you like to know more about it?”
- “Have you researched this item on the Internet?”

Your customer’s answers will tell you all you need to know. If they reply with interest, you’re off and running. If not, move on with the rest of your presentation — sans technical info.

Other things to look for:

- **Eyes:** If they make eye contact, you’re on the right track. If not, it may be time to change tactics.
- **Body Language:** Are they leaning in? Or are they moving backwards with their hands in their pockets?

With these hints, you should have a good idea how interested your customer is in technical information. But regardless of their interest level, you should always try to improve your knowledge base. Why? Because the more you know, the more confident you will be. And that shows in your presentation.

Ironically, the more knowledge you have, the less you will need it. Customers will be sold on your confidence. But if you can’t give them information and they want it, they’ll think you’re dumb. On the other hand, if you can give it and they don’t want it (but you keep trying to force it down their throats), they’ll think you’re not listening. Either one can be a sales killer.

Technical knowledge is important ... but you have to know when to use it, why, and how much. No more, no less.

**SHANE DECKER** has provided sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. He can be reached at (866) 424-2472. Or learn more about the *Shane Decker Sales Academy* online at [WWW.EX-SELL-ENCE.COM](http://WWW.EX-SELL-ENCE.COM).

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