

GLASS HALF FULL

Hiring great salespeople isn't an instant guarantee of success – retail jewellers need to ensure they have put solid sales processes in place if they want to thrive, argues business coach **GREG CHAPMAN**.



TIME SPENT DEVELOPING AN EXCELLENT SALES PROCESS IS AN INVESTMENT INTO THE BUSINESS, AS IT WILL ENABLE THE OWNER TO ACHIEVE THE SALES RESULTS THEY WANT

A common misconception among jewellery business owners is that they simply need to find a great salesperson to ensure the business is successful. They already know how to design great jewellery, be great at providing service and they may even be good at sales themselves, but they believe if they just find someone else who is good at sales, their business will be brilliant!

The owners of any jewellery business that have been around a while are sure to have at least some sales skills. They are also likely to be the best salespeople in their businesses. This is, as you would expect, because they have the greatest incentive to sell – the profit is theirs to keep. As owners are also responsible for the training and support of any sales staff, it's safe to also assume that the skills and motivation of sales staff members will almost certainly be less than those of the owner.

MOST SALESPEOPLE ARE BELOW AVERAGE!

One way to try to arrest a shortage of sales skills in staff is to seek great salespeople. Alas, it's not as easy as it sounds – most salespeople are average or below. Of course, owners can train new sales staff but, if they're not great at sales themselves, it will be the blind leading the blind.

Owners often end up complaining that their sales staff aren't paying their way because they can't produce the same results that the owner produces. Commission increases can help salespeople to increase their motivation but, if their sales ability does not match their claims in the

recruitment interview, no amount of additional money will produce the desired results.

The immediate answer that most people suggest is sales training, and it's a good idea but owners must be careful not to engage in training until they are sure that the store's sales strategy and sales processes are clearly defined. Time spent developing an excellent sales process is an investment into the business, as it will enable the owner to achieve the sales results they want from even average salespeople – even if good staff leave, the processes remain in place.

SALES PROCESS

The sales process should be thought of as a sales pipeline. That is, the step-by-step process for a sale. It starts as someone enters the store. What are the steps?

Do you let the customer browse first, or do you engage them straight away?

When you first speak with them, is it with a greeting? Do you ask "Can I help you?" or do you say something else? These are some of the other questions to ask to create your sales pipeline:

- How do you go about establishing rapport?
- How do you establish need?
- How do you create desire?
- How do you build value?
- How do you overcome objections?
- How do you close the sale?
- How will you follow-up?

Having determined the steps of your sale pipeline, you should fully document each of them. This becomes the basis of any training for your sales staff.

The next step is to see where the sales pipeline leaks. Having segmented the pipeline, it is possible to identify the parts that are working well and the areas where it isn't. It is also possible to measure where staff are performing well and where further training may be required.

Analysis of your sales pipeline can easily double and triple conversion rates. Where in the pipeline do you lose customers? Are you dragging the wrong kind of buyers through the pipeline just to stay busy? How are you preparing your buyers for the next stage in the sales process?

The owner who achieves great conversion rates but despairs over her sales staff's performance, probably has a good sales pipeline, but has not documented it. Once documented, even good pipelines can be further optimised.

Your staff don't have to be the greatest sales people to achieve great results. They don't need to be able to sell ice to Eskimos. It's better to sell Eskimos something they really want, like central heating, and then sell them an ice maker so they don't have to go outside to get ice for their drinks!

It is difficult to recruit sales superstars – someone who can sell ice to Eskimos. It is far easier to create a highly tuned sales pipeline that will turn even average sales staff into sales superstars ♦

Dr Greg Chapman is the author of the top-selling book *The Five Pillars of Guaranteed Business Success*. Obtain a free copy of his Mission Statements Made Easy tool at: FivePillarsBusinessSuccess.com.

