

TIPS
GENERAL

Cry Freedom Rings

→ Ever had a recently divorced customer come in with her ring and ask, What can you do with this? Karen Hollis of K. Hollis Jewelers in Batavia, IL, had a flash: What if she made the woman a ring to celebrate her newfound independence? “I made her a ‘freedom ring,’” she recalled, “And she walked out feeling like a million bucks.” Today, Hollis has turned “freedom rings” into a new category of jewelry for her store. The category has a lot going for it. First, as everyone understands, a divorce is wrenching, no matter how bad the marriage had been. “Freedom rings” turn the negativity of the situation into a positive, celebrating the opportunities of the future, says Hollis.

Multipurpose Space

→ Taking a lead from the Apple stores, Andrea Riso, the owner of Talisman Collection in El Dorado Hills, CA, installed iPads and low tables in her kids’ corner, along with a nice gemological touch — small gemscopes — when she built her store in 2013. Kids have rarely been a distraction to a sale since.



Souper Bowl

→ Who needs the Patriots or Seahawks? Radcliffe Jewelers in Baltimore, MD, held their own Souper Bowl: Each employee made a different soup and then everyone in the store voted on their favorite. The event was the latest in a long list of activities held to keep store morale high, says owner John Shmerler. “Our staff always likes an excuse to celebrate. We have theme lunches around holidays (picnic theme for 4th of July, a big holiday potluck in December, etc.)”

FRESH IDEAS TO BETTER YOUR BUSINESS



SHANE DECKER
ON SALES STRATEGIES

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**FAITHFUL FOLLOW-UP
EARNS CUSTOMER DEVOTION**

THREE TOOLS TO HELP YOU STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CLIENTS

Being a top salesperson isn’t just about what happens when the client is in the store — it’s also about what happens after she leaves. Professional follow-up keeps clients from going to the competition, fosters a caring business, and helps to build loyalty.

The first tool of follow-up is the thank-you card. Every client who makes a purchase should get one — every battery client, every repair client, every purchase, whether it’s \$5 or \$5,000. Handwrite them neatly. A thank-you card is just to say “thank you,” not to try to get them to come back in. (You have other tools for that, which I’ll explain in a moment.) You can put your personal business card in there if you want, but no coupons.

The second tool is the cell-phone. A text or phone call allows for back-and-forth communication and builds the client relationship even further. Several of my accounts did a survey and asked clients how they wanted to be contacted after a repair is done. Seventy percent said “Text me”; those over 60 usually said “A phone call is OK.” Very few listed email. One week after a repair is picked up, follow up and make sure clients are happy with the repair. They’ll be pleasantly surprised that you called. And, this can head off any problems, if there are any.

Finally, social media can be a tool to help you learn more about your clients and get to know them as people. Social media also allows them to learn more about you, which builds rapport. People



don’t generally want to discuss their purchases with you through Facebook, but they are often willing to get to know you better and allow you to get to know them better.

Now that you have your tools, when should you use them? There are many opportunities. For the client who made a purchase six months or a year ago, you can contact her to set an appointment to have her ring cleaned and polished, as well as to check and make sure everything is tight. This shows you care. Have her favorite coffee there waiting for her — find out what it is before she comes in. A six-month service call is powerful for building trust.

Always follow up with birthdays and anniversaries if you have that information. This should be a handwritten card — not an email, text or Facebook note. Some of my accounts engrave a nice bottle of wine with the clients’ names and anniversary date. Another of my accounts sends a gift certificate

for a high-end restaurant. Small gifts like these can pay way more dividends toward future purchases than you could ever earn through advertising.

Finally, follow-up during the engagement-ring buying process is critical to closing those sales. The bridal sale has the lowest closing ratio of all sales the first time a client is in, yet it has the highest closing ratio the second time, if an appointment was made. If the sale is not closed on the first visit, take a picture of the ring on her finger and send it to her on her phone. Then she can show her mom and her friends. Text her the next morning after she gets to work and tell her to give you a call to talk about her favorite mounting or diamond or anything else on her mind. Once you get this conversation started, you can text back and forth until you get an appointment. But you must follow up *the next day* — not a week later. The bridal sale loses too much momentum if you wait too long.