

# How to Bounce Back from a Sales Slump- Sell the Sizzle!

By Anne M. Obarski

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It is amazing how certain smells can grab your attention! There are certain businesses that I can recognize, purely by smell. I just know when I am near a Bath and Body Works, the same way as I just know when I have walked through the doors of a Subway. There is something unique and special about the aroma of each of those stores.

I don't need to even be in a store when I drive by a Fridays or a Burger King. No matter what the weather, the aroma of grilling food makes its way into every inch of my car. I have also noticed that even if I wasn't hungry before, that wonderful smell of food on a grill makes me start to drool! Probably quite entertaining for the person sitting in the car next to me!

I also know how seeing food can grab a person's attention. It never fails that when I go to a restaurant, like Fridays, I end up ordering meals like their fajitas. I think part of the reason is I like how they present the food. When the waitress brings the food they are usually carrying it above their shoulders, which make it very visible to other people in the restaurant. As they carry the order there is a wonderful "sizzle" that you hear coming from that tray. To me, it says "cooked just for me"!

As the waitress or waiter sets the food down, they always say the same thing, "Be careful, the plate is hot!" By this time most people who are seated at my table say the same thing, "Boy does that look good!" They are right, it does! But it has also enveloped most of their senses as it was being brought out to the table. It involved sight, smell and sound and if they are forward enough, they might say, "May I have a bite?" You see, the sizzle sold it!

It is no different than with your merchandise or services. It is necessary to "sell the sizzle" to the customer. To involve as many of their senses as possible so that their total experience makes them say, "I have to have what you are selling".

I believe the easiest way to apply this technique is by what I call, "SAVE" the customer. The acronym is easy to apply.

S= Stands out or is the feature of the product or service. I use a math example we used when we were in school studying fractions. There is a term called "lowest common denominator". When I look at a product or a service, I ask myself what is the one thing that stands out or is the most basic feature of that item. If you strip away everything around it, what is it in the most basic of terms? By

doing this simple procedure, it helps to determine what we are really selling.

Let's say I take a simple flower and let's say it is a rose. In its most basic form it is just a flower. What stands out is that it has a beautiful bloom that catches your eye. So, the feature, or what stands out, is the bloom of this flower. It is what ignites the sizzle!

A= Advantage or Benefit to have. Once I have determined what the feature is of the item I am selling, I can start to list and tell my clients the benefit to having them. If I was selling you one single stem rose, I would start listing the benefits to purchasing this rose. The benefits could be the following:

- It is beautiful
- It is fragrant
- It stands for love
- It is romantic
- It is long lasting
- It stands on its own
- It comes in many colors

Each of these benefits, when listed, helps to reinforce why it would be a good choice. It is what makes the "sizzle" sizzle!

V= Value! The bottom line is that people want, expect, yes, demand a good value. It is not enough to stand out and have lots of benefits, but the person, product or service has to be worth the asking price in the customers' mind. Businesses may set any price they wish but it is the ultimate consumer who makes the decision as to whether it is worth the investment. Pricing might just be the most difficult part of any businesses strategic plan. It is probably the biggest part of the sizzle!

E= Excitement! "I have to have it", is ultimately what we want our customers to say! It is what takes them from looking to buying, thinking to making a decision, drooling to eating. If I see the rose and it is beautiful, I smell how fragrant it is, I know all of the benefits to having it, and the price is right, my response should be, "I'll take a dozen"! It is when the product is placed before us and told "be careful" it's hot, that we just can't resist the temptation a second longer.

That is selling the sizzle.

What is about your products or services that can create a "sizzle" in your customers mind? What is missing? Is it the product itself? Is it still "raw" and needs a little more work? Is it missing the aroma that grabs the customer's attention? Is the price worth it in the customer's mind? Is there a drawing factor that makes the customer turn their car around because the aroma of your product was too much for them to resist? Your goal is to help SAVE your customer, time, money and the energy needed to get the product you offer that is exactly right for them.

Pull out the grill, and bring out the old lighter fluid! It's time to start making your products, services and people, sizzle!

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,

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