



SMART SALESPEOPLE DON'T SELL PRODUCTS, THEY SELL SOLUTIONS.

Installers provide solutions and turn ordinary products into works of art. They should be urged to take photos of their jobs and get customers to give them a testimonial for their work. Why not give installers a couple of dollars for every testimonial or photo they get from the customers?

WHY CERTIFIED INSTALLERS ARE IMPORTANT

Installers are an important part of your business. It doesn't matter whether they are on your payroll or subcontractors; they are most valuable to you.

Although stores hate to admit it, installers will either make or break their business. Since they are the last person the customer sees, whatever impression they leave with the customer, it will be lasting. Despite this, how many stores actually spend time certifying, training or differentiating their installers.

If it were my business, I would change my department to "custom installation." There is no "one size fits all" so why not talk about custom. Besides, the term "custom" signifies something

made especially for the customer. It also implies that the service is worth more money. I know one company that called their service a "white glove installation." Their installers would go into the customer's house wearing white gloves and taking them off during the installation. Apparently customers think that it's quite unusual and love the treatment. Apparently they get better tips also!

Installers can be included in your product and customer service training. The more they are included in your business and understand how you do business; the more they will be able to add to your business.

Certifications upgrade the level of your installers. Consumers understand that trades are licensed and the more training someone has the more they're worth.

There are various installation certifications available.

WHY RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL FLOORING SALES FAIL

In order to sell any customer, you must first understand “their conditions of satisfaction.” For everything we choose in life, including our mates, we have certain criteria and expectations that that must be met before we make a decision.

Knowing the “conditions of satisfaction” keeps both the customer and the salesperson on track, and allows for fewer distractions. Everyone gets excited about different types of flooring and new introductions; this in itself can be distracting and eventually confusing. A customer may fall in love with a product that ultimately will turn out to be a disaster, especially in a commercial job. Long term, it can also be a problem for a residential customer. A customer with a cat may fall in love with a looped carpet, only to find out that this can easily be destroyed by their loving pet.

There are just some products that won't work.

On the front end of the sale, you must understand what the customer is ultimately trying to accomplish. This should be one of the first questions to ask a customer. You may have to redefine it several times, but ultimately this information is what will keep you on track.

Here are several questions that will keep the salesperson and the customer focused on the outcome of the sale:

- 1. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH WITH THIS FLOORING?** Is it being replaced because the customer wants something new and more fashionable, or is there a problem they are trying to correct. This can be an old and destroyed floor that needs replacing.
- 2. IF THEY ARE REPLACING SOMETHING THEY ALREADY HAVE, ASK ABOUT THE PRODUCT TO FIND OUT WHERE IT HAS FAILED THEM.** (For instance, this might be a child or new pet. They may actually like the product and just want an update in color or to replace it because it's just too old.)

3. ASK THE CUSTOMER ABOUT THEIR TIME FRAME.

Many a job has been lost because the contractor wasn't able to meet the customer's time requirements and couldn't get the product. There's nothing worse than thinking you have a sale and realizing your installers or fabricators are booked up, or the product can't be shipped.

4. DON'T FORGET UNFORESEEN CONDITIONS.

The customer often has issues that they haven't yet told you about. The house is under construction, there is no heat or power on the job, or there's too much snow to get into the house. We've all had it happen when the weather has screwed up a perfectly good job. I remember having to go on a commercial job, and all the outside doors were incorrectly cut allowing the temperature to be below recommended installation temperatures.

5. DON'T FORGET BUDGETS.

I hear over and over: Never discuss budgets with the customer. There's a point when you have to clarify and verify the total amount of the bill, so you will know if you're on the right track. This is the time to go back to the original “conditions of satisfaction” with the customer.



Often meeting these conditions means the customer will have to rethink their budget.

Staying on track with the customer's conditions is bound to produce the right sale for both the salesperson and the customer.