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## **“WOW, THAT’S EXPENSIVE!”**

With prices recently increasing across the board around our industry, the fear of hearing this statement on our front counter feels like a piercing knife through the heart, and can sometimes leave us lost for words? Even though we can predict when this statement is going to come, it still seems a shock to us every time we hear the words come out of our client’s lips?

It’s always important to understand your customer’s feelings, and recognize the meaning of statements like this, so you can handle the situation as professionally (and profitably!) as possible.

Firstly, let’s deal with the psychological aspect of this statement from two perspectives, firstly the consumer, and then the front counter consultant:

### **CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY – “WOW, THAT’S EXPENSIVE!”**

This type of remark is usually driven by ignorance; the customer simply didn’t know what the cost of custom framing their precious memory would be? Most consumers don’t know what to expect, and usually underestimate the dollar value of many products and services they require. The same thing applies to many things we, ourselves, have to buy “without a price tag” for reference, such as getting a quote on car repairs or getting your dishwasher repaired? As consumers, these prices always come as a bit of a shock to us, but we still pay them and move on. So why should custom framing be any different?

It’s our job as professional consultants, to help our clients justify the value of “framing their memory”, by ensuring the focus remains emotional during the consultation, so that the purchase is a “WANT” purchase, not a “NEED” purchase.

We all understand as consumers ourselves, we will usually “pay more” for what we “WANT”, than we do for what we “NEED”. Remember when you are quoting the price, you are not selling “4 bits of wood and a piece of glass”, you are selling a beautiful, unique, custom framed “memory” ...

### **CONSULTANT PSYCHOLOGY - WHY SHOULD FRAMING BE CHEAP?**

When you consider the cost of home furnishings in general, quality custom framing is not that expensive, considering the long term value the client gets from it.

For example:

- Consumers will spend more on a nice quality bedspread & sheets, than they will for nice custom frame on the wall?
- Consumers will spend more on curtains & blinds for windows in a room, than they will on framed pictures for the walls?
- People spend more on light fittings in a room, than framed pictures on their walls?
- It can cost more to put quality carpet throughout an entire house, than it does to put custom framing on every wall?

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... and many of these home furnishings will probably be upgraded & replaced sooner than the framing will?

In simple, relative terms, Custom Framing is NOT expensive? Your product is definitely "worth it!", so never be afraid of quoting the true value of your product and service.

### **ANTICIPATE THE STATEMENT**

Some consultants anticipate and control this situation on the front counter, by making it happen early during the consultation process. Choose an "over the top" moulding and mat design option early during the consultation, quote the price, and get the "price shock" out of the way, so that every subsequent option presented hereafter looks more realistic, and also more affordable.

### **SUGGESTED RESPONSES**

Like anything, the best way to handle a difficult situation like this, is to be prepared for it. Here are some great responses I've heard used by different framers during my travels from business to business. Some are better than others, but I'm sure you will find one that is right for you to rehearse and use in future...

Customer: **"WOW, THAT'S EXPENSIVE!"**

Your response:

1. **Compared to what?** – *"Well I guess that depends on how much this artwork/design/ memory means to you?"*
2. **"Handbag & Shoes" analogy** – *"So is a nice handbag and a new pair of matching shoes, but at least the frame won't go out of style in 12 months?"*
3. **"Dinner & Show" analogy** – *"So is a nice dinner with a bottle of wine and a show afterwards, but the enjoyment of that evening won't last as long as this memory on your wall?"*
4. **"10 years" analogy** – *"Well considering you are probably going have this hanging on your wall for the next 10 years, when you spend \$200 now, that's only going to be \$20 a year, which is less than 6 cents a day – for something that is going to please you every time you look at the wall?"*
5. **"Custom Made Dress" analogy** – *"When you buy a dress from a dress maker, it costs more than a dress "off the rack", but it is "just what you want" and fits you perfectly. Likewise custom framing is also "made to measure" – it will be unique, look fantastic, and fit your style & décor perfectly!"*
6. **Half the Price!** – *"Actually, if you leave a 50% deposit now, it's only going to cost you half that when you come in to pick it up in two weeks time!"*
7. **Smile for a Lifetime!** – *"Well it might make you wince for a minute now, but guarantee it will make you smile for a lifetime!"*

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Finally, for what I think is the “ultimate response”, this one deserves the credit:

**Customer: “Wow, that’s expensive!”**

**You: “No its not..... it’s PRICELESS!”**

If you liked this article, you may want to consider attending my seminar at The Framing Show - “WHAT DO THEY REALLY MEAN? – FAQ’s ON THE FRONT COUNTER”, which covers this and many other “tough questions” frequently faced on the front counter!

See you at the show!

*With 17 years experience in the framing 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 succeed. Jared is the author of “Getting the Most Value from your CMC”, and a featured educator at Décor-Expo, Atlanta.  
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