



# increase your profits *today*

Ten tips for boosting sales and reducing expenses that will affect your bottom line immediately.

Obviously, the best offense is a well-planned, thoughtful defense. I'm sure all of us would have planned our strategy differently two years ago if we would have had a crystal ball and known the financial challenges of 2008.

But now, what can we do in the short term to minimize losses and increase profits? Most of the following suggestions—some of which are revenue enhancers and some of which are expense reducers—can be implemented *today* and provide immediate positive results for your business. Don't let the "re" in "retail" stand for "reactive"; make it stand for "revitalize."

**1 Educate your staff to quote three prices during all sales conversations.** Most customers will select the middle price point. For larger items like sympathy tributes, make the range between prices greater; e.g., \$150, \$300 and \$500.

**2 When creating sales menus, begin with your most expensive items first.** You may be surprised how many customers will select higher-priced items. This is an effective way to educate your sales staff to sell up. Place your more modestly priced and bread-and-butter items at the bottom.

**3 Raise your delivery charge(s).** End the fee(s) with "95 cents." Most customers don't notice a difference between \$10 and \$10.95. By implementing just this idea, you will increase revenue with no effort.

**4 Fire someone.** Every shop has at least one "weak link" who does not contribute his or her best toward the company goals. Fire that person, and don't replace him or her unless it is a key position that cannot be absorbed by the current staff. You owe this decision to yourself, your staff and the "weak link."

**5 Restrict overtime.** Communicate a "No overtime" message clearly, and accomplish all work during regular hours. Develop a "to do" list, and make every labor dollar count.

**6 Bid out business insurance.** Even though you may have dealt with the same company or agent for years, make sure you are not overpaying for coverage. Get at least three bids. Compare and save.

**7 Bid out printing jobs.** Companies are hungry for business today, just like you are. Select a couple of projects, and get at least two bids for each.

**8 Reduce trips to the cooler by creating a foolproof, easy-to-understand flower chart recipe that doesn't require designers to do laborious figuring.** CHRIS DRUMMOND, AAF, co-owner of **PLAZA FLOWERS** in Norristown, Pa., posts prices for flowers by the stem, which are rounded off to even dollar amounts, in large print in the design area.

"Our 'quick calculator' makes it easy for designers to make one trip to the cooler and return to their design benches with everything they need to make profitable designs," Chris explains. "This has saved

numerous trips to the cooler and increased efficiency in our design room."

**9 Be resourceful.** That is what our industry was built on—creating something beautiful from raw materials. **ROB FREDRICKSON**, from **MCNAMARA FLORIST** in Indianapolis, Ind., recovers all reusable items from special events.

"We recover glitter branches, permanent accents, votive cups, hardy foliage, containers and virtually anything that is salvageable," he says. "It really helps our cost-of-goods-sold and sends a strong message internally about the value of what we use."

**10 Mine your customers with fervor.** Your best source of sales is your current customer base. Make it a goal to contact these customers via e-mail, standard mail or direct marketing to stay in touch with them. Set a weekly goal to call your top customers to lock-in orders for upcoming holidays or special occasions. You may be surprised what you will receive by just asking for it.

Make today count by taking action on one or more of these 10 ideas. I welcome your comments and questions at [wkschroeder@comcast.net](mailto:wkschroeder@comcast.net). ■

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