

Bring Offline Sales & Customer Service Online

In order to bring your offline sales and customer service experience online you need to translate the fundamental selling skills a traditional sales person in the offline world would count on to close a sale. Since the online sales person cannot depend such things as eye contact, smiles or body language, we need to look for alternatives that will achieve the same impact. Don't let your sales team be caught off-guard while online, make sure they are prepared to answer questions, overcome objections and make relevant recommendations.

The table below outlines traditional point of sale skills associated with the offline sales and lists the online alternative to use to reach the same ultimate goal... close sales and increase the value of each transaction.

Offline Skill	Significance		Online Substitute
■ Greeting of the customer	Establishes a friendly and helpful relationship from the start	→	Greet customer with a welcoming Canned Response
■ Good eye contact	Communicates honesty and integrity, establishes trust	→	Provide your customer with options and all the information that is relevant to their needs
■ Speak slowly and clearly	Demonstrates that you aren't hiding anything; you are there to provide information and let the customer make their own decision	→	Keep answers brief and keep language conversational
■ Smiling	Another way to establish a friendly open relationship	→	Use positive statements
■ Body Language	It reveals what you are thinking and may give the customer the wrong impression	→	Use upbeat tone and helpful attitude in Chat
■ Selling Benefits	It answers your customer's most basic question- "What's in it for me?"	→	Use Canned Responses to sell product or service benefits
■ Asking Questions	It shows that you are interested in your customer's needs while giving you the information to meet those needs and complete the sale	→	Use Canned Responses for qualifying questions to probe further
■ Telling Stories	It holds your customers attention so you can make your sales points while you build rapport	→	Use Canned Responses for brief yet relevant anecdotes

The impact of chat is based on how and what you communicate to your customer. Whether you are selling online or offline, you need to remember that the most effective way to act towards a customer is with **empathy**. As an online sales person you need to find more ways to be helpful as well as portray a valid and sincere attitude via language and tone used in a chat session.

Why are customers loyal to certain stores and not others? What leads to recurring purchases from these customers? For the most part it is the overall experience that is a combination of their perceptions of the store/company itself and the sales people they encounter. Customers buy from a particular store based on credibility, selection, satisfaction and service. The buy from a salesperson is based on presentation, pleasant attitude, personality, knowledge of products and



personal attention. The correct implementation of LP Chat can help you tie these pieces together to achieve successful online sales and increase customer retention.

Qualify your customers

Ask questions of your customers and get a better feel for their needs and interest so you can make the most appropriate recommendations. Set up Canned Responses with qualifying questions for your sales staff to ask. First ask permission to ask questions for example, "Do you mind if I ask you a few questions? Maybe I can save you a little time and money today." Asking questions demonstrates your concern about making sure they get the right product for to meet their needs. The level of relevancy of the recommendation you make based on the customer's answer will reflect that you truly "listened" to them, hence building trust.

If your customer has a chat history be sure to look at past chats to obtain information to better serve them. When making a recommendation stress the benefits of the products and services that would be important to the customer based on what you learned during qualifying and from past chat transcripts.

Use the FAB Technique in your Canned Responses to communicate the value of your product/ services

Offline sales teams are armed with the sales techniques to close a sale. You can empower your online sales team with the tools needed to implement the same sales techniques with the use of Canned Responses. Build up your knowledgebase with Canned Responses that allow your staff to present features, advantages and benefits that are unique your products / services. Think of how these sales points would be conveyed in a face-to-face conversation with a customer...reflect this very scenario in your Canned Responses.

- F** - Feature: A Feature describes a characteristic of the product or service being offered
- A** - Advantage: An Advantage explains how the Feature can be used and describes what it does for the customer
- B** - Benefit: A Benefit translates an Advantage into a motivation to buy

What are several benefits of your products/ services that might be very helpful to customers? Be clear on answering their question: "What's in it for me?"

Making online products and services tangible

The act of selling is the successful transference of belief and customers are more apt to believe in a product/ service that is presented in a tangible fashion. The online environment presents a challenge in that even product that is normally perceived as tangible can seem intangible to the consumer.

Below are some tips for addressing this challenge:

Products: Customers can't feel the product nor try it on for size. Use Push Pages and images to show that online brochure with all the detailed information your customer is looking for, push a page of the product and similar products available to provide your customer with options. Become that customer's Personal Shopper or Advisor.

Services: When selling intangibles such as insurance, financial services and other services, push tools such as an online brochure, sample contract, competitor comparisons, testimonials etc. to make it seem more tangible. Find a means of drawing a picture in the customer's mind. Take Life Insurance for example, the Canned Response below draws the picture of family, life-time events, life's consequences and establishes a need for Life Insurance by personalizing this scenario.

"Life insurance should be an essential part of any financial plan. Its primary purpose is to provide your loved ones with the protection needed to ease the financial burden of death. In this capacity, the proceeds can be used to help meet your children's college expenses, help ensure a comfortable retirement for your spouse, or assist with the payment of any outstanding debts."

Overcoming Objections

Anticipate people's responses such as the most common resistances to purchasing your product / service. If you anticipate resistance, you actually have a good chance of overcoming them if you are prepared.

List all the possible objections that a customer could give you for not purchasing your product/ service. Then make a list of statements to successfully counter and overcome each specific objection...you now have the perfect Canned Responses for overcoming objections. You may also want to probe a little for reasoning behind their decision, for example:

"No, I don't think I'm interested." This is a statement that needs further clarification. Ask the customer why he/she feels this way. Your Canned Response could read: "I'm sure you have a great reason; may I ask what it is?"

It's easier to sell down instead of selling up

Selling up instead of selling down is like riding a bicycle up a hill instead of down a hill. You must start at the top and let the customer know the best value is the highest-priced option. Have Canned Responses ready to provide other options if customer resists and cannot see the value of your top of the line, high-ticket item. Be ready to offer something at the next level down without the bells and whistles that may meet their needs. But remember, before you start to sell down make



sure you answer the customer's real question "What's in it for me?" Your customer deserves to see the best so don't make up your customer's mind for them by offering them less.

Cross-Sell & Up-sell

Look for opportunities to plant seeds, in other words, use phrases to help introduce and cross-sell or up-sell your products/ services. Group your Canned Responses by related products, this enables your online sales person to react quickly to these opportunities and up-sell with a higher valued item, or cross-sell a related accessory for the product they are interested in. The key to cross-selling is to position the accessory as an integral part or an valued compliment of the product the customer is buying; it is not merely an "add-on". For example:

"How would you like to complete your spa theme gift by complimenting the Spa Kit you chose with Goldleaf & Hydrangea Perfumed Votive Candles? Add a fragrant glow at bath time or any time the occasion calls for a touch of elegance. Packaged 3 per box."

The Trial Close and the Close

Trial closes are delivered in a gentle manner and are designed to get the customer to commit to making a purchase. Here some examples:

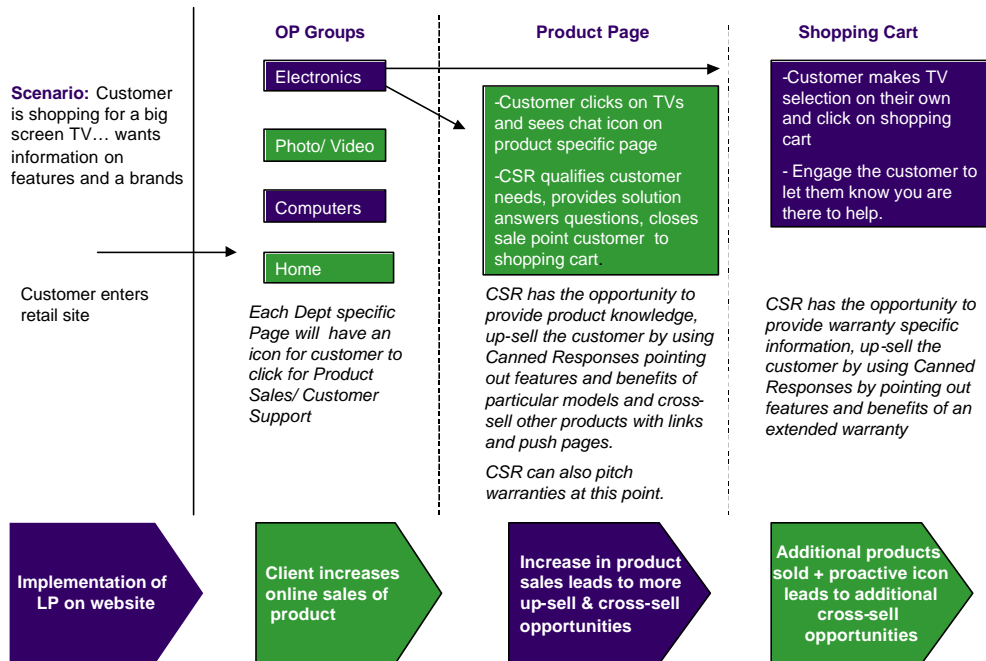
- "Does this one do everything you want it to?"
- "When would you need this delivered? I can make the arrangements for you while we are online."

A successful trial close will prompt you for the actual close after having enhanced the value of a single transaction by taking advantage of up-sell and cross-sell opportunities. It is now time to direct the customer to the shopping cart or even assist them through the payment process. You could close with something like, "Do you need assistance using our shopping cart?"

Sales Strategy Flow

The diagram below depicts the type of online strategy flow that can be implemented in response to sales opportunities on a retail site. This example outlines the process beginning at with the customer's entry into the site all the way through to the shopping cart.

Sales Opportunity & Strategy Flow Example



Ending the Chat

Before ending the chat be sure to ask if there is anything else you can help the customer with. If there isn't anything else, be sure to send them away with a kind good-bye and an invitation to chat again. Here are some helpful ways to end a chat:

- It's been really nice chatting with you. Please chat with us again!
- Thank you for shopping with us. Have a wonderful day!
- Thank you for your interest in <Company Name>. We look forward to chatting with you again.

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