

Can Your Team Sell as Strategically as a 5th Grade Girl Scout?

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Your customer can't spend more with you if they aren't aware of your highest-priced and best options.

There once was a 5th grade Girl Scout who was selling so many cookies, she was invited to share her strategies with many of the nation's troop leaders at a national conference in Cincinnati. She explained several of her innovations that included good territory management and mapping of her ideal "markets/neighborhoods." But the keys to her success lay in her proposing of options, from the most expensive to the least.

She also had tickets to a fundraiser ball to sell, and she was the number-one seller on that front as well. She said, "The good thing was that they were expensive—a lot more expensive than the cookies. But they were worth every penny. Between the chefs from the best restaurants that created a world-class five-course meal to the great entertainment it made for a date night like no other, it was a great deal. And although each ticket was over a hundred dollars, there was a huge discount if you bought two pairs for a double-date night."

After selling tickets for a ball at hundreds of dollars, by the time she got to the cookie conversation many people were relieved! She asked how many people were in the household and captured their names on her "proposal." With her prospect holding a picture of all the products/cookies in hand she would then mention each family member's name and ask what cookies they most enjoyed. She'd make a note next to their name as to their favorites. Then she asked if the family had a freezer.

Once her prospect was thoroughly profiled and qualified, she was able to propose her options: “As you mentioned, your family really likes the treat of having our special cookies. But as you know, we only come around once a year, and the only thing worse than anyone not having their own boxes of their favorites is having those boxes run out in just a few months after you’ve ordered them. Since our cookies are made to be just as tasty after being frozen, my happiest customers stock up for a full year. Or there are several other options. Here is how many of the boxes you would need to keep your entire family happy for the entire year— I call that the gold option. Second, here is how many boxes you would need to keep your family happy for just half the year, the silver option. Finally here is how many boxes you would need to keep your family happy for three months. But you tell me, what do you think everyone in your family would like you to choose, the gold, silver, or bronze option?”

Now, I’m not a big fan of hard closes, but I do like the fact that this fifth grader cared enough to do the work for her customer and figure out what the three possible options might be. And based on her high “renewal rate” with customers, many obviously liked the options.

Most options you will have in your business aren’t as simple as cookies, but the principle of giving options to allow you to raise the bar of potential with many deals will capture you incremental new business, and showing a third option that might be below the scope of what was asked for but is still clearly profitable for you, can help to save many deals that you might otherwise lose.

If your team isn’t able to create and show options as well as a fifth grader, we need to talk!