

"IN CONNIE PODESTA'S BOOK, YOU'LL NOT ONLY LEARN STRATEGIES,  
YOU'LL LEARN THEM FROM AN EXPERT. BUY IT, READ IT, AND BANK IT."

—JEFFREY GITOMER, AUTHOR OF *THE LITTLE RED BOOK OF SELLING*

MAKE A FORTUNE  
**SELLING**  
TO  
**WOMEN**

THE DEAL MAKERS *and* DEAL BREAKERS YOU  
MUST KNOW TO CLOSE THE DEAL EVERY TIME!



**CONNIE PODESTA**

## Chapter 1

### What Women Want:

#### *Five Ways to Close More Sales with Women*

If you're a man, I bet you're thinking that this chapter alone could be worth the price of the book. And you might just be right. Figuring out what women (and men) want has been an interesting project of mine for decades (and will probably continue to keep me busy for years to come). The good news is: there are definitely specific keys to understanding both men and women that will help you be more successful during the sales process. If you're a woman, you probably know what women want in a personal relationship, but you may not have a clue as to what they want as buyers. Even though you have been a buyer yourself, it's doubtful you stepped back during a shopping experience and analyzed how and why you did what you did. It's also hard to separate your personal experiences into general rules without talking to lots of other women about what they look for when they're buying. But if you take all that information and boil it down to the bottom line, you come up with one of the most important differences between selling to men and selling to women:

*With a man, you can concentrate on **CLOSING** the sale.*

*With a woman, you had better concentrate on **COMMITTING** yourself to the sale.*

With her, it is critical that YOU commit to the entire sales process, rather than focusing on just the end result. In other words, the typical aggressive sales techniques that have been the core and mainstay of sales training for decades will probably TURN HER OFF, which will then TURN HER AWAY FROM YOU!

So, are you ready to enter the fascinating, complex, and as much as I hate to admit it, sometimes confusing mind of a woman shopper? Then let's start with some great news:

First I am going to start by recognizing how busy you are and begin this chapter by saving you one full hour of unnecessary time and reading.

Most books on selling to women spend at least the first chapter or two 1) convincing you of how important women are as customers because of their enormous buying power, 2) giving you case study after case study of companies that learned the hard way that they had to advertise, market, and sell differently to women and 3) offering lots of statistics, charts, and graphs supporting right and left

brain theories of communication, the history of gender differences, and the growth of women's purchasing power. And after an hour, you have yet to learn one single thing that you can use tomorrow to help you make more money and be more successful. Since I trust that you are smart and already know that women are critical to the success of your business or career, I thought you might like me to sum up all of that information in a few sentences so we can get right down to the business of helping you close and commit to more deals (and make more money—no apology for that being a major goal as well).

We can begin by eliminating at least twenty pages of statistics, numbers, data, and research. There is only one statistic you really need to know (and believe):

*85 percent of all consumer buying decisions are made or influenced by women.*

No other statistic can compare to this one. No other statistic is necessary in order for you to dramatically increase your "sales to women" quotient. Women are either buying for themselves, buying for someone else, or telling someone else what to buy 85 percent of the time something gets sold! WOW! Now you can begin to understand why this book is so vitally IMPORTANT to your future success in sales.

Now allow me to save you thirty more pages of charts, graphs and useless case studies by giving you the bottom line when selling to women:

It is a documented reality that psychologically women tend to think, act, communicate, negotiate, listen, socialize, make decisions, and SHOP differently than men. Therefore, it's a fact of life that those of us in sales need to adjust our style of selling to accommodate those differences if we ever want to be successful selling to women.

Why is this important? Because it means there is BIG money, AMAZING potential and OUTSTANDING long-term sales relationships in your future if you understand how to sell to women in a way that recognizes and speaks to their unique approach to buying.

Now let's get to work.

Remember, women are usually the experience buyers. They are mentally critiquing each stage of the process and constantly evaluating whether to stay in or get out. After interviewing and talking with literally hundreds of women of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic groups, I quickly realized that women have a very specific set of criteria and expectations in mind when it comes to how they want this whole buying experience to FEEL. (And, by the way, you might as well get used to hearing that word *feel*, because you'll see it a lot in this book.) Emotions, feelings, and a sense of personal connection are some of the biggest differences between male and female buying styles—

women develop feelings about every aspect of the process and those feelings drive their decision to buy from you—or not buy from you. So you have to be able to apply that knowledge when selling to women. If you are a “feelings” kind of person already, you are several steps ahead in the game. If you aren’t, then selling to women will be more of a challenge but don’t worry—I’ll teach you exactly what you will need to do to have that more “personal” touch without leaving your comfort zone.

If there is one question that men have asked more than any other—more than, “How can I earn a million dollars?” or “How can I live longer?” or “How can I achieve wealth, fame, and success?” it is simply “WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?”

But that’s a question for another whole book, and maybe you saleswomen out there aren’t as interested. So for this book, let’s amend the question to ask:

### **What do women want to experience as a buyer in order to commit to the sale?**

Throughout my research, women have told me good stories and bad about their shopping experiences. They told me what they wanted, what they didn’t want, what they needed and didn’t need, what they liked and didn’t like and what they expected and didn’t get. Almost everything they described fell into one of five categories—women said over and over:

- 1.They want the experience to be *PERSONAL*
- 2.They want the experience to be *PROFESSIONAL*
- 3.They want the experience to be *PRODUCTIVE*
- 4.They want to be a *PART OF THE PROCESS*
- 5.They want the experience to be *POSITIVE*

These are the five key elements needed to create the most desirable buying experience for a woman. But let’s look at each one up close to get a better idea of what a woman wants.

#### **1.She Wants the Experience to Be Personal**

The first thing you need to know (and accept) when selling to a woman is:

**It’s not just business, it’s personal.**

Anyone that says that business is not personal doesn't know women at all. For most women the decision to buy is based on many personal beliefs, perceptions, ideas, memories, and most of all—you guessed it—feelings.

Let's face it, no matter who you're selling to, sales requires personal encounters with discussions about what someone PERSONALLY wants or needs, and success is reinforced and sustained by continuing a long-term PERSONAL relationship with each customer whenever possible. It begins the moment those first personal questions are asked: What do you want? What do you need? How can I help you? How can I make you richer, happier, healthier, or more successful?

We salespeople ask both men (results buyers) and women these same questions. The difference is that women are more aware of the PERSONAL side to sales and will make very quick decisions during this initial interview process about whether a salesperson seems sincere, acts courteously, and treats them appropriately, and whether they will feel comfortable doing business with that salesperson. They size the situation up in terms of *how* they want to buy, whereas men tend to focus on *what* they want to buy. The same holds true for communication. Women focus on *how* something is said and men focus on *what* is being said.

Women also tend to be very personally connected to their purchases. I honestly believe that a great many of the purchases women make are directly related to something that is worrying them, and the purchase is made to bring relief—the car is getting old and not safe so let's take it in, the roof might leak so let's fix it first, the kids need clothes, office supplies are low, this old computer might crash, or I want to make sure we can travel when we retire so let's invest. A good example is when my husband and I were exploring different options for a new will. He was not at all excited about the whole process: he can't drive it, eat it, play with it, or sleep on it. Plus, he said it was depressing to think about and not a fun way to spend money. Left to himself, I think making a will would have remained on his "to do when nothing else in the world is going on" list forever. Basically he was there to buy a service not because he wanted it but because I did. This is a perfect example of how women influence men to buy. I, on the other hand, felt we were *personally* (see, there's that word we women like to use) responsible for making sure that everyone was taken care of in the event of our deaths. I didn't think it was fun either, but I was eager to get it done so I could stop worrying about it.

When we met with our estate planner, I brought a huge load of personal stuff into that meeting—my family, my feelings of responsibility, memories, concerns about doing the right thing by everybody, fears about how I would live without my husband, thoughts about what would happen if I

died first (would he remarry, how long would it take him to remarry . . . I got a bit off track). I was also remembering what happened when the relative of a friend died without an up-to-date will: it caused much confusion, heartache, and jealousy among the remaining family members. I wanted to find a person to help me make *my* will who would understand ALL of those factors. My head was swimming as we walked in. Are men and women different? I guarantee you NONE of that was going through my husband's mind! In fact, when I asked him what he was thinking he said, "I should have parked under a tree where it's shady if we're going to be in here very long so the car won't get hot."

As I walked into the office, I was concerned about much more than the bottom line—in fact, details and cost were not even in my thoughts at that point. I wanted to make certain that this particular estate planner was willing to listen and then integrate everything I wanted and needed, not just simply write up a will. I wanted him to have a thorough understanding of all my needs, concerns, worries, and goals so he could create the perfect scenario for us. I was PERSONALLY involved from the beginning of the meeting, even though we hadn't even decided whether or not to use his services. From the moment I was introduced I was aware of each nuance of the process. I immediately began to look for clues as to how I would be treated and whether this was someone I wanted to continue to do business with. Let there be no doubt—I was doing an interview based on how he reacted to my PERSONAL needs and expectations.

My husband, on the other hand, was sitting quietly, waiting to see what was going to happen, and reserving judgment on the details until he had a chance to hear the facts and get a handle on the bottom line. He was focused on the end RESULTS and I was focused on the entire EXPERIENCE. I began "judging" the salesperson way before my husband did.

Like me, many women are looking to accomplish much more in their relationship with a salesperson than finding someone to take their orders. Therefore, you MUST be aware from the very first second how much weight a woman is placing on *who* she does business with. A woman wants to do business with someone she likes and trusts, someone she feels comfortable with, and someone who she believes she can count on. (IMPORTANT NOTE: Making the shopping experience PERSONAL for a woman does not mean being flirtatious, overly intimate, or in any way sexual EVER. That's a deal breaker that goes without saying.) While a man might put up with an unfriendly auto mechanic known for excellent work and great prices, a woman won't. She'll pay a little more and take her car to someone she likes and who treats her with respect—as long as she's still confident he can get the job done. If she's not satisfied with the second mechanic, she'll go to a third and a fourth until she finds someone she can be confident and comfortable doing business with. So remember, when you're doing business

with women, you have to be better than just better than the next guy!

A woman's need for a personal experience means that feelings, the connection between salesperson and buyer, and the possibility for a long-term relationship take precedence in the sales process and are much more important than you might expect. I know a couple who moved into our neighborhood a couple of years ago from an area about thirty minutes away. She still drives the half hour to her hairdresser, dry cleaner, drugstore, and gym. We have all of these services within a block of our house—but it's worth the drive to her to continue to use people she feels "connected" to, people she has developed personal relationships with. Her husband, on the other hand, took no time at all discovering the closest places and switched his services immediately. He discovered he could get the results he needed right around the corner. But since she's focused on the experience instead of just the results, a female buyer is much more likely to stay loyal, even if it means being slightly inconvenienced.

**QUICK TIP:** If you want to sell to women, learning to invest in and manage the **PERSONAL** aspects of the process is critical to your success.

## **2. She Wants the Experience to Be Professional**

Even though women usually want their sales experience to be **PERSONAL**, that does not mean they don't also expect it to be **PROFESSIONAL**. In fact, in order for her to accept and be comfortable with a **PERSONAL** shopping experience, it must also pass the test of being **PROFESSIONAL**. Most women are savvy shoppers, and will ultimately be focused on making a good, intelligent, and price-conscious decision, regardless of their personal feelings—it's just that you will have to pass the **PERSONAL** test before she can move to the next step. Ideally, the two will go hand-in-hand, but don't think you can play on her emotions to get her to make a purchase that isn't in her best interests.

It has often been said that with women, emotion drives reason and with men, reason drives emotion. I don't think this is giving women nearly enough credit. Women couldn't be where they are if they constantly allowed emotion to take precedence over common sense and value. But it's worth noting how much women can do and process at the same time. They can be evaluating the personal side of the experience: Do they feel respected? Do they like you? Do you like them? Are you friendly? Are you enjoyable to be around? And at the very same time, they can be weighing other critical factors: your experience and credentials, the value of the product, the quality of the service, and whether you can be trusted. So when I tell you that a woman wants the experience to be personal, don't underestimate her absolute need for a professional experience. Both weigh heavily in her decision to continue the sales

relationship with you.

Ultimately, every woman is looking for a professional-grade deal. Think of professionalism as one aspect of your brand. That attribute means that everything will be open and above-board (no shady financing deals or merchandise that fell off a truck). It means you'll stand behind your product, she won't have to haggle and hassle to get the same deal her friend got last week, and if and when something goes wrong, you'll accept responsibility and take care of it efficiently and professionally.

Professionalism, for many women, is shorthand for safety—physical, emotional, and financial safety. If women don't feel safe with you, your establishment, or with the deal they're making, they will stop listening and start watching—everything and everyone. They will switch from looking for a good deal to looking for a good exit strategy. Your professionalism is a reflection of your personality, attitudes, and respect for yourself and others. So the first issue is your female customers' level of comfort with you. This is all about your level of respect, trust, and commitment. How you look at her, where you look at her (aim always for the eyes), the tone of your voice, and the manner in which you conduct business are all clues her radar will pick up quickly to determine whether this will be a comfortable and professional situation in which to do business.

**I have not talked to a single woman who didn't have at least one story where a salesperson made her so nervous or uncomfortable that she couldn't get away fast enough.**

There are many examples of unprofessional behavior, but two come to mind for me. Years ago, when my husband and I were buying a house after moving to a new city, I did most of the looking on my own while he worked. The first realtor I worked with was a woman who had me running away from her by the end of the morning. She certainly knew her territory and had an uncanny gift of figuring out exactly what we were looking for, but she wasn't professional at all and made me very uncomfortable. She constantly talked about her other clients and the money they had (or didn't have) to spend. Then at every house we viewed, she would tell me very personal things about the neighbors. Even though she knew her product and had an excellent grasp of what we needed, I felt she shared too much confidential information. I knew if we bought from her, it was just a matter of time before her gossip would include us and our personal information.

The second realtor didn't fare any better—he was very unprofessional but for a totally different reason. I felt uneasy with him right from the start. He was a bit too smooth talking for my taste and made a few glances in the wrong direction. I was immediately uncomfortable and wanted OUT! When we got to the house, it was vacant—but I loved it. The neighborhood, the trees, the charm—it was perfect. Except for the fact that I would have to go inside with him, alone! So I told him I didn't like it

and didn't want to see it. He moved immediately into sales mode—which he should have been in from the beginning—telling me what a great house it was, what a great deal it was—but I didn't care about any of it. I was done—with him—but NOT the house. I found a third realtor and put in an offer. And over the next ten years I gave him at least fifteen referrals. So to a woman being **PROFESIONAL** begins with feeling safe and respected. You respect her time, her space, her privacy, her personal information, and her intelligence.

Being professional also means you're qualified, knowledgeable, and experienced—you're representing your product/service and company competently and she doesn't need to check you out from every angle to make sure you won't try to cheat her or take advantage of her. You know where the lines are and you stay within them. Boundaries are important to a woman and you need to recognize and respect hers.

This professionalism is pretty critical stuff, because if she isn't comfortable with you, the environment, or the deal, she's going to take her business elsewhere, and you will probably never know why.

### **3. She Wants the Experience to Be Productive**

Men are busy, but women are really, really busy. And I'm not whining or complaining about it (although if you ask my husband, he will say I have been known to do exactly that on more than one occasion). Why are women busier than men? In all my years of educating, interviewing, and counseling, it always boils down to one major difference between us and the guys: women have an always-on generator for **WORRY** and **GUILT**, and those two emotions generate a mental to-do list that never ends. Women are like a computer with a hundred tasks minimized at the bottom ready to be "pulled up" and dealt with at any given moment. When my husband walks from the bedroom to the kitchen to get a drink of water, it's a simple task. He goes, gets what he needs, and returns—sounds easy, doesn't it? When I go on the same errand I return thirty minutes later after doing eight other things on my way to the kitchen. My mind sees into nooks and crannies, closets and cabinets, inside and outside. And I usually come back without what I went after because the task took on a life of its own. Men often say (and they have a point) that we women create our own "busyness" and we should just stop worrying. My answer is always, "If I stop worrying, nothing will get done around here."

This worry and guilt springs from a belief that many women hold: it is their job or responsibility to make sure everyone else is happy, healthy, and successful—or, at least, that they could

make it happen by working just a little harder. I often tell my audiences that men live in the present—what is going on now?, how do I feel now?, what can we do about it now?, whereas women live mostly in the past and the future. The past is guilt: what we shoulda, woulda, coulda done differently. The future is what might happen, could happen, probably will happen. Most men are far better at compartmentalizing and tuning in and out depending on what they view as necessary or important that might require their immediate attention. Women view the world more holistically. It's more than just multi-tasking—it's multi-seeing, multi-hearing, multi-doing, and multi-fixing all at once. Almost everything we see and hear reminds us of ten other things, which remind us of ten other things each. So the word BUSY doesn't begin to describe life through a woman's eyes—whether the busyness is self-imposed or not.

What does all of this have to do with sales? Everything! Because she has so many things she needs to do or thinks she needs to do, your female customer doesn't have time to waste (unless she is window shopping, which is a whole experience in itself. But she won't involve you in that). Many salespeople make the mistake of focusing more on productivity with their male shoppers than with their female shoppers when the truth is that women don't want to waste their time any more than men.

It is true that when men are looking to buy, they go in, find what they want at the price they want to pay, and get on with their lives. Therefore, salespeople know right from the beginning that men have little patience with the buying process and would rather be somewhere else—anywhere else. As a result, the astute salesperson gets right to the point with the guys and moves quickly to the bottom line, UNLESS there is an indication that the man prefers to take a bit more time.

Women, on the other hand, usually take far longer to make a purchase. They ask more questions and spend more time weighing their options than men. Salespeople often misinterpret this to mean that a woman is “just shopping around,” has all the time in the world, or is simply indecisive. As a result, the salesperson will often “tune out” the woman who appears to just be “looking” and perhaps even wander off and move on to someone else. Be very careful making any of those assumptions, because you could be way off base. She probably is taking longer because she sees the purchase as part of a bigger picture and she wants to make sure it is going to fit in with whatever else is going on in her life. The sound system she's buying needs to offer great performance, portability for her daughter's college move next year, and adaptability for new technology two years from now, and it has to match the living room decor. Thinking through all those things at once just takes a little time!

Even though a female customer may take longer to close or commit, she still doesn't want to waste any of the time she has allotted for the purchase—she has just allotted more time to begin with

than a man would. But that doesn't mean she wants to be ignored, get passed from salesperson to salesperson, or repeat herself to a salesperson who wasn't paying attention the first time. Never underestimate how precious a commodity time is for a woman. Anything you can do to help her find the right solution to fit her needs will be appreciated. Anything you do to derail the process will be noted and chalked up against you. This is true even though she may appear more social than productive and decisive at first while she is trying to assess whether she likes you, trusts you, and wants to do business with you. This is part of her personal and professional examination of you and the situation at hand. Once she has decided that you are the right person to do the job, she will probably do an about-face and get down to business. Let her take the lead. She'll let you know when she is ready to start buying. You just concentrate on being PERSONABLE, PROFESSIONAL, and PRODUCTIVE.

#### **4. She Wants to Be Part of the Process**

For most women, a purchase isn't just a transaction in which she pays money for the goods or services on offer. It's an entry into a relationship—with you, with your store, with your product or service, and with your company. Because business is PERSONAL with women, if they choose your service, it's often because they are comfortable supporting your business, representing your brand, or becoming part of the circle of your customers. Women are aware that their purchasing decisions reflect back on them and affect the world they live in—just part of the multifaceted approach women take to buying.

Maybe it's because of this awareness that women feel the need to take responsibility for their buying decisions—they don't want to just walk in and buy something (“In and out,” a man might say). They want to weigh the options, learn the differences between them, and decide what's best. They want the information to make good decisions. Women hate to waste time making purchases they will regret, not use, or have to return later. They want to know what makes one brand or product better than another—or why you think one will be better, and whether it really is or not. In short, women want to be a PART OF THE PROCESS and have good interaction with the salesperson.

Now don't get me wrong—men want to be part of the process too, but most salespeople wouldn't dream of excluding a man from a conversation about his purchase. Again there is irony here. Men talk less in the average buying situation, ask fewer questions, and are more anxious to just leave and get on with it than women, yet they are generally included in each step of the process whether they want to be or not. Women, who tell their whole story, ask tons of questions, and have often done far more research on the product often find themselves excluded from some parts because the salesperson

has decided that the information is too difficult, tedious, technical, or uninteresting to share with her. Beware of making one too many assumptions about what a woman wants to know and learn about your product or service, because if she feels cut out of the process, you will lose the sale more often than not.

Being part of the process means more than just being engaged in all decisions and understanding the variables. It also means being listened to—a point we are going to discuss a great deal throughout this book. It means that when a woman wants to explain why she wants something or how it needs to fit into her life, you listen, even if you think you already have the information you need. (If she's still talking, there's a good chance you can still learn something to your advantage about what she wants and why. Pay attention!) It means that when she asks a question, you answer it honestly, without getting irritated or impatient, and you give her an answer that's as complete as she needs. Her questions are more important than your questions.

A great example of being excluded from the process is something that most of you can relate to—and it happens to men and women equally, although for some reason it doesn't seem to bother men as much as it bothers women. I absolutely HATE it when I am buying a car and the salesperson gets up in the middle of our negotiation and goes back to the “manager's” office. Because the offices are glass, I can see them huddled over papers making very important notations and scribbling frantically. Then the salesperson comes back and gives me the “absolute best deal his manager has authorized him to give.” No way! Now I go in and say “I want to deal with the manager or whoever else who has the authority to talk, discuss, negotiate a fair price that works for me, get me the paperwork, and hand me the keys.” I want the person who can do it all WITHOUT leaving me out of the process. I asked my husband about this once (he was the one doing the buying that time, so I didn't feel it was my place to interfere . . . much). I asked him why he put up with them doing this. He simply said, “Cuz that's the way they do it.” “But it's stupid and silly,” I said. “Oh, it doesn't bother me. I'll get the price I want and the car I want anyway. It's just part of the game.” “But it's wasting our time!” I shouted. You know what he said?! “We didn't have much to do today anyway.”

Now we buy cars separately. I like my way and he likes his. I go in, get the person who can make the deal, tell him what car I want and the price I'm willing to pay (after doing lots of research), drive the car, and pick the color. I sign the papers and I drive out. If the dealers aren't comfortable with involving me to that level, I find someone who is!

Making your customer part of the process means that the end result is a good deal for both sides, not just your side. It means that you're her ally, not her competitor. This desire to be part of the process is a key reason why high-pressure sales approaches typically don't work with women. If she feels

pressured, if she feels that you're pushing a deal that's going to benefit you a lot more than it will benefit her, then she will quickly peg you as someone who is not her ally, not her advocate, and not someone she will trust to help her make the very best decision for HER.

The best way to tell if you're making her part of the process is to ask yourself if you are involved in a sales "pitch" or a sales "dialogue." If she isn't talking, asking questions, and following closely along with what you say, she's probably waiting for you to shut up so she can say no or make an excuse to simply leave and go elsewhere. Remember, when a woman becomes silent in a sale transaction—it's probably NOT good news for you!

### **5. She Wants the Experience to Be Positive**

Fact: A woman shops for one of two reasons: because she HAS to (groceries, school supplies, cleaning products, car repairs, insurance policies) or because she WANTS to (furniture, plants, clothes, art, shoes, presents). In both cases, however, the experience had better be POSITIVE. When she doesn't want to be shopping because she has a thousand other things to do or it's not something she really cares about, she will be sensitive to anything that makes the situation worse: hard-to-find parking, annoying music, lack of attention, products out of stock. And when she is shopping for FUN, she will resent anything that makes the situation less than pleasant.

What's the difference between that and what men experience? Men seldom WANT to shop or view it as fun (with the exception of a few things that support their hobbies: cars, motorcycles, sporting goods, electronics, etc.) A man usually expects the process to be boring, mundane, confrontational, and a royal pain in the neck. So he's not disappointed when it is. He is also not as in tune to the environment as she is. He notices long lines, high prices, and what time it is. But he's pretty well tunnel-visioned about getting through the line and out the door. While she's in line (or waiting in your office) she is aware of the colors, the music, the furniture, the displays, the other customers, anything and everything that adds or takes away from the total experience.

But while a man might judge a shopping experience solely on convenience, for a woman, the most important attribute is the sales interaction. The most important criteria for determining whether the experience is positive or not rests on YOU—your attitude, your personality, your style, your smile, your enthusiasm, your commitment to service, and the way you handle the sale itself. It is up to you to set the tone and establish an atmosphere that is conducive to making good purchasing decisions. Her favorite shopping "ambience" is one that is relaxed, cooperative, and hassle-free.

Women are not big fans of “playing the game” when it comes to negotiating the deal. We don’t find it part of a POSITIVE and pleasant experience. That’s not to say a woman won’t do or say what’s necessary to get the right and fair price, but when she HAS to shop, she wants to pay the price and get going. And when she WANTS to shop, she doesn’t want to be embroiled in an argument over price or a product or defend what she wants or needs to buy—that will only destroy the mood and excitement of the moment.

The really GOOD news is that one of the best side effects of a positive buying experience is that it is the fastest way to earn referrals from your female customers. If they get what they want out of a purchase, but feel ambivalent about the experience, they may or may not recommend you or your establishment to their friends. But if they get what they want and they had a positive experience, you’re sure to get referrals. Why? Because women LOVE to talk—they will blast you to anyone and everyone when the experience is negative, but they’ll rave about you to everyone when it’s great! Women, far more than men, will be your biggest advertisers, supporters, and promoters if given something great to talk about.

So exactly what factors determine whether a sales environment is positive? First take a brutally honest look around you: your company and its vision and reputation, your customer service policy, the quality of your product or service, your product’s relevance to your customers, your guarantees, and your culture. Next take an equally close look at yourself: your attitude, your commitment to service, your listening skills, your confidence level, your social skills, your health, your sense of humor—and the list goes on. There are a lot of things that must be present for an environment experience to be considered “positive.” And I do know this—as a salesperson, you can’t afford to be mediocre, middle-of-the-road, or average. You have to create a LASTING and memorable POSITIVE impression.

A great example of the differences in sales experiences—positive versus negative—happened right before my husband and I were taking a cruise to Alaska. We had never been before but some friends had made the trip and had given us a list of excursions we just “had” to take: everything from zip-lining and hiking to bear watching and dog sledding. Just one problem. We live in Dallas—we had absolutely no appropriate clothing or equipment for any of these activities. So I headed to the biggest sports store in the area, a monolithic, three-story sports mecca. I didn’t have a clue what to buy or even what floor to go to.

I approached a saleswoman who was talking on the phone and waited. Finally she looked up and I told her my situation. “Over there,” she said, pointing behind me. “Excuse me?” I asked. “Go over there and you’ll find all the hiking stuff.” “But I need more than just hiking gear, and I don’t know what

hiking gear I need,” I said. “Well,” she said, “I’ll be over before you finish and then I’ll show you where to go next.” Feeling confused, I walked to the hiking department and began picking up anything and everything that looked like it might work—gloves, long underwear, boots, even goggles. A young salesman spotted me, came over, and offered to take a few things out of my arms. He looked at what I was carrying and asked jokingly if I was preparing for a trip around the world. No, I told him, laughing, but then I suddenly became a bit unglued. I told him that I had signed up for all these cruise excursions and now I had no idea what I was doing and I wished I was just staying on the boat relaxing by the pool instead of hiking into the wilderness unprepared. And did they sell bear repellent?

The young man was silent for a moment, and then he did the perfect thing. He smiled, calmly led me to a chair, set all my myriad items in a pile, and said, “OK, we are just going to sit here for a while and figure this out.” I was beginning to feel that he was taking a PERSONAL interest in my trip. “Let me see your itinerary and I am going to take you mentally through this entire week. I have been to Alaska many times and by the time we are done you will not only have everything you need, but you will feel totally comfortable doing all the things you have signed up to do.” With these words, he was assuring me that the time spent with him would be very PRODUCTIVE and that I would definitely be a PART OF THE PROCESS.

Over the next hour, he not only explained and described each and every excursion I was taking, but had his associate go and get the clothes necessary for that particular event. He had an incredible amount of professional knowledge about the products I would need, and he kept my list to the real necessities. It was a very POSITIVE way to spend the afternoon, and was the perfect sales experience for me. And I have been raving about him to everyone I meet. I even gave his name to my travel company and cruise director. And yes, both of these salespeople were on commission. Though how the first young woman was making a living in sales is beyond me.

When a sales experience meets ALL FIVE criteria—it is a slam dunk.

\* \* \* \* \*

Are you totally excited yet? I hope so! This is an exciting business. I absolutely LOVE sales. Well, let me amend that—I LOVE sales when I make the sale, and feel downright terrible when I don’t. But that doesn’t happen too often anymore. Why? Because I’ve pretty well figured out what works and what doesn’t. What turns people on and turns people off! Successful sales is about making tough assessments about yourself and your relationships with other people and then being willing and able to change the things that don’t work. It’s about taking ownership of YOU—and not blaming the prices,

the economy, the customer, or the home office.

Ready to close and commit to more deals with women? Ready to learn more about yourself? Excited to understand more about what makes women buy and shop the way they do so you can use that information to create and sustain long-term relationships with female buyers? Yes, there are a lot of elements to consider when selling to women, but they're all related, too. To help you understand how to apply these principles, we're going to jump into the deal breakers that will kill a sale with a woman, applying these principles as we discuss them. By telling you what not to do, we'll really be showing you ways in which you might be violating these principles and driving women away. So get ready to analyze your present sales strategies and perhaps substitute some exciting new ones!

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