



LISTEN IN as Huckabee makes calls for Valentine's Day orders to unsuspecting florists, Jan. 14. Not available? Sign up anyway! You can get the DVD and train your staff all month long! www.safnow.org/webinars.

The Call

- SHOP:** A florist in San Diego
- SCENARIO:** A customer shopping for a special holiday gift
- EMPLOYEE:** ABC Flower Shop, this is Wendy speaking, how can I help you?
- TIM:** Hi Wendy. I need to order a holiday gift for a big client but have no ideas. I need help!
- EMPLOYEE:** Sure, we can help you out. Have you ordered from us before?
- TIM:** No, I am calling from New York, my client is in your area.
- EMPLOYEE:** Got it. I'll need to take some information from you to start the order. (Takes details.)
- TIM:** OK, so what are my options?
- EMPLOYEE:** Well, you called the right place! We have poinsettias, flower arrangements, gourmet baskets. What were you thinking about spending?
- TIM:** I really don't have a budget but am more concerned about choosing the right gift. This client gives us tons of business every year.
- EMPLOYEE:** I like the poinsettias — we have some really cool colors this year. How about a real big one for their office?
- TIM:** I don't want to offend anyone with a real 'Christmassy' plant so can we talk about other options?
- EMPLOYEE:** Sure, we offer some dazzling holiday arrangements with ornaments starting at \$90.
- Wendy and I had to go for a few more rounds until landing on a "giant" *non-denominational* green plant in a decorative container for the office at \$125.

The Analysis

- 👍 Wendy was truly bubbly and engaging on the phone. She used appealing terms, such as "dazzling," and sounded genuinely excited about the shop's poinsettia selection and other products.
- 👎 Wendy didn't pick up on the fact that I was more concerned about the look on the recipient's face than the charge on my credit card. She also didn't realize that an arrangement with ornaments in it still says "Christmas." Be careful not to make that same mistake!

The Fix

Enjoy the holiday season and the fact that many customers are more light-hearted, relaxed and will spend more, if you let them. They want to hear about what's new and different in your shop. They're often less picky about delivery dates, as long as their gift arrives by the holiday. Make sure you sparkle on the phone (versus sounding like you're wearing cold, wet socks).

Get in the spirit.

Know what the shop is offering for the holidays both in the store and on the website before you start taking orders. Get excited about describing them to customers. I liked Wendy's enthusiasm in telling me about their poinsettias in "really cool colors." How are you going to add some sizzle to your descriptions?

Don't act like Scrooge.

Many customers order only at the holidays, so make sure you give them the chance to spend big. I have never heard a "Bah Humbug" after describing a "beautiful large arrangement filled with red and white garden flowers and accented with seasonal greens and pine cones, perfect for a dining room table," — despite the fact that it's priced from \$100 to \$125.

Remember, Santa is always watching...

The naughty salesperson does not listen to customers' clues and desires to send big. The good salesperson leverages the card message for bigger bucks: "A great way to thank an important client is with one our *premium* gift baskets filled with an assortment of wonderful fresh fruit, cheese and crackers, cookies, sweets and more. A large basket, perfect for a big office, is priced from \$125 to \$200."

Bottom line: Spread the holiday joy by giving the best customer service sales advice to your customers and everyone wins! 🌸

Tim Huckabee, an international flower shop sales and customer service trainer, is founder and president of Floral Strategies LLC and the American Institute of Floral Sales Experts (AIFSE), a retail floral sales certification program. If you would like Tim to test-call your shop for this column, contact him at (800) 983-6184 or tim@floralstrategies.com

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