

## MYSTERY CALLING A WIRE SERVICE

> For August I decided to call the consumer division of one of the wire services to hear how they might handle me versus my treatment from a traditional retail flower shop. I know this is a slight deviation from calling brick and mortar stores, but it's important for you to learn how customers are being treated when they buy flowers anywhere and to learn from that experience.

Honestly, I was not sure what to expect but proceeded as always, with an open mind. For this call, I decided to be in dire need of help and guidance because I just heard some bad news and had no idea of what I needed or should spend. The rep both surprised and disappointed me; the call really was a mixed bag. But do play the recording to hear exactly how these national companies serve local customers.

### The Opportunity: A Family Breaks Apart

I explained that I just learned that my parents were getting divorced after 40 years and I wanted to cheer up my mom with flowers. In my typical fashion, I quickly threw out that I had no clue as to what I wanted and had not been on the website. (I joked that I did look but did not find a "soon to be divorced" section.)

### Thumbs Up: Engaged, Interested Service

This rep engaged and connected with me, and it was a pleasant surprise. Upon hearing that I was about to be from a broken home, she chimed in and expressed regret. Additionally, she made an attempt to personalize the sale by asking for my mom's favorite color. Yes, that is a standard question; however, listen to her funny comment when I paused to try to remember the color. In short, she made an impression because she sounded engaged and

tuned in to my needs. But that's not enough to make a good sale.

### Thumbs Down: Undersold and Underwhelmed

Sadly, even with our great rapport, the rep horribly undersold me. When I stated my desperate need for guidance, she chose a \$55 item from their website and started rambling off a list of flowers (information, of course, that is wasted on most customers who know very little about flowers). When I pushed her about the possibility of spending more, she switched gears and recommended an open order, allowing the filling florist more creative license, but she only went up to \$60! Take a close listen to how she talked about the fees (and make sure your team members don't do that). Finally, this sale screamed for a finishing touch, perhaps candy. But none was offered. And that meant a smaller sale.



### The Recording

You're only half-done learning from this column. Next step, gather your staff 'round a store computer, read this column to them and then play the recording of this call by visiting [safnow.org/timscalling](http://safnow.org/timscalling). Turn it into a group discussion: Ask your team for feedback on what they heard and have them talk about how they can make better sales moving forward.

**"If we fear rejection and sell from our own pockets, sales will never rise."**



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### The Takeaway: Offer More

More than half a year into this column, I hope that you are learning from the one trend present in nearly every shop I call (and even the wire service call center): we determine what customers spend and if we fear rejection and sell from our own pockets, sales will never rise. But I have the answer: Use one of the most powerful elements of my training process and simply tell customers, "This is what I recommend for that occasion..." and when you offer a bigger price, they will buy it. Really. 🐦

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

How does your staff REALLY treat customers? Call (800) 983-6184 to volunteer your shop for a free Tim's Calling undercover shopping call, anonymity guaranteed. (Retail value: \$50.)