

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLUM

Power of the Word 'Yes'

My dad tells a great story from the very early days of our store, and it's a lesson that I fortunately learned early in my career. The store had just recently opened on a shoestring budget. One day, he was meeting with a sales rep and excused himself to help a customer looking for a piccolo trumpet. Considering that we had opened with a meager inventory, that was not part of the mix. When he returned to the rep, the late Joe Friedman, Joe told my dad that he had a really nice piccolo trumpet in his warehouse and would have happily gotten it to him the next day on approval. Nothing gets your attention like losing a potential sale when you're an upstart company. That day my dad learned no matter what the question is, it's imperative to find a way to say "yes." So, how do you put the power of "yes" to work for you? Here are a few examples:



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GET TO KNOW THE CUSTOMER

Many opportunities will revolve around inventory. You have a customer come in looking for a Les Paul, and you dropped Gibson when the financial demands of being a dealer became more than you could handle. If your answer is "no," you've made it awfully easy for the customer to decide to look elsewhere, and you've done nothing to build any sort of relationship. Why not start out by getting to know the person? Start with, "I'll be delighted to help you find your perfect guitar." Learn what he owns, what kind of music he plays and what in particular caused him to ask for that Les Paul. You may discover that Les Paul was the only name he knew. This is your chance to tell him about your amazing selection of PRS guitars.

FIND NEW WAYS TO SAY 'YES'

What happens when an existing customer calls up to see if you'll give her a loaner for that amp she bought from you a couple of years ago that's now on the fritz? "Sorry, we don't do loaners." She'll not only seek other options, but she's going to

feel like her previous business with you was unappreciated.

Think how much more effective it could be if you said, "Please bring us your amp. We'll find a way to make this right." Then when you're face to face, you explain that you don't do loaners, but you tell her about your premium rush service. Or show her all the new amp technology, and offer her an amazing trade-in on her broken amp.

FIELD PRICE COMPARISONS

Finally, let's look at the dreaded price comparison question. "Your competitor quoted me at XXX for this keyboard. Can you beat it?" Even if the price is insane, your answer should never be "no." Find out if this is the right product for the customer. If it is, will they need cables, a carrying case, software, a stand? Can you make them a package deal that both eliminates the direct price comparison and better serves their needs?

Pay attention to every time your natural instinct leads you to say "no." Resisting that temptation and working towards positive solutions will lead you to the sweetest words of all, "Yes, I'll buy it!" **MI**

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