

CLUB NETWORK

The official publication for fitness facility owners and managers



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Being real is the only way to sell!

Many salespeople have it all wrong. The other night I was in the middle of cooking my family dinner when I received a telephone marketing call. As I answered the call, my one year old daughter was screaming for me to pick her up, my four year old was hungry and whingeing in the background and I was stressed to say the least!

But the salesperson did not take any notice of this, or if she had noticed it, she didn't see fit to mention it. She started her scripted sales call by asking if I was having a good day and proceeded to ignore everything that she could hear going on in the background to continue with small talk. To me, her approach was annoying, fake and insincere and all I wanted to do was to get her off the phone so I could attend to the many things I was trying to juggle.

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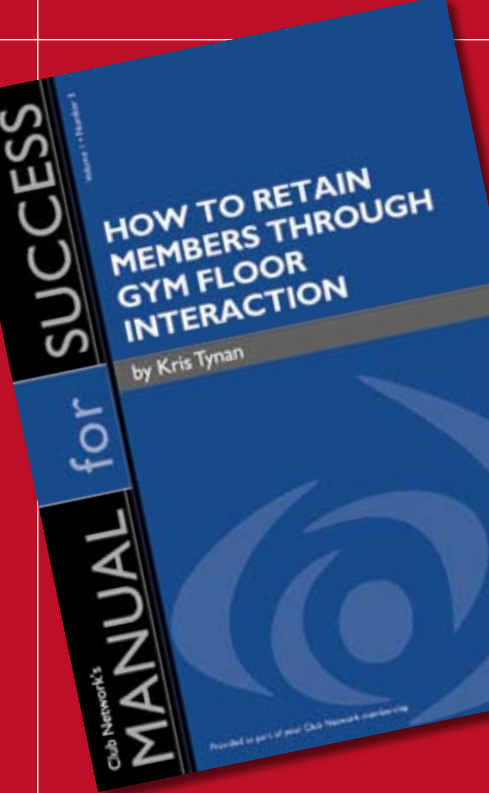
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Being real is the only way to sell!

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As I hung up the phone, I started thinking about whether I could have been swayed to take up her offer of a cheaper phone service. My answer was 'yes' - had her approach been a little different.

Pay attention to the elephants!

The term 'elephants in the room' is often used to describe the situation when people ignore really big, obvious things in interactions with others, like arguments which are swept under the carpet never to be spoken of again. We often ignore elephants in order to be politically correct, so we don't put others off side or because we don't know how to go about dealing with the unspoken topic.

In this example, the telephone sales girl ignored a really big 'elephant'. It was dinner time when she called; she could clearly hear the commotion of my girls in the background and given this, she could have safely assumed that talking to her about changing telephone carriers was probably one of the last things on my mind.

Had this girl been 'real' with me and, rather than follow her scripted banter, said something like 'it sounds like you have your hands full and I really don't want to take up your time but would you be interested in saving money on your phone service', I may have been tempted to ask her to call me back in an hour when things had settled down a little.



Enclosed with your *Club Network* newsletter is your *Manual for Success* publication. This manual is written specifically to help **YOU** increase your facility's profits.

This third issue is written by Kris Tynan and gives you a wealth of practical techniques to improve gym floor interaction, and thereby retention and profit.

Club Network's *Manual for Success* is just another way your Network membership enhances your success.



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Listen when prospects talk



The other day a girlfriend of mine went to check out a fitness facility in her area. It was an impromptu visit during work hours and she had just ten minutes to spare. She is already a member at another gym and therefore wasn't in a position to join this one,

but she wanted to have a quick look at the facilities. She mentioned all of this to the salesperson who proceeded to usher her into the sales office to talk about memberships and prices. This was the last thing that my friend wanted; all she wanted to do was to have a quick look around to see if the facility offered what she was after with a view to possibly joining at a later date when her current membership expired. She didn't want a lengthy discussion with a salesperson in the office and was totally put off by this approach. After clearly explaining her situation to the salesperson they hadn't listened to her needs and had pursued their own agenda. So she politely smiled as she left and will never set foot in that facility again.

Standard sales approaches often don't work because each person is an individual and wants to be treated as such. Had the salesperson said something like 'I know you are short on time so I'm wondering if it's alright with you if I deviate from my standard sales banter and just take you on the tour? I'm actually supposed to sit down with you in the office and discuss prices and memberships, but if you are interested in this sort of information then I can talk about it as I show you around. Are you interested in knowing more about prices and memberships?'

Had the salesperson said this to her, my friend would have felt truly understood and 'heard'. The salesperson has acknowledged the lack of time and has also asked the client whether they are interested in knowing more about prices and memberships rather than just forcing the information on them.

Empathise your way to sales

How is your sales approach and that of your staff? Are you truly listening to your clients needs? If not, you might be putting off many potential customers without even realising it. Just like my friend, they could smile and thank you and then never come back. My friend was one potential new member lost to the facility; and if it happened once, it has probably happened on numerous other occasions. A prospective member walking into your facility of their own accord is a gift; you need to ensure that such opportunities are not squandered by your sales staff. Perhaps the sale won't be closed on that initial visit, but a good impression and empathy for the prospect's situation can go a long way to ensuring that when the time is right for them, they will return and become a member. Being real and trying to understand the other person's situation is the only way to effectively sell to a potential customer. ♦



Heidi Di Santo

Heidi Di Santo is author of the best selling book 'Heidi's Lose Size & Energize' which was featured on Channel 7's 'Sunrise' as part of their 'shape up for summer' program in 2005. She is a lifestyle motivational speaker and is presenting the opening keynote at Network 06. For more information visit www.heidi.com.au



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