



TIM

TALKS

Smarter Sales and Service Strategies

Perfect your phone pitches

Why is the average sale on your website almost always higher than a phone sale? Because salespeople in almost every shop I train tend to make the same mistakes: selling from their own pockets, not using their voice as a tool and not listening to customers. If you can get your staff to live and work by these three points, your average phone order will increase:

1. When employees take a card message containing the phrase "Happy Anniversary" (usually an occasion worthy of lavish design), they should automatically suggest a large arrangement. Preface the suggestion with, "For your anniversary, I'd recommend or I'd suggest ..." to automatically sell more large-size arrangements.

2. When I train employees on how to make a sale, they often say, "You make it sound so easy!" That's because I've used and refined the process for more than a decade. Practice makes perfect. The real secret behind my sales strategy is that I sound confident. I use my voice as a tool. I place a full stop at the end of a price instead of a question mark. For example, I say, "We'll create that large design for £50" not, "We'll do that for £50 — is that

OK?" Hang reminder signs in the work area: "Our prices end in full stops, not question marks!"

3. Few salespeople have good listening skills. When I make test calls to shops, I pretend I'm calling from New York and that my sister is turning 30 next week and she's at her wit's end. I mention that I have a business trip in China and can't celebrate with her. I go on to ask if the salesperson has room to write 12 names on the card message. Even after this buildup, sadly, the standard response is "Our arrangements start at..." Did he or she not hear what I said? A dozen people are chipping in on this gift; it's her 30th birthday — we're talking big occasion, big gift.

Try this activity with your employees to get your message across: Grab a week's worth of orders and pull out those with "big ticket" card messages but small price-point items. White out the prices and hand copies of those orders to employees. Ask them to suggest an item and price based solely on the card message. Then show them the actual prices and discuss the importance of reading and reacting to the card message before talking product and prices.

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



Child's Play

This month's Design Line is not so much about individual floral arrangements as it is about the use of colour.

When designing arrangements for in-shop display, make sure they fit in with your chosen colour scheme, so that everything is in harmony, or go barmy and completely mix up primary colours for a zany, multicoloured look. Often your choice will depend on the preferences of your customers, so maybe it's an idea to create different areas within your shop with different coloured displays – that way you keep everybody happy! Don't overdo it with colour though as things will get messy.

Either way, choosing your colours carefully should always be a top priority for florists. It is after all one of the principles of design, so you should be aware of how to use them. Various books and websites cover colour theory, so log on and have a look!

American website www.color-wheel-pro.com is one site that's worth a look, especially as it links in to software dedicated to colour theory

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.

