

**LISTEN IN** as Huckabee makes **birthday and anniversary calls** on unsuspecting florists, **March 4 at 1 p.m. EST.** Not available? Sign up anyway: You can access the webinar and train your staff all month long! [www.safnow.org/webinars](http://www.safnow.org/webinars).



## The Call

**SHOP:** A florist in Seattle  
**SCENARIO:** A customer wants to remain anonymous on his Valentine's Day order

**EMPLOYEE:** Thanks for calling 123Flowers. My name is Maribel, how can I help you?

**TIM:** Hi Maribel. I would like to send roses to a special lady.

**EMPLOYEE:** OK. Do you want red, pink, yellow or white? And are you interested in one dozen or two?

**TIM:** I want to make a splash so let's go for two dozen red.

*After taking the recipient information and delivery date:*

**EMPLOYEE:** And what would you like to say to Stephanie on the card message?

**TIM:** Just sign it, "Your Secret Admirer."

**EMPLOYEE:** No name?

**TIM:** Nope. I don't want her to know it's from me, yet.

**EMPLOYEE:** Our company policy is that we either need to have a name on the card message; if not, we do reveal the sender's name if the recipient calls and asks.

**TIM:** No, that doesn't work for me. I'm paying good money for these roses, so please just fill out the card as I asked and make sure no one reveals my name.

**EMPLOYEE:** Sir, as I just explained, I can't do that, it's against our store policy.

**TIM:** Fine. Then I will find a florist who understands that the customer is always right! Thank you for your time.

## The Analysis

👍 Maribel maintained a professional demeanor even as she explained and reinforced company policy to a disgruntled customer. Bonus points for offering the two-dozen roses option.

👎 Maribel lost the sale *and* ticked me off in the process. Maybe she could have saved either the sale or, if not that, the prospect of getting future (non-anonymous) business from me had she handled the situation with a bit more finesse.

## The Fix

I have seen many different ways of handling an anonymous order, ranging from no policy at all to strict enforcement of one (like at Maribel's store), to not releasing sender information until the police call the store. Which is best? That depends on what you think is best for your store, staff and community.

### Adopt a Policy — and Diplomacy

Don't require staff to make a judgment call on the character of the customer — innocent and playful, or spooky and stalker-ish? — every time this situation arises. Have a policy, and make sure it is simple, clear, concise and easily understood by staff and customers alike.

While I give Maribel kudos for following the rules, she could have handled the situation better to possibly save the sale, or at least keep the customer for future business. A few tips:

- **Play up what you *can* do, not what you *can't*.** If a customer requests anonymity, try: "Of course, we can leave your name off the card. But our policy is to divulge the sender's name if the recipient calls to ask."
- **Reinforce your interest in their business.** If he's not amenable to your policy, you'll have to diplomatically refuse the sale. Try, "Your business is important to us, Mr. Huckabee. Our policy is designed to protect customers, as I'm sure you can understand. Alternatively, I can have the flowers ready for you to pick up and/or you can have them delivered through another service."

### Bottom line

Operate like a big business – have rules and stick to them! Whether your policy is to allow anonymous orders with no restrictions or to divulge the sender's name if requested by the recipient, review the policy with your staff before Valentine's Day. 🌸

**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](mailto:tim@floralstrategies.com)

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