

FLEXIBLE INSIGHTS

Supply Your Customers With Something Extra

We all know that supporting our existing customers and establishing new business opportunities is more important than ever. Have you noticed lately that your customers are also expecting “more” from you as a supplier than ever before? Things are changing at an increasing pace and your customers and future prospects are looking to their suppliers for in-depth expertise, application experience and the resources to help them get the job done and done right. What they are really looking for is solutions – solutions to their packaging needs. Those that can separate themselves and their company from the competition and orient their selling strategy to solving problems and develop total solutions will win the business and, perhaps more importantly, their customer’s loyalty.

Consultative Sales Solutions

Your ability to provide a consultative sale is not only necessary, but smart. Selling and promoting flexible packaging today is not just about selling packaging materials, but selling packaging solutions. Consumer product companies large, medium and small are all looking to you and your company for support and assistance to move them forward with new ideas and innovative alternative packaging to suit a dynamic and competitive marketplace.

As sales professionals, we must all be keenly aware of how our products and services are utilized within the client’s organization. This may sound obvious, but your awareness must go well beyond what print method or what barrier properties best suit the particular application. Your personal success, as well as the



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success of your organization, can be dramatically affected by your ability to exercise “solution selling.”

Flexible packaging materials today are being used to produce a myriad of package styles and formats. Your ability to get up to speed and better acquainted with the evolving technologies of flexible packaging and the equipment that produce these packaging formats will go a long way to supporting your customers needs and objectives.

Rollstock, pouches, bags, wraps, shrink sleeves, zippers, “sliders,” spouts and fitments are all tools of today’s flexible packaging converter/marketer. Your understanding of the methodology of how these materials interface with the machinery that they run on will go a long way in creating a “solution” approach to your sales.

Network With The Other Side

As my personal activities are mainly focused on the equipment side of the equation, I network with many individuals and companies on the

material side. In my own networking effort, I often find myself supporting many of my colleagues who sell and promote packaging materials. More and more these individuals and companies are looking for advice and information on machinery solutions and other information to support the total scope of supply. Many of their customers are starting to ask their opinions and advice on packaging machinery technology, contract packagers and other key components to the supply chain needed to bring a new project or package on-line.

How do you prepare yourself to sell solutions? Well, the best way is to be aware of what is happening in your own industry. What are the trends? Attend package design conferences, trade shows, not only the converting show, but think about visiting a packaging machinery show like the upcoming Pack Expo in Las Vegas, Sept. 26-28. There you will see many of the systems that your customers use in their packaging operations in action. You may even meet some new strategic machinery partners of your own that can become a key part of your own “solution selling team.”

Consider organizing and facilitating joint presentations with these other suppliers in an effort to put the pieces of the puzzle together for your customer. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated and along the way you will create the customer loyalty and sales building opportunities we are all looking to develop. ■

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