

### Trump Price Objections By Avoiding “Budget” Questions

Every salesperson has heard prospects say they just don't have money in the budget. But it's possible salespeople are the ones who are putting that idea in the prospect's head, says sales expert Colleen Francis.

According to Francis, “budget” has a negative connotation which encourages buyers to focus on price.

Francis suggests replacing “budget” with questions like, “Do those numbers fall within your range?” or a simple “Is that doable?”

That way you keep the prospect focused on the positives of your offer rather than turning it into a discussion about price.

*Source: Overcoming Sales Objections by Colleen Francis. Reprinted with permission from the What's Working in Sales Management bi-monthly newsletter. To subscribe to What's Working in Sales Management, call 800-220-5000.*

### How is Your Showroom Dealing with the Tough Economy?

*We opted to change our showroom hours, extending them from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and opening on Sundays. We're also running an inventory reduction sale to help increase our cash flow.*

— Rene Perez  
The Gallery of Lighting  
Boerne, Texas

*Proactive Showroom is a monthly publication of the ALA.*

E-mail your story ideas and sales tips to Sherri Kelley at skelley@americanlightingassoc.com.

### The Hite Company Uses “Green Zones” to Promote Energy Efficient Products

The Hite Company, based in Altoona, Pa., has created Green Zones in each of its store locations to promote energy-efficient products and provide tips and information on ways customers can save energy while also saving money.

“The Green Zone is not an area where we just stock energy-efficient products,” explains Katie Brouse, marketing. “The products are actually working displays. As an example, the Green Zone in one of our locations uses an occupancy sensor to turn on energy efficient lights when a customer enters.”

The Green Zones are constantly being updated with new products as they are introduced, and suppliers help by providing the latest product and service information as it becomes available.

The Hite Company created marketing materials to ensure the new Green

Zones were noticed by customers. Materials provided to each store included flyers, shelf signs, three sided hanging mobiles and banners with tree

graphics and “leaves” showing products that can be used for energy efficiency savings.

Sales associates throughout the stores wear buttons in hopes that customers will inquire what the Green Zone is all about, and special energy tags were created to hang on energy

efficient fixtures.

Green Zone information is also included on the company's Web site, and customers get additional reminders if their telephone calls are put on hold.

“The purpose of the Green Zones is to constantly remind customers of all of the various ways they can incorporate products to save energy and money in the long run,” said Brouse. “It can be easy being green, and we show our customers how.”



### Performance/Profitability Survey Offers Guidance

The ALA is encouraging showroom members to participate in the 2009 Showroom Performance and Profitability Survey being distributed this month.

One of the ALA's most highly-rated member services, the Performance and Profitability program compiles data from the returned surveys and allows showrooms to compare their performance against past surveys and against industry averages.

Information in the general report includes gross margin, operating expenses and average collection. The report provides data for more than 100 different measures, ranging from sales per employee to inventory turnover to

gross margin as a percent of sales. Also included are all key financial ratios and a complete percentage income statement and balance sheet.

The general report also includes some analysis. For example, the report compares the differences between the typical ALA showroom and the high-profit showrooms whose profitability is in the top 25 percent. These comparisons can give showrooms guidance, helping them to become more profitable.

For more information and pricing, please contact Eric Jacobson at ejacobson@americanlightingassoc.com or 800-605-4448, ext. 24.