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Confused in Paradise? Not Anymore!



Sitting on the back of an army truck going up a very steep road is not the normal place you'd expect a sales lesson but it happened

I was at Hamilton Island, to speak at the Richardson & Wrench national convention. On the Saturday evening a 'Safari' had been organised to go to the top of the island, followed by a BBQ on the beach. (If you ever go to Hamilton Island, I would recommend it).

Along the way, I asked one of the tour team, Carol, what she did on the island. In her brief reply, she demonstrated the total essence of selling and gathering business: "I work at the tour desk," she said. "Well, not actually at the desk. I found that I couldn't help the clients much being behind the desk."

Carol explained that when she first came to the island, there was so much to do with all the various activities like scuba diving, golf, tennis, visiting the reef, seeing the other islands, go-karting and the like, that she got confused.

What should she do first – then what, etc? After she had been there a couple of months and participated in all the activities herself, she got to know from experience, just how things worked.

She said, "I thought about it and decided that lots of people who come here for a holiday experience the same confusion. It's different for the people who are returning and know what to do. So, now I go and talk to the guests around the pool, on the beach or wherever and help them by asking what sort of holiday they want. By letting them know my experiences, I can help them better plan what they want to do.

"Simple things like how long it takes to go somewhere, would children be OK and I also take my photos along to show them so they can get a feel for how much fun they can have. If they only have a short holiday, a day or two of being unsure of what to do, can be really costly."

I love stories like this! Carol demonstrated the essential core of relationship selling – the simple but effective practice of becoming the – *Buyers Assistant!*

As a "customer" of Hamilton Island, Carol knew the challenge. She had experienced it personally. By putting together such a great range of activities, the Island had actually created a potential problem – confusion of choice – especially for first timers.

A typical dilemma

Many businesses face this dilemma – perhaps yours is one of them? You have gathered or created a range of products and services that you firmly believe give you a real edge in the marketplace. To ensure that your customers are fully served, your range is comprehensive. Variations are available, to customise solutions when needed. You



A lesson on selling from a tropical Paradise – the glorious Hamilton Island

have worked hard to get it just right. Now you are wondering why more people are not using the entire range of your services.

The Essential Question

Start by asking yourself the essential question: "What do people find difficult about doing business with me or my company?" This simple question led to Carol's wonderful insight.

She took into account the customers view of the product - *the range of activities*. Then, she took action to solve the problem - *the confusion*.

Results?

A far better holiday for the visitor.

Outcome?

A delighted customer, and a resort selling more services and activities to people who now had a reason to want them.

Two related perspectives

Selling anything involves being aware of two related perspectives. There's always a *problem* and a *solution*. Each has two ways of being viewed - the customer's view and the salesperson's view. So there are four positions in total.

In business, when we have worked hard to put together a process that we believe is customer friendly, it can be a challenge to constantly review it and look to improve it. After all, before Carol's insight, Hamilton Island had two tour desks, staffed by excellent people who knew their products well and were extremely service focused. It still does.

The Win/Win/Win

Now because the customer's view of the problem was recognised (and I suspect most guests didn't even realise they had a "problem" or that they were "confused"), the service has been enhanced, resulting in a genuine win/win/win.

Why the extra win?

The customer wins with an enhanced experience. The business wins with increased sales and repeat business. And, the staff member wins.

Carol took her idea to

Simon McGrath, Acting GM who approved the trial. Great news for initiative and team involvement.

Footnote: Simon tells me that like any new idea there was a fair degree of comments like, "It works OK now, do we really need to do that?" Now, because of the great results, and positive guest feedback, he is considering starting a second of these roving 'fun ambassadors'. And Carol has the satisfaction of knowing she has made a real contribution.

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