

How to Tame the "Sales Monster" and its Bite to Your Bottom Line!

By Anne M. Obarski

How to Tame the "Sales Monster" and its Bite to Your Bottom Line!

Anne M. Obarski
anne@merchandiseconcepts.com

Merchandise Concepts <http://www.merchandiseconcepts.com>

How to Tame the "Sales Monster" and its Bite to Your Bottom Line!

By Anne M. Obarski

"Why would you ever want to buy anything at full price?" That was a quote from a recent news article in my local paper. She went on to say, "If you see something you like, you just wait a couple of weeks and you'll see it on sale. We are spoiled right now."

No kidding.

We are experiencing a period of deflation. That is when there is a sustained decline in prices of goods and services. A sluggish economy forces businesses to reduce prices. When retailers cut prices to stimulate spending it hurts profits. Meanwhile, stores are under pressure to cut expenses to increase profits! It is a vicious cycle.

First, the sales monster is not going away anytime soon. It is growing bigger and stronger sale by sale. Retailers must offer some type of "savings" to the customer or the customer will just wait out the retailer.

It's not the way I remember sales. I remember my mom waiting for "White Sales" in the winter and a "Spring Sale" around Easter and then the infamous, "Back to School" sales and then "autumn" and the mother of all sales, "After-Christmas" sale. A sale was special and something that would get customers to the store clamoring to get in with flyers in hand. Now the customers clip coupons and download them off the net and find it necessary to check if the price on Monday is going to be better than the new sale that will run on Thursday.

So how will retailers succeed in this world of the "sales monster"?

The answer is two fold: real sales training and improved UPT's!

Real Sales Training: I have spoken to many retailers who have found it difficult to do much more than "register" train new employees. The thought of doing any "real" sales training just doesn't fit the budget or their tight schedule.

Consequently, I believe, many retailers are building a group of employees who basically do nothing more than stock shelves and ring registers. They are now being trained to say, "Did you find everything ok?", and hope that the customer doesn't say "no" and ask them to really help them find something.

Expenses are cut, hours are cut and retailers expect these poorly trained sales associates to give fabulous customer service to shoppers who really just want their merchandise rung up quickly and on sale. The answer to this ongoing problem is to heavily invest in your best asset, your employees.

Try the following ideas:

1. Daily meetings. Retailers usually start their days by talking about sales projections with their staff. That's a given. Get your staff involved by doing a sales role play with a new item of merchandise. Have them sell the features and benefits and answer objections and see how they can "close the sale". This is "old-school" selling techniques that are being lost out the door.
2. Teaching tools. Offer a library of training videos, audio tapes or books for your employees to use. Highlight the "tip of the week" in your break room for employees to use for the week. If you hear them use the tip, plan a reward for them.
3. Mentors. Create your own on-going training program by assigning "mentors" to new employees. Have them work side-by-side with experienced sales associates to learn the sales process in your company.
This is what team building is all about.

The second part to taming the "sales monster" : Simply put, sell more to more people!

Easier said than done? Quite frankly, if you want to survive in this industry, there is no other choice. The answer lies in trained sales associates who will increase their UPT's or units per transaction.

Customers enjoy the thrill of the hunt and the victory of getting something at a bargain. The goal is to have them find more items on sale or heaven forbid, at full price, to purchase. That is where the true professional sales associate can add to the company's bottom line.

For example; Mrs. Jones comes into your store and finds an item at 50% off that she loves. She has no intention of buying anything else and brings it to the register. Ms. Smith, the associate, sees her intended purchase and mentions that there is a coordinating piece that goes with that and it is 25% off! Ms. Smith walks her over to that item and on her way stops at another item that is full price that goes equally as well. Ms. Smith explains the benefits of all three items and how well they coordinate. She compliments Mrs. Jones on her good taste and reminds her that all three items will give her years of service. Ms. Smith asks if she can contact Mrs. Jones when other similar items come in. Mrs. Jones now purchases an item for 50% off and one for 25% off and an item at full price. She is happy with her purchases and the relationship that she built with Ms. Smith. Not only did the employee offer great customer service, she helped the store sales figures by increasing the UPT's of that sale.

You see it is a relationship building system. People want to business with companies who are knowledgeable, who are efficient, and who are friendly and most of all, who they trust. They will buy more from you, the more they trust you.

There's more than one way to tame the sales monster. Start thinking out of the cage!

Anne M. Obarski is the "Eye" on Performance. She is an author, professional speaker, retail consultant and Executive Director of Merchandise Concepts. Anne works with companies who are people, performance, profit focused and she helps leaders see their businesses through their customers' eyes. Anne's mystery shoppers have secretly "snooped" over 2000 stores searching for excellence in customer service. Reach Anne at <http://www.merchandiseconcepts.com> or <mailto:anne@merchandiseconcepts.com>. For high resolution photo of Anne, please visit, <http://www.merchandiseconcepts.com/annephoto.html>

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)