

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Danger of Great Demos

Picture this scenario: You go to a NAMM Show and hear an amazing demo of the latest, greatest whizbang product. Based on what you hear, you order lots of them because you're sure that your customers are going to be equally impressed. Then the product arrives and sales are disappointing. What happened? Well, it turns out your sales associates don't have quite the same chops as the clinician at NAMM, and therefore your customers are not motivated to buy.



Educate your customers and they'll reward you with repeat business

Or there's another way that this can play out. Maybe you have an associate who becomes passionate about the product and gives demos that are just as good as what you heard at NAMM. But then, for some reason, you find that the return rate for this product is terrible or that the customers aren't recommending the product in question to their friends. Does this sound familiar? After that happened more than a few times to me at my store, I took it as a lesson learned. And now I'd like to share the solution with you.

ASK OR YOU DON'T RECEIVE

I learned to attach one simple condition to my purchase orders when buying new products that I suspected would be difficult to demo. I insisted that I'd buy this new, untested product only if the manufacturer could and would support my team's selling efforts. This could come in the form of visits by their clinician, training sessions by their sales rep, support videos, how-to guides and/or hands-on training at their facility. My goal was to enable my staff to make as compelling a presentation as I had seen when I saw the product introduction at NAMM. Remarkably, many suppliers were happy to provide precisely what I wanted. Make a point to ask suppliers for help in selling their products.

Just as it's important for manufacturers to help dealers know how to use their products, it's imperative for dealers to offer that same level of service to their customers. If your associates are superbly effective at selling products, but offer no support to ensure the successful use of that product, then they are closely akin to the old snake oil salesmen! When a customer

gets a product home and can't make it work or gets results nothing like what they heard at the dealership, they're going to be terribly disappointed. At best, they'll return the product to your store. At worst, they'll keep it along with a healthy dose of animosity towards your store, your sales associate and possibly even the manufacturer. Customers like that are highly motivated to share with others their stories of disillusionment.

So, how do we keep this from happening? At the most basic level, if you sell a beginner's guitar, for instance, you should be providing lessons that encourage them to learn to play.

If you sell high-tech products, you should offer tutoring in the use of the product. Many dealers have had great success with YouTube training videos on the products they sell. They're not hard to produce, and they add great value beyond the hardware and software you've sold. I used to even offer playing tips at the point of demo. ("If you play an oboe patch as if it were a piano, it will sound like a terrible piano.")

Educate your customers and they'll reward you with repeat business and plentiful referrals. **MI**

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