

Title:

The Pretty Woman Theory

Word Count:

484

Summary:

Each initial contact we make with a prospective customer can make or break not only that sale, but potentially dozens more.

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customer service, sales, retail, sales approach

Article Body:

We've all seen it. Julia Roberts is shopping on Rodeo Drive. She's dressed in her "professional" gear and gets that infamous attitude from the saleswomen. And of course, we're all cheering when she stops back by the store in her newly purchased couture, arms laden with shopping bags and delivers my favorite line of all time. "You work on commission right? Big mistake, huge!"

We all love to watch that scene and feel like we identify with Julia. However, I am going to admit something here. I think that, whether we're willing to admit it or not, all of us in sales have been guilty of this crime. I know this is extremely politically incorrect, but come on now. The minute we encounter a customer, we form some sort of split second judgment as to what kind of client they are.

The problem does not lie in that initial judgment (even though it's most likely completely wrong!). The problem is born the minute we allow ourselves to act based on that initial opinion.

The single most powerful sales and marketing tool we have is word of mouth from past and current clients. By the same token, the fastest way to lose business is for one person to have a negative experience with anyone associated with your company. If that happens, you've not only lost that person's business, but most likely anyone that person happens to talk to while they're still upset, and by proxy, anyone that second person talks to, and so on and so on.

So what lesson can we learn from everyone's favorite working girl's shopping experience? I know you've heard it over and over again, but seeing this happen over and over again in stores across the country, I think it definitely bears

repeating. Every person you come in contact with is a potential sale. Every potential sale is a potential commission for you and a potential increase in your company's profits.

It's really that simple, but from my personal experience as a customer, most salespeople don't seem to get it! All customers want is to feel that you appreciate the fact that they're spending money on your product. They don't want to feel as if you're looking down on them, and they certainly don't want to feel as if they're interrupting your day of leaning against the wall looking bored.

If you ask me, projecting an air of self-importance is the single easiest way to fail at retail or any other type of sales. So, the next time you encounter a potential customer try to remember that silver screen moment of Julia and try to decide if you want to be those women that everyone in the theater is booing or the wonderful people who make her feel like a princess!