

By Carl Davidson

# Selling During *Tough Times*

*Many dealers are reporting a serious slowdown in business over the past few weeks, but what's worst is that many are reporting plunging customer confidence. What many dealers today are hearing from customers is something along the lines of, "We want it but times are tough and we don't want more payments at this time." This article will discuss a few ways to keep selling, closing and earning through tough economic times.*

*Staying confident despite economic downturns*

## **Are You Convinced?**

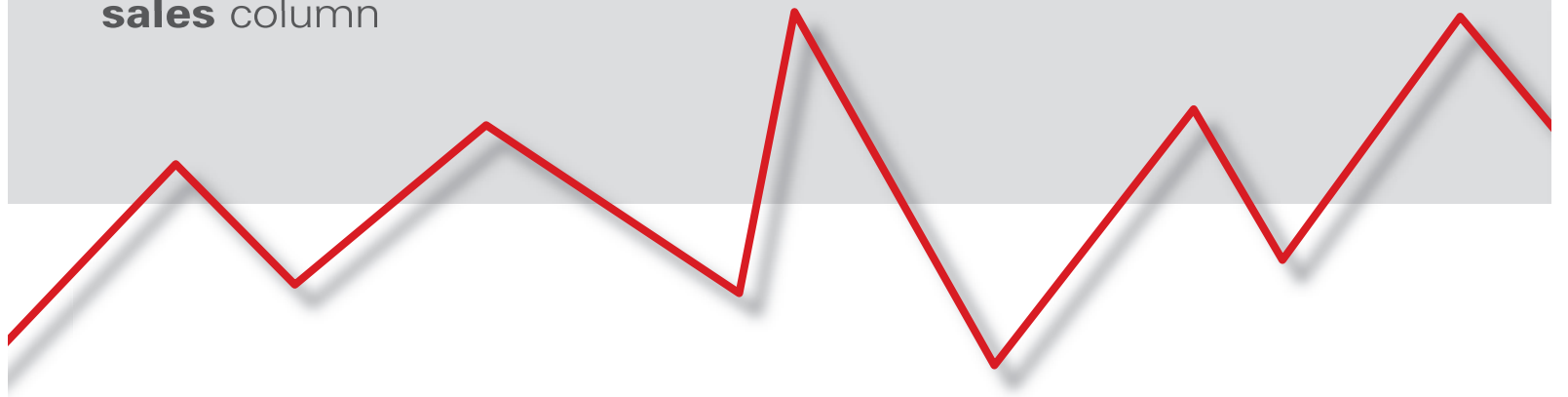
We always start here because this is truly where the sale begins. Because your income has probably fallen in the last few months, and because it may fall for a few more months, would you personally buy water equipment today? Do you believe it is something worth spending money on during tough times? Does the equipment save you more money than it costs to acquire it?

If you can enthusiastically answer 'yes' to any of these questions, then you are ready to sell. But if you admit that you would

not fork out the money at this time, you will never be able to sell through this downturn. No matter how many years you have been in the business, take the time to sell yourself to the point where you would spend your last dollar on water equipment.

## **Showing the Savings**

Be sure you emphasize throughout your sales demonstration just how much money the customer will save. The salespeople who get the customers do so by telling them a realistic number.



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I recommend you do this by asking specific questions and not just using a number such as, "According to the government, you will spend 20% of your grocery bill on soap." A great question to ask when the customer says they do not want another payment is "During this downturn, are you going to keep clean?" If they are, they will need water treatment equipment more than ever.

When times are tough, saving is even more important. You can save families hundreds of dollars per month on commercial beverages and soap. They need our equipment now more than ever and now is the time to emphasize savings, not health or anything else.

**Sell to the Easiest Customers**

During slow times, try to prospect and sell to the easiest customers. These are married couples with school-aged children, living in the suburbs with an average combined family income of \$70,000. These are the people most likely to keep spending during a downturn.

**Have a Fallback**

Now is the time to carry fallback items. These could be a package of two carbon and KDF showerheads and a carbon filter for the kitchen sink that you can sell for about \$395. Once you know they are not going to buy your full system, it is great to fall back and leave the home with something. This also keeps the customer from shopping—if they buy the package from you, they will feel as if they have

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solved their problem for now. In six months, they will need to replace the filters. The economy may be better at that time and you may be able to upgrade them to a complete system.

Small sales like these add up. If a salesperson sells 400 of these packages this year, that is about \$158,000 in income for the company and 400 good leads in six months time.

### Stick to the Basics

Economic slowdowns and recessions tend to make us do less selling than usual. I can already feel the bunker mentality sweeping through our industry. Try to stick to two demos per day no matter what, and remember that recessions do not change the number of people we can try to sell. If you stick to solid prospecting and focus on demos, you will sell more than you think in any economy.

Be optimistic because this shall pass. We have sold through recessions, slowdowns and huge unemployment trends—and we're not even officially in a recession yet. Keep in mind that it will pass. Keep up your prospecting activities and you will survive to sell in a new market thinned out by the survival of the fittest. When the smoke clears, you will be in a stronger and more profitable position than ever. *wqp*

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