

VOLUME 152 NO. 4 JULY/AUGUST 2022

furniture WORLD



RETAIL SUCCESS STRATEGIES

RETAIL TRAFFIC • FINANCING • DESIGN CENTERS

NEXT LEVEL TRAINING

Sales-Type Coaching

Part 6— by Scott Morris

Knowing the positive and negative qualities of these seven sales types will help you to be a better coach or mentor.

There are as many different furniture “selling styles” on display in any furniture store showroom as there are salespeople.

That is why, from a sales management perspective, it is useful for coaches and mentors to become familiar with the basic types, each of which has intrinsic value as well as weakness.

The Decorator

You may have people on your sales team who have a flair for decorating. They delight in taking their customers on treasure hunts to locate that perfect pair of lamps, pillows, or area rug. Decorator personalities emphasize visual aesthetics and gravitate toward looks that really pop! They tend to effectively cultivate relationships with nearly all of their clients and excel at building tickets. However, there are downsides to this approach as practiced on most retail floors. First, a time-consuming treasure hunting approach can cost them the sale should a time-constrained shopper need to leave before consummating the deal. Second, the main driver of furniture store purchases is furniture! These need to be 100% locked in before accessory items are considered. Failing to do this

first can cause shoppers to have second thoughts.

The Super Bonder

Some members of your team have the talent to create instant chemistry with shoppers that keep conversations flowing. Once they read a client, they intuitively steer conversations toward personal topics like kids, pets, sports, etc. Personal relationships become the “X” factor driving their sales. These individuals tend to have high close ratios. Though, in many cases, their cancellation rate may also be the highest in your store. That’s because they spend so little time addressing customer needs or justifying purchases.

“When it becomes necessary to ‘TO’ customers, Closers are almost always the ideal people for the job.”

“There is a big difference between the Designer and Decorator sales-types. Decorators have accessories as their focus. Designers, however, are interested in the total feel or personality of their clients’ rooms.”

The Pro Presenter

Great trial lawyers and superior salespeople share a common trait. They have a special knack for turning boring facts into strong emotional appeals. Emotion is a powerful motivator when it comes down to convincing shoppers and closing sales. Since it often requires decades of practice to become a pro presenter, this sales-type usually has lots of experience. They can be great teachers and add lots of helpful ideas during store meetings. Their downside? Although great at upselling, they often fail to focus on building tickets by adding accessory items or helping customers create total looks that pop.

The Closer

Someone who is a genuine closer spends much of their time concentrating

on the back end of the sale. Their laser-sharp focus centers on trial closing, isolating the true objection and overcoming it to affect customers’ decision-making processes. When it becomes necessary to “TO” customers, Closers are almost always the ideal people for the job. They can single-handedly increase a store’s close ratio. However, some closers also burn through a lot of customers, sacrificing the store’s public goodwill, just to make a quick sale.

The Designer

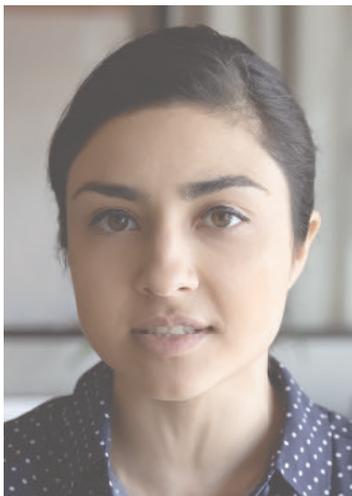
There is a big difference between the designer and decorator sales-types. Decorators have accessories as their focus. Designers, however, are interested in the total feel or personality of their clients’ rooms. A decorator may pick out accent pieces to make a piece of furniture look better. A designer wants to

know if the furniture and accent pieces will create the total room feel their customers are looking for.

Designer types consider the big picture and do the best job satisfying customers’ long-term needs. They don’t just sell things. Designer types build trade for stores and generate the highest average tickets. So, what downside could possibly be associated with this sales type? Although great with fabrics and aesthetics, they sometimes don’t spend adequate time explaining the quality construction of items. The more the customer spends, the more comfortable they want to feel about the true quality of items they are considering.

The Storyteller

You may not come across this selling style very often, but it is extraordinari-



SALES-TYPE COACHING

ly effective. It is said that Abe Lincoln always had a good story to tell. Even when pressed by detractors, he would spin a disarming tale to win them over. I

“These individuals tend to have high close ratios. In many cases, though, their cancellation rate may also be the highest in your store.”

read that some folks considered Lincoln’s approach frustrating because it was almost impossible to argue with him.

Telling great stories is an art form. Cass, a salesperson I once encountered, was probably as good a storyteller as old Abe. Once he started, it was just minutes before his customers would begin to lean in, their eyes got bigger, and ultimately, their jaws dropped! Once he got to that point in his story, his customers developed “lead bottoms.” What I mean by that is that they hardly ever left without buying.

So, just what kind of stories would he tell? Unfortunately, we don’t have the time or the space to go into it right

now, but if we ever get a chance to talk sometime, be sure to ask me about those magical stories! What could be the only downside with this sales type? All your other salespeople may need a session or two with the company psychologist to address issues of low self-esteem. Just kidding! However, when an individual like this dominates the sales conversation with a narrative, some of the proper and necessary customer questions may not get posed, resulting in the customer’s true needs remaining unknown.

The Conversation Driver

Unlike storytellers, conversation drivers

How To Win the Battle for Mattress Sales

The Bed Seller’s Manual

“The Best Resource For Mattress Sales Professionals!”

by David Benbow

291 pages of sales-boosting power.

www.bedsellersmanual.com



ask questions and control conversations with their customers. Controlling the conversation leads to controlling the sale. You no doubt have heard there is a good reason we are born with just one mouth and two ears! Really great salespeople are always good listeners. In fact, anyone at the very top of their chosen profession has become an expert listener. People like to be listened to. That is true when they buy furniture or visit a medical doctor. If a salesperson asks appropriate questions then listens intently to the answers, it makes them seem smarter, shows obvious concern and tremendous professionalism. Such is the power and lasting impression of asking the right questions!

Most customers don't shop for furniture that often and need guidance along their journey. Many times, they haven't even begun to think about many of the essential considerations that should be driving their decision-making. That's when the conversation driver sales type is needed the most.

There are actually many different types of questions that should be asked. These include more than just asking about a client's merchandise preferences. Questions should address room considerations, decorating inclinations and a dozen or so specific to the type

of room customers are looking to furnish. The conversation driver sales type is extremely helpful to shoppers who have very little experience, keeping them from making costly mistakes. What might be this sales type's shortcoming? Customers can become alienated if they feel like too many questions are being pushed on them or in a rapid-fire manner. Every question must flow naturally during a friendly and engaging conversation.

Sales Meeting Suggestion

Present the information in this article to your sales team during a scheduled sales meeting. Ask each sales associate to identify their own personal sales type, or combined type. Then ask them to comment on how they might be able to minimize the downsides of their present style or cultivate additional styles' skills to enhance sales performance. Open up the meeting at the end to brainstorm as a group.

About Scott Morris: *Scott worked for the four largest furniture retail chains in America in various positions. He is the owner of HSM Publishing. His mission is to stop the high sales associate turnover rate within the industry. He has written and published six books, plus produced*

the empowering "Sales Questions" Laminate, and publishes the advanced level, 10-Hour sales training course titled, "The Best Furniture Sales Training Ever!!!" He also produces a package of "12 Insightful Customer Handouts" to aid in the in-store selling process, and to give to the 75 percent of all shoppers who leave without buying!

His newly produced 2-Hour "Sales Closing Academy" is geared to closing today's unique shoppers. He may be reached at: hsm7777@att.net or visit www.TheBestFurnitureSalesEver.com

"When an individual like this dominates the sales conversation with a narrative, some of the proper and necessary customer questions may not get posed."