

Would You Like Fries With That?

In today's competitive retail environment, sales and profitability are on-going concerns with many, if not most, retailers. Shareholder and/or corporate expectations of a healthy return on investment and consumer demands for lower prices appear to be diametrically opposed. There is, however, a way to survive the pressure from these demands.

Sell more add-ons or accessories.

This may appear to be a simplistic approach, but the truth is that most retailers leave thousands of dollars lying on the counter because their employees neglect to actively sell additional high margin items. These items contribute immediately to top end sales and bottom line profitability.

Both employees and managers have excuses why they don't capitalize on this sales opportunity:

Employees

"I don't have time."

"Customers will tell me if they want anything else."

"I'm concerned customers will think I'm being pushy."

"I'm afraid of losing the sale." (Particularly for commissioned sales people)

"I don't get paid commissions so why bother?"

Managers

"Most of my employees are teenagers and they don't care."

"My store is too busy."

"I'm constantly short-staffed so everyone is overworked."

"I don't have time to train my staff."

I'll reference McDonald's, the burger giant, to address some of these excuses:

"I don't have time."

When the counter person states "Would you like fries with that?" it takes exactly 1.4 seconds. Suggesting add-ons does NOT take much extra time particularly when you consider the potential payoff.

"I don't get paid commissions..."

You or your employee(s) may not make commission; neither does the counter person at McDonalds.

"Most of my employees are teenagers and they don't care."

What is the average age of a counter person at McDonald's? Sixteen? Seventeen? If they can do why can't you?

“My store is too busy.”

See response to “I don’t have time.”

“I’m constantly short-staffed so everyone is overworked.”

See response to “I don’t have time.”

Now, let me deal with the remaining objections by relating some personal experiences.

“Customers will tell me if they want anything else.”

When my wife and I bought our first computer we could hardly wait to get home and set it up. However, when I went to plug in the last power cord I was lacking a receptacle. I needed a power bar. This didn’t even cross my mind when I was in the computer store but if the salesperson had suggested it I would have bought one.

“I’m concerned customers will think I’m being pushy.”

Several years ago I was shopping for new suits. The sales staff brought me shirts, ties and socks to compliment my suits. When I left the store I was excited because I knew I had several combinations of suits, shirts and ties to wear. Not once did I feel that the sales people were pushing me into buying something I didn’t want or need.

“I’m afraid of losing the sale.”

In the example above, I didn’t even consider NOT buying the suits because the sales people were assertively accessorizing. I wanted and needed the suits and I had already invested a significant amount of time in the process.

“I don’t have time to train my staff.”

Training does take time and time is a critical issue in the retail environment. Neglecting your team’s development however, means that you are exposing yourself to higher turnover, loss of revenue, and increased stress.

Do yourself a favor, teach your staff the importance of upselling and incorporate suggestive selling into the routine of everyone on your team. Execute consistently and watch your sales and profitability increase!

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Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group, helps retailers increase their sales, improve their profitability, and motivate their employees. He is also the author of “Stop, Ask & Listen – Proven Sales Techniques to Turn Browsers into Buyers.” Receive a FREE copy of his special report “100 Ways to Increase Your Sales” by subscribing to his 59-Second Tip, a free weekly e-zine available at his website www.RobertsonTrainingGroup.com. For information on his programs, contact Kelley at Kelley@RobertsonTrainingGroup.com or 905-633-7750.