

How to Increase Your Sales From Browsers in Your Store

By Graham Couper-Smith

If you or your sales person asked your visitor the deadly: "Can I help you?", you have probably now lost the chance to promote or assist the genuine browser. The answer: "No thanks, I'm just looking", immediately follows. It can be hard to recover from this mistake. Better to start out on the right foot from the beginning.

People buy from people they like. The message behind this is: Don't ask if you can help, build rapport instead.

Let me tell you a story:

I was browsing in a tourist shop in Guam and saw a brilliant example of this displayed by an older Japanese sales assistant (maybe the owner of the store).

My wife and I walked into the shop and the Sales Assistant, looked up, smiled and said: "Good Afternoon, welcome," and waved into the store to show us we were indeed welcome. She did not offer to help.

We walked in, and browsed. She heard us chatting after a few minutes, and said, "I know that accent! You're Australians. Welcome to Guam, how long have you been here?"

We had a nice chat with this lady and ended up buying some stuff. We probably would have just wandered around and walked out without the conversation. We also enjoyed talking to her and the experience of shopping in her store, which would otherwise have been just another tourist shop.

So, again: Don't say, "Can I help?" Build rapport instead. Besides, it's also more fun.

A good tip is look for something unique about the customer to comment on, as the Japanese lady did with our accents. If you can't think of something, talk about something very topical, and if you can't think of that, have something impressive on the counter or in the shop you can ask their opinion on in a non-selling manner.

I saw this done beautifully in a fabric shop once. A lady was examining 2 pieces of fabric to decide which one was best for her project. A browser walked into the shop, and the shop keeper said to her fabric buyer: "Let's get a second opinion", then looked at the visitor and said, "We need to choose a piece for a boy's bean bag, which do you think would be better?" The visitor thought about it and got involved in the conversation and after the fabric lady left, ended up buying something...such was the rapport with the shop-keeper.

So again, don't ask "Can I help you?" there are better ways to get the visitor to buy in your store.

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