
Building Trust – No One Trusts You! – Profile Magazine April 2006

Ok, let me get straight to the point – no one is going to give you \$300 bucks and leave their priceless, sentimental memory with you to frame, if they don't trust you!

It doesn't matter if you are the "cheapest framer in town", if they don't trust you, you won't win the job. In fact, being "the cheapest" can sometimes work against you in establishing trust.

If your customer starts saying "so, do I have to leave my priceless family heirloom here with you while you make the frame?", then you know things are not looking good for the "trust factor".

As picture framers, we are in the business of selling a luxury product based on emotion, so establishing trust is not just important for us, it is vital.

"You are never going to successfully sell a luxury, "emotional" product to a retail consumer unless you can establish some sort of trust. "

Your customers won't tell you if they don't trust you. They don't just come out honestly and say, "Hey I don't trust you, so I'm not going to give you my job". In reality, they will just find some other excuse and you will end up losing the job, usually leaving you to think that the issue was your price!

I've seen quite a few framers with "confused reactions" after offering a quote and the customer walking out. Some framers say to themselves "I must have been too expensive, again".... Wrong! It wasn't price... it was simply just lack of trust. Even if you were only going to do the job for free, as an observer, I could tell by the doubtful look on the customer's face that there was no way she was leaving her job here with you. If they totally trust you, then it doesn't matter what your price is, they will pay it!

ESTABLISHING TRUST WITH THE CUSTOMER

Ok, so how do we build trust with our customers?

In the world of retail, recognisable branding is probably the most effective way to establish trust with a consumer. An easily recognised, identifiable brand will help a consumer trust your product or service. However, truly recognisable branding is simply too expensive to establish for most small business operators like ourselves. So in order for custom framers to establish trust with their client, we really must go back to first principles -

TEN STEPS TO ESTABLISH TRUST

1. **Always work on your business "presentation"...** First impressions count! You only get one chance to make a first impression! Have a look at your shop presentation, your display, your signage, your logo, your personal

appearance. Does any of it look a bit “dodgy”? We all get a bit complacent, but maybe it’s time to freshen things up a bit? How a consumer perceives your business always contribute to how you establish trust.

2. **Always make customers feel comfortable “roaming” the store...** Don’t “attack” a customer with questions as soon as they walk through your door! Don’t “stare them down either. Allow your customer to “get a feel” if they want to browse. Allow them to get an idea visually of what you do, and to help them adjust their sensory overload. However, be “available” when they are ready for your help.
3. **Always listen to your customer...** in other words – know when to “shut up!”. When your customer talks to you, listen and use the information you learn about them in your dialogue with them. Everyone has “a story” – so encourage them to tell you their story! They more comfortable they feel about talking to you about themselves, the more they will trust you.
4. **Always be humble and appreciative...** in other words - don’t be a “front counter snob!”. Be grateful - Remember, they are the customer, so make them feel special. They didn’t have to choose your shop! Always leave your attitude and ego under the counter, and also.... Don’t forget to smile! A smile can sometimes make all the difference!
5. **Always be confident...** and play the role of “the expert”, even if you have to “fake it”. If you are not confident in yourself or your decisions & suggestions, then the customer will not be confident in you either.
6. **Always use the customers name...** as much as possible! They will feel the experience is more personalised, and unique to them.
7. **Always use eye contact...** If you can’t look your customer in the eye, then they will either sense dishonesty or fear. This is especially critical when quoting prices. Failure to do this is the quickest way to loose trust.
8. **Always ask the customer how they “feel” about particular design options...** “How do you feel about this design option?”; this type of question takes the focus away from price, and back to the core “emotional desire”. The more emotional the process becomes, the less the price matters.
9. **You can never judge a customer...** by their look, presentation or speech. Everyone is unique and different, and we all look different on our “day off” work. What will be “expensive” to one person; will be affordable to the next. We all have different priorities.
10. **Don’t try to win every customer...** If you have to fight too hard for the sale, then let it sail! There are always some customers you don’t want! (that “customer from hell!”) Usually, the jobs you fight “too hard” to win are the ones that ending up costing you the most money, time or sleep!

In summary, trust is about believability & credibility. The average consumer does not know about the "relative price" of custom framing, and would never know if your price is expensive or not? They just have to be "convinced" that you are not ripping them off, so they need to trust you first. As we all know, telling someone to "trust you" just doesn't work. You have to show them.

Jared Davis CPF, GCF



With over 15 years experience in the framing & graphics industry, Jared Davis CPF, GCF has covered the wholesale, commercial and retail aspects of the business. His previous sales, marketing & training experience gives him an understanding of the changing opportunities for retail businesses, and he offers an up-to-date approach on new methods and techniques now required by today's business owners, to be able to successfully market, merchandise and sell their services to consumers. Jared is also a featured educator at major international industry tradeshow & conventions.