

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

Training Leader's Guide

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TO THE TRAINER/FACILITATOR

As the trainer/facilitator of this program for retail salespeople, your job should begin before the actual training session. The following information is provided as a suggestion to help you prepare.

ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

The information presented in this Training Leader's Guide and Participant Workbook, and in the video "The Power of Suggestion", is geared mainly toward those retail associates who have previously received basic sales training or who have some experience working in a retail environment.

The purpose of this course is to teach associates who already possess basic selling skills how to increase sales volume through **suggestive** selling.

REVIEW THE PROGRAM

In addition to viewing the videotape before any training session, review the discussion questions contained in the workbook. Familiarize yourself with them and your company's policies with respect to the various topic areas covered.

USE THE WORKBOOK

As you preview the workbook, you will notice that we have designed it as a multi-use training tool. As the participants watch the videotape, we have provided space for them to take notes on the page opposite questions relating to a specific subject area. If time permits, participants may then use those notes and information you have given them to answer the questions on the opposite page. With this design, the workbook can be used as a self-paced instrument or as support material in a group session.

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MEETING ROOM CHECKLIST

- ___ Do you have a good copy of the videotape?
- ___ Is the VCR in good operating order?
- ___ Are all cables correctly hooked up?
- ___ Is the screen visible for all participants?
- ___ Is the room dark enough?
- ___ Is the room properly ventilated?
- ___ Is the room free of distractions?
- ___ Is the room large enough to comfortably hold the number of participants you are expecting?
- ___ If the session is being conducted by a trainer or facilitator, are lecturns, flip charts and dark colored magic markers available?
- ___ Will the speaker need a microphone?
- ___ Do you have adequate numbers of workbooks and/or materials for the participants?
- ___ Do the participants know the time, location and purpose of the training program?

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CONDUCTING THE SESSION

If you are unfamiliar with training sessions, the following tips on conducting the session may be useful. Participants will bring varying backgrounds and degrees of experience to the session, so it may benefit you to prepare with these training techniques.

INTRODUCTION

- Establish a relaxed, open atmosphere.
- Introduce yourself and everyone in the room.
- Let your enthusiasm show.

VOICE

- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Use simple, direct questions.

EYE CONTACT

- Maintain eye contact with the entire group.
- Face the group when speaking.
- Avoid reading the Leader's Guide or any other materials. Prepare yourself so you can paraphrase.

PREPARATION

- Have an example in mind in case no one in the group does.
- Use humor when you can do it naturally, but avoid "joke telling".
- Complete the Participant Workbook beforehand, so you know the answers for each of the questions.

HANDLING DISTRACTIONS

- Don't fiddle with change or keys in your pocket.
- Don't pace. If you're moving around, there should be a reason for it.
- Don't shuffle papers.
- Don't chew gum or smoke during the session.

QUESTIONS

- Always watch for puzzled looks. Be prepared to solicit questions.
- Repeat each question so everyone in the group understands.
- Answer each question to the entire group, not just to the person who asked it.
- Ask questions one at a time – don't confuse the issue.
- Ask open-ended questions so that the participant's can open up.
- Ask follow-up questions to obtain more specific information.
- Avoid asking yes/no questions or leading questions.
- Make sure you understand the participant's question by rephrasing or restating it in your own words for clarity.
- Turn the question over to the group when appropriate to gain the group's involvement.
- Have patience.

LISTENING

- Reinforce participants' involvement with verbal and non-verbal cues such as head nods, and statements like "go on", "you're on the right track" and so on.
- Allow silence for important points to sink in. When asking questions, allow adequate time for the participant to think of a response.

NOTES

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OUTLINE OF KEY TRAINING POINTS

"The Power of Suggestion"

I. WHEN TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS

- A. When the customer seems undecided about the purchase.
- B. When you don't have exactly what the customer wants.
- C. When you recognize a benefit to the customer that may not be readily apparent.
- D. When you feel that the customer may be making a decision that is not in his/her best interest.
- E. When you receive an objection.

II. WHAT SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE

- A. Suggest complementary items and accessories.
- B. Suggest substitutes or alternatives.
- C. Remind customers of special offers or sales.
- D. Suggest multiples to capitalize on the best value or to give the customer additional options.
- E. Suggest additional items the customer may need or want in order to use the main purchase.
- F. Educate the customer about higher quality merchandise.
- G. Suggest solutions to customer problems.

Remember: The Key is to Ask Questions and Make Suggestions.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE VIDEOTAPE

"The Power of Suggestion"

Following is a suggested introduction to the videotape "The Power of Suggestion".

"The goal of this videotape is to help you increase your effectiveness as a retail associate through the development of suggestive selling skills. It assumes that you have already acquired a basic working knowledge of selling skills, including the approach and greeting, needs discovery, presentation and demonstration, handling objections and closing."

"The information presented in this video goes beyond these basic selling skills to assist you in developing the ability to know when and how to make suggestions during the sales process. These suggestive selling techniques will help you increase your sales volume and it will benefit the customer too."

"As you watch the video, take notes on the left hand pages of your participant workbook. You will refer to them when we answer the group discussion questions and complete the workbook following the video."

"Now let's take a look at "The Power of Suggestion"."

AFTER THE VIDEO TAPE HAS ENDED

"Let's open our workbooks to the Discussion Questions on Page 5, and complete them using your notes and memory. Afterward, we will discuss your answers with the group."

OPTIONAL EXERCISE #1

Suggestion Showcase

Objective

The purpose of this exercise is to get your participants to begin to think quickly about possible complementary items and other suggestions they can make on the floor with particular pieces of merchandise.

Time

15 - 20 minutes depending on the number of pieces of merchandise.

How To Conduct

Before the session begins, select a number of items of merchandise that the participants might sell or at least be familiar with. Keep them hidden until the exercise.

When you begin, tell the participants that you will reveal a piece of merchandise. Ask them to respond quickly with a show of hands as they think of a suggestion that could be made regarding that particular piece. You may want to record their answer on a flip chart or markerboard. Keep going until the group runs out of good suggestions.

If the group has trouble getting started, have a couple of suggestions prepared ahead of time to get them started.

Summary

Point out to the group how many suggestions can be made. Highlight the creative or best answers.

OPTIONAL EXERCISE #2

Suggestion Selling Skills Rehearsal

Objective

The purpose of this exercise is to get the participants used to asking questions to determine wants and needs and then to respond with appropriate suggestions.

Time

20 - 30 minutes depending on the size of the training audience.

How to Prepare

Before the session begins, develop several role play scenarios where the participants will have to assume the role of a customer and a sales associate in a suggestive selling situation. Possible examples could include the following:

- A customer who wants something in a size or model that you don't have in stock.
- A customer who is buying a product that lends itself to a multiple sale.
- A customer who wants a less expensive item or model when a better quality one, or one with more convenient features is better suited for their needs.
- A customer who has an objection about a product or item.

Once you have developed these scenarios, write out or type two separate role explanations on 5" x 8" cards. One will be for the customer, the other role will be for the sales associate.

On the customer card, give information about what the customer wants and needs and why. If it is an objection, be specific about what the customer doesn't like or feels uncomfortable with.

On the salesperson's card, explain in general what the problem or opportunity is, but let the participant discover the details by the questions they ask in actual role play. Indicate that a particular item may be out of stock, or that the customer really could use a higher quality item, etc. Don't make them too difficult or too easy. The objective is to make it as real as possible without making it impossible.

Develop several scenarios to fit your department or store. If you have a larger group you can repeat some of these.

Role Play in Class

Divide the group into pairs. Select one person in each group to play a customer and one to play a salesperson. Hand out the appropriate cards to each group. Give them a few minutes to prepare what they are going to ask and suggest.

Let them rehearse for about ten minutes. Remind them that the objective is to find out what the customer wants and needs and then to make suggestions. Also remind them that the customer should not be overly resistant.

As you watch each group rehearse, select the best ones to role play in front of the class. Have the class observe and take notes. As each role play is completed, thank the role players for their participation. Praise them for their questions and suggestions, and ask the group to help the role play team with other possible questions and suggestions.

Summary

Review some of the most creative and useful questions and suggestions. Mention that if they can role play in front of their peers successfully, they surely can do the same with customers.

TRAINING SCHEDULE OPTIONS

The following training schedule options are provided to give you some recommended plans for conducting a course on "The Power of Suggestion." These are approximate times that can be modified to fit your exact needs.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| OPTION 1: | 30-minute session |
| 5 minutes | Introduce participants and hand out workbooks. |
| 20 minutes | Introduce and show the video "The Power of Suggestion". |
| 5 minutes | Discuss video content, with workbooks to be completed later. |
| OPTION 2: | 60-minute session |
| 5 minutes | Introduce participants and hand out workbooks. |
| 20 minutes | Introduce and show the video "The Power of Suggestion". |
| 15 minutes | Complete workbook and discuss answers. |
| 20 minutes | Complete Exercise #1 and discuss. |
| OPTION 3: | 90-minute session |
| 5 minutes | Introduce participants and hand out workbooks. |
| 20 minutes | Introduce and show the video "The Power of Suggestion". |
| 15 minutes | Complete workbook and discuss answers. |
| 20 minutes | Complete Exercise #1 and discuss. |
| 30 minutes | Complete Exercise #2 and discuss. |

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