

# Sales Strategies



by Jared Davis

## *Dealing with Quotes*

**H**i, I just need a quote on getting this framed." It's a question framers hear on a daily basis yet in some ways the most challenging to deal with. This question can be offered in a variety of different wordings, such as "I'm just shopping around" or "I want to get a couple of prices first." They all carry the similar possible motives. So let's look at the psychology behind this type of question so you can convert more quotes into sales.

### **What Do They Really Mean?**

What does a customer really mean when asking this question? Do you take it literally, or do you ignore

*Determining a customer's motives and tailoring your approach accordingly can turn a quote into a sale*

it and move on with your standard consultation? When a customer walks into your shop and asks this question, there are a number of possible motives. Here are the most common ones.

**"Sure Thing" Shoppers** – They have every

intention of getting something framed; they just use the question as a general conversation greeting or as a subtle but friendly threat to keep you honest. This is the most common motive. When you discover this fact, it is safe to casually assume the sale.

**"Ignorant" Shoppers** – Most consumers are generally unfamiliar with custom framing, especially if it is their first time. There's a saying that goes "In the absence of knowledge, the only thing left to focus on is price." Price is the one thing that all con-

sumers can relate to, even when they have no understanding of the product whatsoever. With this type of motive, it is important to slow down and provide education about your product as you go to achieve a successful outcome. The more they learn about your product, the less important price becomes.

**"Suspicious" Shoppers** – These are "first time" customers at your business, and they may be slightly suspicious and defensive as they don't quite trust you yet. No one likes to be taken advantage of, so it is vital that you make customers feel comfortable with you and the process as much as possible.

When it comes to selling, the first sale you need to make is yourself. Asking first-time customers how they found out about you can be insightful and an interesting conversation ice breaker.

**"Price" Shoppers** – They really do want a quote and have every intention of shopping around, unless you can convince them otherwise. They can also be potential time wasters and tire-kickers.

### **Qualifying Motives**

There are a number of approaches and techniques you can use to help filter the different types of motives to help you isolate what type of shopper you are dealing with.

**Filtering "Ignorant" or "Suspicious" Shoppers** – "So, have you ever had anything framed before, or is this your first time?" Asking this question will easily reveal whether they are first timers to framing and or to your business. If they've had something custom framed before, then you are safer to assume they are more likely a sure thing.

**Filtering "Price Shoppers"** – "Okay, before we start, I'd just like to mention that we currently have

about a two-week turnaround at the moment. Is this going to be okay for you?" This question creates a forced opportunity for the consumer to reveal their intentions a little more. If they only really want a quote, they'll say this specifically, but if they are a "sure thing" shopper they'll likely reveal a bit more about their intentions.

Here are some more useful responses for handling the "Hi, I just need a quote on getting this framed" scenario.

- "Okay then, let's see what you like, and we'll take it from there."
- "Great, how about we come up with a few different choices and quotes and see which one you like?"
- "That's great! Well you've come to the right place. We have hundreds of design options to suit any taste or budget."
- "Obviously you must have a reason for getting more than one price. Do you mind if I ask what it is?"
- "No problem. So is the price going the most important thing in making this decision, or do you prefer to choose what you like more?"
- "Great, so is there anything you are looking for in particular before we start?"

## Seven Golden Tips for Converting a Quote into a Sale

At the end of a design consultation, you get to a point where you finally have to quote a price to the customer. Here are some strategies to consider that can help convert a quote into a sale.

### *"So when did you need it done by?"*

By using this closing line straight after you quote the price, as in, "Okay, so that only comes to \$495. So, when did you need it done by?"

you do two things. First, this helps to assume the sale with a question the customer is obligated to answer, and it puts the customer in an uncomfortable position of having to back down from committing to the sale. Second, it psychologically encourages a customer not to think "if" this job is going to get done but "when" it needs to be done. This is a highly effective and popular strategy used by many framers.

**Assume the sale** – Rather than presenting a price for the customer to make a decision on, just automate the decision for them. "Okay, so that price only comes to \$490, and we'll have that ready for you by Wednesday the 23rd." Once again, it creates an awkward situation for a customer to back away from.

**Sell the experience** – Remember that you are not just selling "four bits of wood and a piece of glass" but a "design" and an "experience." When it comes to quoting the final figure, don't be afraid to put it into a positive context that is not too clinical. "Today, this fantastic design that you and I have created together is only going to come to \$495."

Remember, custom framing is an emotional experience and doesn't have to be rational and logical. If price really mattered, then chances are they wouldn't be in your shop going through this process anyway as they probably would have found a ready-made solution elsewhere.

**Eye contact** – Eye contact is a critical body language signal. Always look your customers in the eye when you quote price; otherwise they may have reason to doubt your confidence in your own pricing. And that can give them a reason to hesitate about committing to the sale.

**Quote expensive first** – If you are

offering prices on a few different framing options together, always quote the most expensive option first so that each subsequent price option is more affordable than the previous. This way, a potentially price sensitive customer only suffers sticker shock once rather than multiple times.

**Whoever speaks next, loses.** – After you quote your price, stay quiet. In the art of selling, it is common knowledge that whoever speaks first after a price is quoted is the least confident party in the negotiation. Don't start trying to justify your price after quoting it, as it just shows a lack of confidence and creates doubt in a customer. Even if the price is large, if you act as if it's not and that it's just a normal price, then a customer has less reason to suffer doubt as well.

**Avoid verbalizing large numbers** – If you ever have to quote a price that breaks \$1,000 barrier, rather than verbalize the full figure, break it down into individual numbers instead. "That price comes to one, four, eight, nine" rather than "one thousand, four hundred, and eighty-nine dollars." The smaller numbers sound much smaller, and "thousand" combined with "hundred" are big words for most consumers to hear, especially if they are unprepared. Alternatively, you may even choose to write the price on a piece of paper and confidently show it to the customer instead.

## Handling Price Shoppers: An Unconventional Approach

The next time a "price shopper" comes in for a quote, why not try a completely different strategy—one that is frequently used by a handful

of successful framers. For this method to work, you need to consider three things:

1. Be prepared to really spend some time with the customer.
2. Completely personalize the experience for the customer and commit to the process 100 percent.
3. Only use it on "want" consumers, which are typical domestic retail customers. This approach is not effective when you are selling to a "need" consumer, such as an artist, a photographer, or an interior decorator.

After a design consultation with a definite "price" shopper, there's the inevitable moment when they'll ask you for a copy of the quote in writing. Many framers are typically protective of the detailed information of the exact components used in their design, especially if they have invested some time in the consultation. As a result, a framer will choose to protect this information, hiding it in the POS or quote book, only revealing the price alone, written sparingly onto the back of a business card.

However, rather than offer a customer a price-only quote, why not do the unexpected and offer a completely detailed quote, including all product codes, dimensions, and details.

You might find this a crazy idea. However, customers are not fools, and they won't expect this level of sincerely and genuine help. They know you've spent your valuable time with them, and there's an element of guilt for most customers that usually works in your favor.

Explain to them, "Betty (use the first name), I understand you're shopping around for price, and we've spent a bit of time here together today. I don't usually do this, but to help you out I've recorded all the exact details and dimensions for you here in this

quote, so all you need to do is show this information to some other framers and ask them for their price, which should save you a lot of time."

"Now, do you know where some of my competitors are? Would you like me to give you some addresses to help you?"

Before you start saying, "This is a crazy idea," stop a minute and think. What have you done here?

1. By providing all the specific details of the quote, you've actually robbed your competitor of the opportunity to create a personal connection and an experience and relationship with this customer. At the end of the day, people buy from people. It's the personal connections that make the difference.
2. You are offering unexpected sincerity, which people don't expect, and you are banking on some potential guilt, which generally gets the better of most people in the long run.

You continue by saying "Betty, I just want to mention something before you go. You're probably going to find that we are not the cheapest framers in town, and there's a reason for that. Not all frames are created equal. For what it's worth, we only offer the highest quality materials and craftsmanship, combined with the best service and the best value for money. That's why we have been in business for over XX years and we have the best reputation in town."

"Betty, whichever way you choose to go, I sincerely appreciate you considering us and giving us this opportunity. I hope I've helped save you some time and, of course, I hope to see you again. Thanks!"

If you still think this is a crazy

way for handling a quote, look at it this way. If you do lose the sale because you decided to give the customer too much information in your quote, then you lose it for the right reasons—because a purely price-focused (and likely disloyal) customer is never a good long-term customer. All you've lost is some consulting time, which, chances are, you would have lost anyway.

But if the customer returns and you do win the sale (which commonly happens when you try this approach), then you also win it for the right reasons. The customer will chose to give you the business because you spent time with them and gave your genuine help, sincerity, and overall experience rather than your price. Either way, win or lose, you still win for the right reasons.

At the end of the day, don't forget that people generally don't buy custom framing because it is cheap, so don't feel obligated to direct your business towards this approach. And never be fearful of your price when you quote it. Be proud of your product and your price, and your customers will feel confident in paying you what you are worth. ■

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