



No. 3

This is the third in a 10-part series aimed at empowering Floral Management readers to build a foundation month by month, sale by sale, for higher sales, more confident employees and happier customers.



## YOUR VOICE IS YOUR BEST TOOL

> Are you caught up? This is the third installment of a very different type of column from me. I am giving you a month-by-month game plan to dramatically improve the sales culture in your store, empowering your staff to offer higher price points more comfortably and easily every day. In January I covered the importance of holding regular meetings with staff and gave some simple guidelines on conducting meetings in your shop. Last month, I talked about how critical it is to treat walk-in customers better — no more of the old-fashioned, ineffective, “How can I help you?”

This month, I am tackling how to make a better phone sale following the principles I teach in shops every week. I want you to practice these techniques to demonstrate to your staff how important it is to truly engage the customer on the phone, not just take their orders.

### Be the Expert

**What’s Happening:** Do you realize that when customers call the shop they are seeking the help of an expert and are predisposed to follow your lead? It’s true: Customers will spend more if you simply allow them to do so.

The floral industry tends to make two critical mistakes while making phone sales: We are afraid to offer higher prices for fear of chasing customers away, and we ask far too many questions.

**What Should Happen:** Customers often pick up the phone and call you without a specific budget or design in mind. Leverage that to your advantage!

Regardless of the technology you’re using (or, heaven forbid, still taking orders on paper) there is an intelligent, conversational pattern that you must follow when making a phone sale: delivery information, then the card message and then the product (which should be your professional suggestion based on the card). You must sell to the card message because it instantly tells you the occasion, the relationship between the sender and the recipient, and how many people this gift represents.

For example: “To celebrate such an important birthday, coming from all her children and grandchildren, I suggest sending one of our large vase arrangements, perfect for the dining room table and priced from \$X to \$Y.” Don’t be afraid to offer that higher price point. The worst that can happen is the customer says no. Even if that happens, you won’t lose the sale.

Start to monitor how many unnecessary questions you’re asking customers. These questions lengthen the call and, ironically, erode their confidence in you. For example, if you think a customer’s design would benefit from a few red roses, offer that in the form of that professional advice they so desperately want. Say “I recommend adding a few red roses for a splash of color. They’re just \$Y each,” rather than “Would you like to add some red roses to the arrangement?” In general, customers should not be asking you repeatedly, “What do you recommend?” or “What do you suggest?” Ask them fewer questions and offer more of your professional advice!

**Still Skeptical?** My final nugget of advice is to constantly monitor the pitch of your voice and how you are delivering your advice to customers. I make mystery shopper calls and often hear even seasoned staff tiptoeing around prices, raising their voice by four octaves. That does not instill customer confidence! Here’s the trick I use: Tell a customer a price (even when it’s more than you would spend!) in the same pace and tone as you would say your name. In other words, your name is a fact, so you say it very matter-of-factly. You need to do the same with prices. And customers will spend more! 📞

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### COMING NEXT ISSUE:

Your action plan for the spring holidays.



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