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# DO YOU WANT FRIES WITH THAT?

The art of the up-sell is set out by Ulrike André

Participants of a recently held webinar in which I participated were asked to state whether they had an up-sell strategy in place or not. An astounding 78% announced that, indeed, they had no such strategy in place.

McDonald's lays claim to quite possibly the world's most famous up-sell question: "Do you want fries with that?" A close runner up would have to be "Do you want to super-size your order?" which helped McDonald's to increase their sales, without any added cost to them, across the globe and overnight.

By asking a simple question at the moment we were trying to satisfy our quench for deep fried pommes de terre, McDonald's was adding instant sales (profit) and making us believe they were merely being observant and making sure our culinary needs and desires were being met.

This begs the question: can we adopt this theory of offering French fries or even increasing the ordered size of fries – to our industry?

The simple answer is: "mais oui!"

## START WITH THE BASICS

A customer who comes into your shop and enquires about your products and services will often have a pretty good idea about what they need. They might even have a specific T-shirt, hoodie, or other promotional item in mind and they often have the design they want to see applied onto it ready in hand or on a flash drive. Sounds fairly cut and dry you might think. After all, who's to question a determined and prepared customer?

## ELEVATE THEIR VISION

Nowadays a T-shirt is no longer just a T-shirt. There are many facets to consider and even more options available: Cotton, polyester, Lycra, nylon, Cordura ... the list is endless.

And each material has its purpose and value. Take cotton for instance: how was the cotton harvested? What is the carbon footprint of an organically grown cotton T-shirt? Was the cotton treated after the shirt was made?

To many customers it will matter. Many customers have spent a lot of time to come up with an idea, finding or creating the design, and chances are they want their decorated textile to last a while. To suggest the matching textile to heat apply their design onto might make a difference and you do not only have an appreciative customer but also added some profit to your margin.

## PERCEIVED VERSUS ACTUAL VALUE

Continuing this thought you will know that the material that you use to heat apply will have a real value and a perceived value. Why not utilise this fact to your advantage? A glittery or holographic heat transfer material is often perceived as more valuable as a straight-coloured flex material. True or not, that is how most customers see it. But we know that this is not necessarily the truth. Be prepared accordingly and you can benefit from this fact.

Your time is valuable – make them aware

Although the customer might have a design in hand when they come to you, more often than not this design needs tweaking. It might take a minute or it might take longer. Many times the customer simply does not know how time consuming it can be to prepare their artwork to work with your machines. Let them know! Tell them how much you charge per 30 minutes, 60 minutes etc. They ought to know of the cost of your time and respect that. If you decide to not charge them, inform them how much you could have charged; you are still adding value in the customer's mind – this is important!



Product samples from Stahls' International contain plenty of ideas for up-selling

## INSTEAD OF DISCOUNTING – ADD VALUE

You know your margins, you know your cost, and you know your profits. You know that a straight discount means loss in revenue – your revenue. Why not alter what you have great control over – the product you use to make the designs? Up-sell your customer to a 'better' material but charge them for a 'lesser' one? You are in control of your discount and the customer feels that they received something for 'free'.

## BE IN THE KNOW

Some things are negotiable; some are not. In order for you to speak to and satisfy your customer you must have full understanding of what your customer wants and needs.

Only then can you successfully customise your conversation to match your customers' wants and needs and exceed their expectations. Show and suggest all resources you have available and guide them to a great final product.



A 'basic' koi design utilising black Cad-Cut Super Film



This shows a 'better' koi design in red Cad-Cut Super Film with black MultiFlock



This special effect 'best' koi design utilises Cad-Cut Hologram (mirror), black MultiFlock and red Glitterlake.



## BE PREPARED

Being prepared is the key ingredient for the successful up-sell. This pertains to all aspects of your business such as product selection, presentation, training and motivating staff.

In order for you and your staff to make any suggesting to your customer, you need to know exactly what stock to carry, what a service costs you, the discounts you are able to afford and the amount of time needed to produce the order.

## SHOWING SAMPLES IS KEY

Some people have a vision of a finished product; many do not. Help them. Create tools that help people visualise. You can take it a step further and group these marketing tools – samples, swatch cards and so on to match your pricing structure – for example: Basic, Better, Best. That way you make it easy for customers to see what they get for their money.

Ideas for visual aids are available all over: a small binder with sample work or an album with pictures of past jobs. One of the simplest up-sells is showing lettering or numbering in one colour and then showing the same job as a two-colour example. Make sure you have a sample swatch or colour card. Ask your vendors for their ideas or see if they have any pre-made samples or swatch cards available. If they don't, why not make your own marketing tools?

Decorate a garment and show the three price points by heat applying, screen-printing, direct-to-garment printing samples of colours, foil effects, reflective materials and so on. And keep in mind what we talked about earlier: you might want to move a perceived higher priced material/effect to the more expensive price bracket.

## ENCOURAGE AND REWARD YOUR STAFF

Never forget your own staff. Thoroughly explain your products and services to them and keep them updated at all times. Encourage them to be creative by allowing them to utilise your inventory and pay them in incentives that are interesting to them. Support them in their creativity; after all they have just as much (or more) contact to the outside world (in your shop and in their personal lives) that can prove to be most valuable.

Tap into that world of knowledge and insight by encouraging, appreciating and rewarding them. Why not set up a reward system that is tied to your newly implemented up-sell system? Most of us hold customer reward cards in our wallets. Why not create an employee reward system? Create a point system where they can earn points for every up-sell they were able to generate. Communicate the prizes that can be achieved and see if this does not create a buzz within your staff.

## PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE

It may sound like a lot of work; it might sound tedious and time consuming – true. But with just enough patience and perseverance you will see that slight increase take on a snowball effect. Once word gets out that you and your staff are knowledgeable, take time to get to know customers' needs and surprises by innovative improvements and suggestions the customer has not thought of before meeting you; your business will increase.

A happy knowledgeable associate helping a customer to make their individual mark in their world is the best advertising you can ask for. Happiness sells and up-sells. ■

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