

How not to sell

Here we are—it's Black Friday, and plenty of businesses want your business. Between extended (way extended) hours and special deals, people are being lured in to buy. Most of these people have a very specific need in mind (a Christmas gift for their child or a flat screen TV for the family room) and are going in with focus.

Which leads me to an experience I had on Tuesday (the day I went to the mall, because, frankly, there is nothing I need so much that I will fight people and crowds today). It was a classic case of how not to sell.

I went in to a shoe store—with the intent of shopping for SHOES. I selected a couple of pairs and asked the clerk for my size. She said "We are having a sale on our handbags—20% off." I nodded. Then, she brought the shoes out. I slipped them on, and found that they were a bit loose in the heel. She hadn't been paying too much attention to me, and finally asked me how they fit. I said they were loose. She offered to measure my foot...I declined (I already know my shoe size). Then I selected another pair. She brought them out, and she told me the store has a great deal on socks...get a hole in them and get them replaced for life. I nodded once again. I left the store with no shoes, socks or handbags.

The salesperson was trying to sell everything except what I wanted. Most likely, "corporate" told its people to upsell and gives a bonus/commission for every non-shoe item sold. But, in this case, this particular salesperson lost sight of what her job is in essence—to sell shoes. In order to do so, she would have had to focus on what I wanted. She could have asked if I was looking for a casual or dressy shoe or whether I needed a wider width, or offered an alternative suggestion when I told her the shoes she brought did not fit. **Instead, she ignored my needs and focused on her script (mention sale on purses,**

mention lifetime warranty on socks). How not to sell, plain and simple.

To sell, you have to focus on what your customer wants. That is also plain and simple.