

## BIGGER IS BETTER

> This month I wanted to give you a different angle on these calls by reaching out to a shop in Texas that has gone through my complete training process to see if they are abiding by what I taught them, or if some of the nasty old habits I so often discover in these calls have returned.

The employee was not expecting my call, so I caught her doing what she normally does. I also used a fake name and blocked the caller ID so she did not put on her "game face." Instead, as you will hear, she handled me smoothly and naturally. Overall, I was very pleased with the way I was treated. But there's always room for improvement.

### The Opportunity: An Employer Gives Thanks

I told the caller I was from out of town, a new customer, and on a mission to thank an employee for landing a big contract. I started to plant the seeds of my intention with casual comments, as customers regularly do, and she did pay attention. As always, I did not mention a dollar amount or color scheme, with the hopes that the rep would offer the appropriate size and budget for my needs as well as selling me an open order based on what they had in stock (instead of asking the problematic question, "What's her favorite flower?").

### Thumbs Up: Efficient, Attentive and Thorough Service

Maybe it's the New Yorker in me, but I like friendly, efficient and attentive service without lots of unnecessary questions or chitchat. And you'll hear the professional manner in which she maintained control of the call, and me!

Like every major floral POS, their system had her take the card message before talking about the flowers, and she nailed this part of the call by both commenting on the card and selling according to what she had learned — not just the occasion but the scope of the occasion and who the flowers had to represent.

### TIM'S CALLING...LIVE

Want to dig deeper into Huckabee's advice — and get direct feedback on your own questions? Tune in for "Tim's Calling...Live" on July 24 at 2 p.m., a 30-minute webinar available free to SAF members on [safnow.org/webinars](http://safnow.org/webinars). The session includes 10 minutes of Q&A time.

When you listen to the recording of the call, notice that she seamlessly offered a finishing touch (my training term for any add-on) to personalize the gift and to boost the value of the sale. Finally, I was pleased that upon offering me a price range, she did not automatically assume the higher point, offer to meet in the middle or — worse — ask me how much I wanted to spend.

### Thumbs Down: Think Even Bigger

Collectively, we're often guilty of two mistakes: not thinking outside the box when an extraordinary situation presents itself and selling at the prices we would spend personally. While I do give her kudos for starting me where she did, I think a better response would have been, "Wow, that's amazing. Let's send her something spectacular to celebrate her achievement" and go on to offer me a design starting at \$250 or more. Yes, \$250, since the worst thing that a customer can say is "no." Furthermore, I constantly stress that a big budget does not have to translate into a big design. For example, "Consider sending her a gorgeous arrangement of our premium flowers in vibrant summer colors but designed low and compact for her to enjoy on her desk or in her office. That would be priced from \$250 to \$300."

### The Takeaway: Consistent, Ongoing Training Pays Off

To keep your team sounding good, serving better and selling high, you have to focus on continuing education, training and inspiration — a point I also make this month on p. 2 in a Viewpoint column. I get that you're busy, pulled in many directions and feel like you're walking into an organized storm every morning. However, part of my motivation for writing this column and sharing the recorded calls is to provide you, the shop owner or manager, with a toolkit to focus on increasing and expanding your team's sales skills — skills that are just as vital as your designer's creative abilities! To keep sales moving upward as we head into summer, make sales and customer service a hot topic of conversation in your store. You'll love the results. I promise. 🌸



### 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 my call to this shop 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 like an employer's thank-you gift to a high-performing employee moving forward.



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