

SIMPLE WAYS TO TRAIN YOUR SALESPEOPLE IN JUST A FEW MINUTES A DAY

Bob Popyk

Sales training is not an easy subject for music retailers. First of all, who has the time? Secondly, what if you train them, then they leave? Thirdly, what if you don't train them and they stay? Well, here's my take on it: If you don't spend at least a little time training your people to sell, you're going to see money walking out the door.

I think untrained sales staff is like having vending machines on your floor. Either way you won't sell very much. Sharing some sales-smarts with your staff **EVEN JUST A FEW MINUTES A COUPLE OF TIMES A WEEK** can add tremendously to your bottom line.

You don't need to do it spending hours at a time.

You don't need to have volumes of material with charts and graphs. You can easily do it before you open with everyone around, in about 7-10 minutes each day.

Think about it: If you spent 7 minutes a day on just one subject with your sales staff, that's over an hour a week on 6 different subjects. That's not one long tedious session on how to implement various ways to crank more biz; that's a few short bite-size sessions that could add more sales that very day.

It's also something you could do starting right now.

First of all, here are a couple of things you might want to consider:

- Have a specific area where you talk to your staff.
- Make sure they know that these discussions are not to be taken lightly. Save the jokes and banter for another time.

- You want to be sitting down, even if it's just for a few minutes. It's important. It's not casual conversation. It's business.
- Have them take notes. It doesn't have to be sophisticated. Things written down are remembered.

Here are a few subjects you could cover, and some ideas you can give your sales staff to use as soon as your door opens:

GREET EVERYONE WHO COMES IN

This is obvious, but you would not believe how many music stores have sales people that let customers roam around without being approached, greeted, or talked to in any way. They are not an intrusion on their day. Say hello. Make them feel welcome.

BE CONVERSIVE

Here's the way it works: You talk, they talk, you talk again. It's called "conversation". Find out what type of music they like, find out what they play, and find out what instruments are currently in their home. Find out who else plays in their family. The ideas are endless. Getting them to talk gets them to like you. If they feel you're their friend, they're more apt to buy

HANDLE OBJECTIONS

I don't care what the objection is, you can simply ask "Why?", "Why's that?" or if that's too tough, just say "Oh?" and let the customer talk some more. You will be amazed what comes out of their mouth. Many times they will talk themselves right into buying the instrument.

WHO ELSE PLAYS?

Let's find out who else plays in the family and suggest something for them. Maybe they would come (or be brought) into the store. It's all a part of being the customer's friend.

FIND CUSTOMERS ON THEIR OWN

Have a short meeting on how to find customers without waiting for someone to walk through the door. Call a few customers on the phone each day. Write a couple of thank you notes. Send out a few postcards. The ideas are endless. Share them with your staff.

INCOMING CALLS...GREATEST SOURCE OF NEW BIZ

Do you always ask, “who’s calling” when handling incoming calls? Do your salespeople? Keep a log next to your phone on every incoming call. Get a name, check caller ID to get a call-back number, and see if you can get an e-mail address before you’re done. Above all TRY TO GET THE CUSTOMER IN YOUR STORE. Get them to come in, and it will be easy after that.

SELLING UP - AND ADD ONS

Don’t take for granted that the customer who comes in for a specific instrument wouldn’t like something better. Suggest the next model up or two, and then try for add-ons after the sale is made. McDonald’s does it (“You want fries with that?”). The Post Office does it (“Are you all set for stamps?”). You should do a little suggestive selling too.

SELL DOWN

Maybe that instrument is out of your customer’s price range, but showing a couple of steps below could show them that their dream instrument is a bargain in the long run. The whole thing here is to become the customer’s friend. Help them decide.

DEMOING – FINDING OUT CUSTOMER’S MUSICAL TASTES

Do you ever ask what type of music your customer likes to play, or listen to? Do you demo with your own top-10 repertoire of hits, thinking that since you like it,

your customer better like it too? Find out if they are into golden oldies, classic rock, Christian rock, country, jazz...the list goes on. Then demo according to their tastes, not yours.

ADULT MARKET

Let's go out after the senior citizens who have plenty of free time and plenty of cash to spend on their music hobby. Then let's find out who their friends are and try to get them in the store. Some might not relate well to your over-pierced and tatted-up staff, but try working around it and think of ways to reach that market and at least get them in the store. There's gold in the grey market

USE BUSINESS CARDS

Everyone should have his or her own business cards. Tell your staff how to use them, get them placed, put one in every bag, give them to their friends, neighbors, acquaintances and people they meet on the street who might be interested in a musical instrument. Come up with funny titles if you cater to a hipper market. Don't just give your staff the cards. Tell them how to get them out there.

REFERRAL SELLING

Who else do you know? Ask them if they would tell their friends about your store and maybe suggest they come in...to see that sales person personally. One happy customer will tell ten others, and out of that ten a few might come in ... if you ask.

SELL LESSON PROGRAMS

Lessons are a commodity in themselves. They bring people in the store every week. Don't forget to mention it when talking with a customer.

ASK THEM TO BUY

Uh-oh, closing. If you can't close, nothing else you do right counts. You don't need

to be slick. You just need to be yourself, know what you are talking about, create some positive acceptance and just simply say: “Would you like to get it?” “OK with you?”, or “Can I write it up?” It’s not that hard. If you don’t ask, you don’t get. Let your sales people know that. They need to ask the customer to buy.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, YOUR STORE AND MUSIC

Attitude is everything. If you don’t like what you are doing, update your resume. It’s time for a career change. You are what you believe. You’re not just in the music business; you’re in the life-enhancement business. This is a fun business. And the more money you make, the more fun you’re going to have.

For more information, contact Bob Popyk directly at (315) 422-4488 ext. 102.