

Counter Intuitive: Smart sales and service tactics

By Tim Huckabee

...this fee, that fee
and another fee.
Fee, fee, fee
fee fee fee"



Yes, but it won't look like our work...
We'll try to find someone in that area..."

The PSYCHOLOGY:

The customer wants reassurance that you can help with a special order — he doesn't want to hear about technical issues or a litany of fees. He decided to call his local florist for this order and should feel he made the correct choice!

The SMARTER RESPONSE:

Step One — Build Confidence

Tell your customer, truthfully, "We have preferred/affili-

The SCENARIO:

A customer asks, "I want to send some flowers out of town — can you do that?" Many sales people change their demeanor when they hear mention of sending a wire order. I hear responses and comments such as: "Yes, but there is a \$XX service fee... Yes, but we have a minimum of \$XX..."

ate/associate florists all over the country. I can work with them to take great care of your order."

Step Two — Make a Simple Sale

Generalities are the best, safest way to describe the design to your customer and the filling florist. "I will ask them to create a beautiful vase arrangement in bright spring colors..." or "Our florist will choose a beautiful green (or flowering plant) for you..."

Step Three — Price it Right

Don't volunteer a minimum price unless a customer asks for it. I suggest using a simple pricing guide to cover arrangements and plants: SMALL (desk size) \$35 to \$50, MEDIUM (coffee-table size) \$50 to \$65, LARGE dining-room-table size) \$65 to \$80. Use whatever pricing structure fits your market; these are based on what I've seen in flowers shops of all sizes across the United States and Canada.)

Follow these steps and you'll make easier, larger wire order sales and increase customer satisfaction.

Tim Huckabee is president of Floral Strategies, a one-on-one sales and customer service training company exclusively for florists. Got a customer-service challenge? Tell Tim about it and he'll tackle it in an upcoming column. E-mail tim@floralstrategies.com or call (800) 983-6184.

Just Browsing Online Sources for the Efficient Business Owner

A Site to Behold: www.socialsecurity.gov

Wondering if your retirement plan is solid or how to even begin planning for retirement? The Social Security Administration's Web site can help. Click on the "plan your retirement" link to figure out your retirement age, how to calculate your benefits, and how to decide when to retire. If you've just gone through a major lifestyle change, find the "get help with your situation" section and click for information about marriage, divorce, or a death or birth in the family.

Don't Miss: The information for employers in the bottom right corner. Find information and instructions for W-2 forms. Check out the "resources" list in the left column — you can learn more about being a woman business owner or how being a grower affects your Social Security.

A Site to Behold: www.nationalgardenmonth.org

Get your customers' gardening gears going with this site, where you'll find details about national garden month, April, and information about how to get involved. Ever thought of organizing a town beautification day? Click on the "ways to celebrate" link under "gardeners." Read about the health benefits of gardening and share the good news with customers. Click on "the power of gardening" link for more information to share.

Don't Miss: The feature article on container gardening, a trend your customers will want to know about. The article shows what shrubs are best for big pots and what color combinations work best.