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Sales in the New Normal: Sell Services, Not Product

By Andrew Shore, CAPS

As all of us know, the remodeling market is not what it was five years ago. There is a new normal in the sales world — no longer can you get clients excited about products before proving yourself an expert and establishing rapport. To get clients on board, your sales tactics must start by offering your expertise and experience, not the products you deliver. Communicating the right messages and tailoring them to your firm's capabilities, not the dollar figure at the end of your contract, will seal the deal.

It is critical to truly understand what is driving your client's desire to remodel. What are their wants, needs and fears for their project? The key is to realize every client's first priority is a successful project. As a sales consultant, you have to remind them that buying on price alone will not

projects on time and on schedule while avoiding cost overruns and eliminating problems. At the end of the day, clients would rather pay more for their project if they feel confident it will be successful. Otherwise, every day they will have the nagging reminder that the project they did with someone else has deficiencies, and you offered them a successful project.

A Smarter Solution. After realizing all clients want a successful project, you need to help eliminate their fears. Explain and give value to your process. Justify how your approach to design will cost effectively optimize their budget to get the most function and best appearance. Your experience will help select the best products for the best value based on their goals. Also, explain that your experience has allowed you to accurately schedule projects, which helps avoid surprises and eliminates cutting corners. You may not be the cheaper solution, but you offer the smarter solution. If you address all of these issues, it will help reduce your client's monetary concerns, and you will be building a trusting relationship with them.

Smooth Construction. As a design/build firm, we are not only selling the design, but we also take great pride in our project management. We make a point to explain our construction process and discuss our experience in coordinating products, deliveries and labor. This expertise in the field shows competence and commitment on our part. Homeowners also fear the unexpected. Remodeling can be full of surprises, but how you handle it

is key. Make sure to explain your method of response and how your experience will allow you to handle any situation.

Be the Expert. These days the Internet is everyone's first stop. This is a great tool but a potential drawback to the remodeling business. The Internet allows consumers to load up on information, but they still don't have the knowledge they need to implement their remodel. That's where you come in. Keep in mind you don't have to agree with your clients' opinion. You should be confident in expressing that you don't think they will be happy with a desired product based on your experience and the priorities they have set forth with you. Be the expert and show your value to their remodeling project.

Communication. Starting with your initial meeting, remember how important communication is to clients. Keep them informed about budget changes, what selections need to be made and always reference specific deadlines. Try to stay in touch with each of your clients every 72 hours, even if it is letting them know you are still working on an answer to their question. This will gain their trust and respect and help them realize you are their partner from drawings to completion.

We all should be adjusting to the new normal. You may not be able to compete with the home improvement giants, but remind clients why your services are more valuable and that your experience will ensure a successful project. |QR

Your No. 1 sales tool should be showing your clients how you can deliver projects on time and on schedule while avoiding cost overruns and eliminating problems.

get them a successful project, but involving a professional such as yourself can guarantee a smooth remodel. Here are a few suggestions to include in your sales pitch:

Details, Details, Details. The details and complexity in a residential remodeling project are extensive, and creating a successful project is about pulling all the elements together to meet a client's expectations. Your No. 1 sales tool should be showing your clients how you can deliver



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