



TECHNOLOGY

Fresh Ideas to Better Your Business

INDULGE BROWSERS

→ Amazon and Blue Nile have proved jewelry and the Internet make for a *pretty* good combination. But there's still something of a gender gap that makes online shopping unsatisfying for many women. "Too many websites are owned by guys and managed by guys yet we want women to participate," says retail guru Paco Underhill. "Retailers need to understand that not every shopper is looking to complete a transaction," says Underhill, who will speak at the SMART Show on April 18. When women buy jewelry, it's a moment of indulgence. Be sure your website reflects that, Underhill says.



TWEETING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

→ It seems obvious, but bears repeating: drinking and tweeting (or any social media posting) make for a combustible combination. "If you've had a few drinks, ask yourself if you would be tweeting the same thing if you were sober," Dennis Wharton, VP of communications at the National Association of Broadcasters, told *PR News* recently.

EMAIL BANKRUPTCY

→ Drowning in unread emails? Delete them all and start afresh. The key to this unorthodox move, according to tech blogger Fred Wilson, is to publicly declare email bankruptcy. That is, send a message to all your contacts letting them know you're trashing all messages before say Jan. 1, 2015. If their message was really important, they'll send it again. By which point, you'll be way ahead of the productivity curve.



SHANE DECKER
ON SALES STRATEGIES

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MEET A HIGHER STANDARD

SET YOUR PEOPLE UP TO SUCCEED WITH THESE FIVE TYPES OF SALES MEETINGS.

When store owners hire new people but don't train them properly to sell jewelry, I think to myself, "What's the point?" After all, in order to understand the products we sell in our industry, it takes a salesperson at least three years to be fully versed and confident — more if your store carries fine timepieces. So when you make a new hire and throw that person "to the wolves" without training, it not only damages their self-confidence, it makes your client think that none of you know what you're doing.

Weekly sales meetings are the key to ongoing competence on the sales floor. There are five types of sales meetings that you should be holding regularly. They are:

1. Gemological. This is training on diamonds and colored stones. I recommend salespeople take GIA or DCA classes; both are exceptional at delivering the knowledge that a jewelry seller needs to be successful. Remember, your customers are researching your product way more than they ever have before. If you don't train your people on gemology, these cus-

tomers will either go to another store or back to the Internet.

2. Product knowledge. Each salesperson on your team should be a walking encyclopedia of every brand you carry. Too many salespeople allow themselves to be category smart (that is, they know a lot about timepieces but not diamonds). If a client walks in and wants to look at watches and you're the bridal person and can't turn over, because everyone is busy, you just became a sale killer.

3. Salesmanship. This is how to sell. Topics include how to romance the three areas of every

ing. You could meet every day and not cover it all.

4. Store procedure. Information on how your store is run is vital to a well-oiled sales team. You can teach on how to set up and tear down your cases, the correct way to write up repair tickets, and store security rules (a lot of stores wait too long to train on this one). I call this area of training "flawless execution of the basics." If you're not good at the little things, you won't be good at the big ones.

5. Store culture. How you do business is what separates

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sale, how to close all the way through, how to greet and T.O. and add on and wow all clients, and how to handle objections with speed and accuracy. This is a lifelong study. I've trained in over 4,000 stores and I readily acknowledge that I am still learn-

you from your competitors. This includes benefits like service, facts and quality. Facts include how long you've been in business, having a GIA-trained staff, owners on premises, jeweler on premises, diamonds from Antwerp, and so on. Under service are repairs while you wait, battery replacement, laser welding, appraisals, even gift-wrapping. Quality includes expert craftsmanship, your brands, lab reports, platinum mountings, quality control experts, personally selected diamonds, and so on.

Regular, well-planned sales meetings give your people a professional edge. The better trained they are, the higher their closing ratio will be and the more clients will want to come back again.

