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By Carl Davidson

what went Wrong

The anatomy of a failed demo

Every week, I conduct coaching calls for dealers and salespeople in our industry. I enjoy this work because I get to see what actually goes on in the homes of customers during a demo and I observe the small nuances that make the difference between a sale and a miss. I thought it would be helpful to review an unsuccessful demo that was conducted recently.

Keep in mind that nobody can make a sale every time, but looking at some new ideas and techniques can help us all sell a few more systems.

Setting the Scene

Fred, a fairly new salesperson to our industry, recently visited a home that requested a free water test. He found the home to be owned by a single woman who was interested in the products Fred had to offer, but he was unable to get the savings up high enough for her to justify making the purchase. The sale fizzled because she just did not use enough soap to justify buying a system.

Let's take a look at some things Fred could have done differently to land the sale.

Taste Test

The customer said she was happy with the taste of her tap water,

so Fred did not conduct a taste test. This may have been a critical error—if she could have been convinced her tap water was less than desirable, she may have purchased the system even if it did not pay for itself. After all, most homes have dishwashers and air conditioners that do not pay for themselves. If the salesperson can raise desire high enough, many customers will want it even if it does not pay for itself.

Only the Soap Savings

The salesperson only discussed savings associated with cleaning products; however, during the coaching call, we discovered this customer was a professional woman who dressed for success. She may have wanted a system that ensures she never has a bad hair day, as she revealed that she spends a lot of money at beauty salons repairing chlorine-damaged hair and split ends.

Not only can water treatment systems solve these problems but they can also save customers enough money in salon costs alone to pay for the entire system. In this particular case, however, these issues were not brought up.

The Government Says...

This salesperson also used the old “the government says you spend 20% of your total grocery bill on cleaning products” approach. But I have found that the skeptical customers of today do not believe the government—or a salesperson—without proof. They will not admit this, though, so many salespeople

do the demo thinking the customer will feel that the system pays for itself, only to find the customer is really unconvinced when they try to close the deal.

This approach is not compatible with today's customer. While doing a demo, you need to demonstrate actual savings for each item you present.

Soap Packages

Fred said he mentioned the soap package during his demo, but unless you carry a sample case with you and let them see it, smell it and feel the quality of it, most customers will not believe the value.

If you go the extra mile and do all of these things, you will then have someone who believes in the savings that the soap package offers. If you do not go the extra mile, they most likely will not believe the value. Some salespeople say the soap package does not work. My experience is that these same salespeople are often the ones who do not work hard enough to justify the value.

As you can see, it is easy to say “They weren't interested,” but it may be more true to say, “I wasn't interesting.” By leaving out crucial steps that would raise desire, the system was not desirable enough to justify the purchase.

Be sure you customize each demo to the wants, desires and fears of the prospect. Do not leave anything out and be sure your prospects believe you by proving everything you say to be true. *wqp*

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