

TIM TALKS



Smarter Sales and Service Strategies

A universal sales approach

The key to a shop's selling success is consistency among its sellers.

Do you let designers fill orders however they want? Not unless you want two customers who order a "£50 spring vase arrangement" to get something completely different. Recipes give designers guidelines that ensure consistency.

But what about your salespeople? They need guidelines too. The most successful shops have a set, written policy for dealing with sales and returns.

Before I train a shop, I have employees take a "sales test" to gauge how they operate individually and as a group.

Here are some of the questions I ask:

- How do you handle the customer who wants to spend £40 for "something showy"?
- What do you tell the customer who says, "It better be nice because I'm going to see it!"?
- What's the quickest way to price a wire order for a gourmet basket?

Give your staff a sales test several times a year. Keep it short — three to six questions — and give them a few days to complete it. Review the answers together and set some policies. You'll find your staff and customers appreciate having sales handled a "standard" way.

This column shows just a taste of Tim's extensive range of tips and techniques for better business. Tim is *F&WB's* recommended in-store trainer and as florists around the UK and Ireland are finding out, a day with Tim in the shop (cost £595) can easily be recouped from increased sales and staff morale.

For details of Tim and his company *Floral Strategies*, log on to www.floralstrategies.com or to book him for your shop ring *F&WB* on 020 8939 6495.

If you've got a customer service challenge you'd like Tim to tackle in an upcoming column drop us an e-mail at austin@thewordhouse.co.uk

Design Line

For this month's Design Line, we're back on the theme of display, or more specifically, how the addition of accessories can transform the overall look.

In the first design shown here, two simple rose designs have been displayed on a bed of red glitter, which instantly lifts the designs, giving them a real star quality. In the other, the short glass vases have been placed on simple ceramic saucers, giving them an opulent, upmarket feel. Whether you sell the saucers with the design or not, customers will love them.

The moral of the story is, when buying sundries, have a look around and see what there is for you to use in your displays. Treat buying items as an investment too — these red saucers are great for many Valentine's and Christmas periods for years to come.



British Florist Association... it means business

The British Florist Association (BFA) represents the interests of florists throughout the UK and is the only trade association recognised at government level.

As a member of the BFA, you have access to the HelpLine, where whatever the question, a team of advisors and members will aim to give an instant answer... be it a question of salary structures or legal issues.

Then there's the events. From hands-on workshops to European Floristry Schools, via networking events and the Annual Conference, as a member you get priority access to some of the country's most brilliant events where help, advice and inspiration is never far away.

Throw into the mix the contract of employment pack, the Industry Action Group and the publications and you'll see that the BFA really does mean business.

To find out more about how the BFA can benefit you and to become a member (for only £60 + VAT) call 0870 240 3208.

