

Sales training guide

Exclusive to Windows Active, window industry sales training expert Paul Clifton has teamed up with the Consumer Protection Association to deliver the ultimate sales training guide for installers. Jeremy Brett, Director at the CPA and Paul Clifton kick off the three part series by discussing how to appoint and prepare.

Selling can sometimes be seen as a dirty word but without companies going out to sell products and services and people buying them, the economy wouldn't function.

In this three part series we will reveal sales techniques and tips to help installers add value to their sales presentations and ultimately boost their profits.

A winning combination, we have teamed up with Paul Clifton, who runs Window Sales Lab – a sales training and profit mentoring consultancy, to deliver this series.

He is also author of the book 'What Master Salesmen Know that Average Salesmen Don't' and recently judged the 2013 FIT Show Sales Professional of the Year competition.

In an ever competitive and changing industry this is vital to ensuring we are all at the top of our game and in tune with the evolving expectations of those we sell to.

The series begins with information on how to appoint and prepare.

Maximising lead to sale conversion rate

An important element when maximising the 'lead to sale conversion rate' is to properly appoint valuable leads.

Consider this scenario - a company has two people booking internet and ring-in appointments. But administrator A's appointments convert 50% better than administrator B's. Most of operator A's appointments are two leg sits with people who are firstly in the market and secondly are inspired having had a good chat with the sales administrator.

Operator B's appointments are pretty much the opposite. The effect on sales, conversion, morale and profits can therefore be significant even before we salespeople walk up the garden path.

Steps when booking an appointment

Fact Find

Firstly, it is important to ask the consumer what home

improvement they are 'thinking' of carrying out. Then encourage them to expand on their problems and aspirations. At this early stage in the relationship I like to ask if they have any design, material or colour preferences.

Customers love to talk about their needs and wants, as long as they feel that you are genuinely interested. It's also important to establish any timescales regarding the proposed work and ask how long they plan to live in their current home.

Motivate

Based on what they tell you, it is worth mentioning some options and choices which might suit their performance and longevity requirements. At this stage plant seeds but don't water them.

Even administrators with limited product knowledge can do this. And if you have any current offers then tell them about them and establish if they may be relevant. In addition to 'motivating' 'teasing' and 'inspiring', you will find that this initial approach has you ahead of the competition and reduces appointment cancellations.

Establish Status

It's not always vital to see both partners if one is not available, however, where possible it is beneficial to have all interested parties present because they will have many little decisions to make. Ultimately, selling is nothing more than having the customer make lots of little decisions and then one big one.

A convenient time

Regarding appointment booking a common mistake is to ask: 'What is a good time to come out and see you' or 'is tomorrow at 3pm convenient for you?' These two approaches can lead to a detrimentally high percentage of single sits. This serves neither the customer nor the company.

Instead say: 'We do like to catch you both in together, so accordingly we do quotations in the evenings, as well as through the daytime.' 'What is the best time to catch you both together, is it through the day or are evenings better?'

It is more effective not to suggest a time suitable for your diary and instead fit in with theirs. This avoids customers fitting in with your timings which are not really 100% suitable for them.

You've now booked the appointment

The bottom line is that customers love to buy but hate being sold to. And an important secret to progressing from a 5/10 conversion up to the fortune changing dizzy heights of an 8/10 conversion is this: replace 'telling and selling' with 'showing and choosing'.

In other words rather than telling or showing the customer how good you and your products are, instead take them

through every single choice and sell them the dream of the perfect design and the best products for their particular needs.

You may think that this is obvious but we see very few sales people do it; and customers will not buy unless they are one hundred per cent sold. Put another way, you can't close them until you have first sold them.