

# SUCCESS TRAIN

## Would you like fries with that?

*Suggestive Selling - best epitomised by the famous question “Would you like fries with that?” - is a simple tactic that can improve your revenues and profitability.*

*Julie Vella explains how your business can start to suggest its way to bigger profits.*

IF YOU HAVE ever visited a famous multinational fast food outlet and been asked “Would you like fries with that?” then you have had experience of “Suggestive Selling”, the practise of offering your customers a little (and profitable) extra every time they shop with you.

So, how can you start to use Suggestive Selling in your business?

The biggest obstacle to effective Suggestive Selling is staff who don't ask the right questions - or don't ask any questions at all. But that can be overcome by paying attention to these simple steps.

### 1. Create a great first impression

Customers' purchasing behaviour is greatly influenced by their initial impressions of your staff. To ensure that your staff create the right impression, insist on:

- High standards of personal grooming;
- Uniforms being freshly laundered at the start of every shift;
- Always greeting customers with a smile and using a welcoming tone of voice;
- A positive, upright posture that signals a readiness to serve;
- A sincere, positive attitude;
- Being attentive, but not rushing the customer; and
- A desire to make the customer feel that you are there to serve them, rather than that you are trying to make a sale.

If your staff adopt these practises, their attitude and passion will become evident to your customers and could have a great impact on the number and value of each transaction.

### 2. Acknowledgement

Another important step towards Suggestive Selling is ensuring that your staff acknowledge your customers the moment they walk into your business.

You should train staff to make eye contact with and greet every customer, two signals that show they are available to provide service if required. Staff should also be prepared to stop what they are doing to acknowledge a customer, rather than making them wait.

Other ways to acknowledge customers include:

- A smile or a nod;
- A quick phrase such as, 'I'll be with you in a minute'; and
- When known, acknowledgement by name.

### **3. Customer centred**

The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes is a valuable skill to have when serving customers. Doing so is an effective way of showing that you and your staff are thinking of the customer instead of yourselves. If you can achieve this, customers will feel that your advice is of benefit to them.

### **4. Making a suggestion**

Once your team creates a good first impression, warms up the customer with good acknowledgements and then shows they are there to add value by being customer-centred, you get the chance to have a go at the critical part of Suggestive Selling: making a suggestion!

Suggestions vary for every business, but there is an offer at the heart of every suggestion.

Some suggestions can describe an offer. Telling a customer that 'if you purchase this product today, you get a matching one for half price' shows you are enthusiastic about helping the customer to complete a purchase (which is why they came to you, after all!).

Your suggestion should inform customers about a current offer and its duration. Don't make assumptions or presume a customer would not be interested in your offer. Letting each of your customers know about this offer may not entice them to purchase this time, but it will entice them to revisit at a later date to take up the offer.

*Julie Vella is the Director and Principal Consultant of Success Train, specialising in sales training behaviour skills utilised to retain and attract customers and increase transaction size. The Success Train methodology is to train managers to grow their own business. Julie has 30 years of sales experience, 20 of those in the FMCG industry.*