

Have a tip or idea for improving business that you would like to share with other showrooms?

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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.



Keep Staff Up to Date on New Products

Making sure your sales staff is familiar with the products you are selling is essential for showroom success.

Ask your manufacturers' reps about providing presentations to familiarize your staff with products added from each rep's lines.

Tips for Showcasing Your Showroom

Lucy Dearborn, owner of Lucia Lighting and Design in Lynn, Mass., is not one to sit passively and wait for people to come to her showroom.

"The 'build it and they will come' approach may work in Hollywood," says Dearborn, "but in the real world it takes a carefully crafted marketing approach to drive foot traffic into your lighting showroom."

Dearborn and the Lucia Lighting staff demonstrated their passion for marketing from the very beginning with the showroom's grand opening in 2006.

"When we initially opened Lucia Lighting and Design and unveiled our 8,000-square-foot showroom in a lovingly restored mansion, we launched our grand opening with an equally grand party," says Dearborn.

The showroom was transformed into "Café Lucia" for an evening soiree attended by more than 250 contactors, design professionals, family and friends.

"We wanted to create an upbeat, warm and inviting environment where clients looked forward to visiting," says Dearborn. "Lucky for us that our showroom also houses a state-of-the-art kitchen and funky bar area so we have all the props to entertain."

Since then, Lucia Lighting has organized a whirlwind of activities to increase traffic in the store, such as an event featuring a master glass cutter from Waterford; a "Trends in Lighting" event for designers and architects featuring designer Denis Caldora and sponsored by American Brass and Crystal; and a "Lighting for Brighter Sales" event for area Realtors.

Lucia Lighting is also very involved with local charities, a "win-win" situation that gets the showroom's name out in the community while allowing the business and its staff to help worthy causes.

Efforts to market the showroom got a big boost recently when *Boston* magazine awarded it "Best of Boston Lighting Showroom" recognition, calling it a "lighting nirvana" and assuring potential customers that the large selection

guaranteed they would find something "to turn them on, and vice versa."

Dearborn's marketing tips include:

Special Events

"Make them fun, relevant and serve food and drink," says Dearborn. "Whether we are hosting an event for Realtors to educate them on how small lighting enhancements can make a difference, bringing in an industry expert to talk about trends to designers or having a trunk show featuring local artisans, we keep the tone light and the food and drink flowing."

Monthly Newsletter

Send information on lighting trends and tips to your customers. "Keep it simple and send it electronically," advises Dearborn.

Community Involvement

Lucia staff and friends have participated in a Walk for HAWC in Salem, Mass., this spring and "Give back to the community," Dearborn says. "Good karma is the gift that keeps giving back."

Direct Mail

Lucia Lighting and Design has received rave reviews for their professionally designed over-sized postcards. "Along with sending mailings to our current clients, we also purchased a list of new homeowners in the area," says Dearborn. "It was a welcome opportunity to add to our database."

Professional Networking

Dearborn suggests not just hosting and attending professional networking events, but also taking a leadership role in creating partnerships with local businesses that complement your array of products and services.

"The bottom line is that you need to be proactive, creative and open to generate foot traffic," says Dearborn. "Spread the light!"