

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

The Worst Call of All, II

Last month, I discussed the worst sales call I'd ever heard. At the time, I thought it couldn't get any worse. I was wrong.

Recently, my manager took a call from a salesperson who sold ad space in a local publication. My manager gave me the details the next day, and I had her write it down. The call began with the salesperson asking for me and my manager telling her I was out. Here is what followed:

Saleslady: I wanted to tell him how bad his ads are and let him know we want to work with him to create a better ad in a better magazine — and probably at a much better rate than what he paid for an ad of such low quality.

Manager: Excuse me?

Saleslady: I'm looking at your ad, and I don't even see your company's name. Who runs an ad and doesn't put their company name in the ad? That's not very smart or good for business. You need to tell people your company name. Your ad really sucks.

Manager: How did you know the ad was ours if you didn't see our name in the ad?

Saleslady: I went to the website listed in the ad.

Manager: I have a copy of the magazine right here on our counter. I see our business name listed at the top of the ad, but I think the point of the ad is to drive traffic to our website, which is why the URL is in bold and larger fonts.

Saleslady: I must have overlooked the name before, but that's because it's too small. I know good ads when I see them because I'm in advertising, and there is nothing good about this ad.

Manager: OK. I'll tell the owner you called. Is there a number where he can reach you tomorrow?

Saleslady: (Gives the number) Tell him to call because I would hate to look for your company a year from now and know you went out of business.

Manager: Out of business?

Saleslady: I'm just saying that if you keep running ads like these that don't tell your customer who you are, what you do and why you do it, then I don't see you sticking around for very long.

Make sure he calls now.

When my manager finished telling me about the call, all I could say was, "I hope we never come across a customer like that." But the more I thought about the call, the more I tried to find a takeaway that we could use to better the business. Obviously, the salesperson was obnoxious, but she may have had a point. Sometimes, we overlook critical aspects of ads, such as name placement or contact information. And after looking at our ad, I agreed our name was a bit small, and we could have used a better font. I had a designer work up a new ad.

Unfortunately, that's about the only positive takeaway from the call. The salesperson made too many amateur errors. Obviously, you should never refer to your potential customer as unintelligent or insinuate that you're an expert because you work in a particular field. Also, telling potential customers that you'd hate for them to go out of business because they don't use your product is plain insulting.

Still, out of all the mistakes I picked up, there was one in particular I couldn't get past.

"What business did she say she worked for, and what was her name?" **MI**



Takeaways from the worst telephone sales call I've ever heard

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