

THE NEW ADDITION

> When I ask people I train what they like most about selling flowers, I often hear comments like, "They make people happy" and "We get to connect with customers about something happening in their life." I agree on both counts. Behind every ringing phone is a customer who wants to express their feelings with flowers, and they need our help to make the best choice. Is your staff really *tuned in* to customers' needs?

The Opportunity: Welcoming a Baby

I called this shop acting like a proud uncle-to-be, excited about this good news from my sister and ready to spend! I think we forget that most customers are doing this, reacting to good news and looking to use flowers to celebrate or express their feelings. Though I wish there were a magical algorithm to tell us what to offer based on what a customer says, I think my training gets florists pretty close, emphasizing that a big life event like an announcement of a pregnancy justifies starting at a higher price point.



tions but thankfully that was not the case here, and she volunteered an appropriate, gender neutral pastel color scheme. Guiding the call by making appropriate suggestions is a very professional way to take a flower order. Well done! She rounded out the sale by offering candy in a playful way, alluding to it being a good way to deal with any pregnancy cravings. Overall, it was a fun conversation.

Thumbs Down: Don't Be TOO Conservative

When you listen to the recording of this call, ask yourself if she sold from her own pocket or let me spend from mine. As always, I did not mention money and let the clerk take over and offer what was best for my needs. Interestingly, she volunteered that their designs started at \$50. Stop and think about the math for a minute: If the smallest design starts at \$50, shouldn't you at least double or even triple that figure for an event that you have just referred to as "exciting" at least twice? When I pushed her, the budget moved to \$80. Only a \$30 increase. Frustrating. Furthermore, when I tried to ask a simple question, "How big will that be?" the clerk really struggled to express size. Ask yourself what your staff does. For the record, a "nice size" is a non sequitur. What does nice have to do with size? How big is a "bad size"?

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The Takeaway: Focus on Service, Not Sales

Customers trust us to give them the best advice. That said, remember that they're paying for the order, not you, and they'll tell you if they think what you suggested is too much for their budget. Think about it this way: When was the last time a customer called to complain that the flowers they ordered were too big and too beautiful? It never happens. Instead, they call and say, "I wish I was told that I needed to spend more money to get a bigger design." Ouch! 🌸



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.

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 "expecting a baby" sales moving forward.



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Thumbs Up: Etiquette Counts

Maybe I am just getting old, but I really enjoyed the way this clerk referred to me as "sir" throughout the call — a nice little touch any shop can adopt. The woman who waited on me was clearly happy for me, mentioning more than once how exciting it was that my sister was expecting her first baby. I often chide salespeople for asking too many ques-