



From the Editor

Slow Down and Enjoy

I've tried something over the past few weeks that I highly recommend: Slowing down.

I have been hand-writing notes or picking up the phone instead of sending quick e-mails. Cooking in an oven instead of a microwave. Drying clothes on a drying rack instead of putting them in the dryer. Talking more slowly. Taking my time when I'm reading a book. Easing off the gas pedal.

I started doing this after reading Bill Bryson's witty and engaging book *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid*, a memoir of his life as a boy growing up in the 1950's. I was raised in a different time than Bryson was, but still in the days before cell phones, DVDs, PlayStations and home computers.

When I was a kid, we had virtual reality. It was called "outside."

The result of my slowing down is that I'm appreciating life a whole lot more. I'm enjoying conversations more. Listening better. Eating more slowly and enjoying that more, too. Life seems bouncy again. More fun. Much better as I take the time to enjoy it more. Let it soak in.

I commend to you taking a little more time to do everything in your life. See if it doesn't result in a richer experience.



David Weiman
Editor and Publisher

5 Quick Tips

Here are five quick tips for selling your jewelry more effectively:

- 1. Use your time zone!** If you want to encourage customers to be able to reach you when you're most likely to answer your phone, include your time zone in your marketing materials and on your website. Also, list the times when you're most likely to be available.
- 2. Keep birthstone charts handy.** If you make and sell gemstone jewelry, keep a birthstone chart handy when selling face to face or on your website. People love looking at them (and buying based on them!) and they make great promotional items, too.
- 3. Keep track of birthdates!** Make sure you collect birthdates on your customer information cards or in your database. You can send a "birthday card" with a discount offer, or provide "personal shopper" services to get the birthday celebrant something they will truly love.
- 4. Wear your jewelry every day.** Wearing your jewelry is the most direct way of eliciting comments from others. Those comments lead to sales! As mentioned in a tip from a previous issue, carry business cards, too, so that you can continue the conversation with these prospects!
- 5. Give sample pieces and cards to friends!** If you have some willing friends, "give" them pieces of yours to wear, along with some of your cards. Offer them a referral bonus or percentage for every buyer who sees your jewelry on them, takes a card and then orders from you!

To share a selling tip, send an e-mail to david@marketingjewelry.com. If we use your tip, we'll extend your subscription by one FREE issue.

 Q & A

Q: I'm having trouble finding a professional sales representative to rep my jewelry. I'd rather have a professional trying to sell it to stores. Why can't I find anyone to do that?

A: Artisan jewelry occupies a special place in the jewelry world. It's not mass-produced, so it doesn't nicely yield to the "economies of scale" and volume selling. And it's not thought of as "fine" jewelry (like gold with diamonds, for example) so it doesn't have large profit margins.

The profit in jewelry – and everything else, for that matter – is the difference between what the consumer will pay and your cost to make it. *(Contrary to what some have suggested, your own personal labor is not a "cost" that you should factor into the equation.)*

The more people between you and the consumer, the less you make. If you sell directly to consumers, it looks like this: **YOU → CONSUMER**

If you sell through a gallery: **YOU → GALLERY → CONSUMER**

If a rep sells to galleries for you: **YOU → REP → GALLERY → CONSUMER**

So, the jewelry has to either be very inexpensive to make and sell in volume, or it must be very high end, so that there's enough profit for everyone along the chain from you to the consumer.

That's why some artisan jewelers find that relatives and friends often make the best "reps." They are likely to take less and be much more motivated to help you. Check with your immediate social circle and see if you can't find some folks who would be willing and able to help!

Also, check out the website <http://www.jewelersresource.com>, which shows jewelry makers how to get to the next level of their careers.

Have a question you'd like answered in this space? E-mail questions@marketingjewelry.com.

Feature

How to Handle Objections



by David Weiman

Some sales occur so effortlessly that you may never open your mouth except to say, “Thank you for your purchase.”

Others require answering simple “yes” or “no” questions, or responding with information about the materials you used.

Then there is that other kind of sale. The one in which the person raises a concern they have about buying the item, or a reason they give for not buying it. Those concerns and reasons are called “objections” in the sales world. Despite how common they are, objections are frustrating and upsetting for many jewelry makers. Why? Because your natural instinct – to immediately respond to the objection – is actually the wrong thing to do.

Consider this a crash course in how to handle them!

Examples of common objections that jewelry makers hear include:

“I could make that myself.”

“All you did was put some beads on a string.”

“It’s too much.”

“I’d never buy that.”

“My Aunt Jenny makes that exact same jewelry; did you look at her jewelry before you made yours?”

There are many models for how to handle objections. Here is a simple four-step process you can use:

1. Clarify what the real objection is;
2. Confirm your understanding of the objection;
3. Ask probing questions to identify the client’s preferences;
4. Match your jewelry to those preferences or offer an alternative.

Clarify what the objection is.

The most common mistake that jewelry sellers make is to begin responding to the objection right after the prospect raises it.

One reason people respond quickly is because objections put us on the defensive. When that happens, our urge is to “do something,” so we respond to try and persuade the prospect to buy it.

Another reason people respond quickly is that they’re afraid of losing the sale, and they believe that if they throw out a bunch of reasons why the prospect should buy, one of those reasons will stick.

The problem with responding immediately to an objection is that objections often contain vague information that needs to be clarified before it can be handled effectively.

In fact, often the prospective customer isn't even sure what they mean by their own words. Think about your own experiences walking through a store and looking at a toaster oven. You may have a sense that something's not right for you, but you can't really put your finger on it. If a salesperson were to ask you if you wanted that item, you might say "no," but without a well-developed sense of why it's not what you want.

A common objection in the jewelry world is: "It's too much." That's a vague comment. It could mean that it's too expensive.

It could also mean:

- it's too flashy;
- it's too big;
- it's too chunky;
- it's too clunky;
- it's not right for me, etc.

If you had initially jumped to the conclusion that it's too much money, you might have responded by comparing the price of your jewelry to that of other sellers. But if the prospect wasn't talking about price in that vague comment, you'd be off to a bad start!

So, the first step in handling objections is to clarify what the objection is. Ask a question that leads the prospect to tell you more.

What is the easiest way to do this? Restate what they said in the form of a question.

Prospect: "It's too much!"

You: "It's too much?"

It's simple, right? Well, you'll be amazed what happens right after you put their objection in the form of a question: They'll clarify what they meant.

Now, I know this looks odd when you see it in writing, but it truly works. That's because we naturally clarify when someone repeats our words back to us. It's human nature.

And it happens in conversations all the time. In fact, if you listen to talk radio (politics, sports, or whatever), you'll find excellent interviewers doing this all the time.

Watch Larry King, Oprah, or anyone who does interviewing for a living. They also practice that technique because it's the easiest way to draw more information out of somebody.

When you repeat what a person just said, she knows at some level that we don't understand, so she clarifies.

Clarifying the objection above leads to this conversation:

Prospect: It's too much.

You: It's too much?

Prospect: Yes, it's too big and chunky. Too much for me. I think I look silly when I wear jewelry that big.

Now, with just one question, you've clarified the person's objection ... it's about the size of the piece, not the price tag.

Confirm your understanding of the objection.

Now that the prospect has communicated what she means, make sure you understand it by confirming it with her.

This may seem like an unnecessary step. But it's vital to make sure you're on the same page as the prospect. And it's a simple thing to do. In the example we're working with, you'd simply say, "I see, you think this piece is too chunky for you."

Use her words. Restate or rephrase the comment in whatever way is most comfortable for you. The point is to make sure that you are in agreement,

because that condition of agreement is a new start from where you were when the objection was first raised.

It is much easier to work with a prospect when you are starting from the same place. So, psychologically, this step is quite important.

Ask probing questions to identify the prospect's preferences.

So far in the conversation, you've confirmed the objection. In the example we're using, you've learned what kind of jewelry the prospect *doesn't* like. You want to know what kind of jewelry she *does* like, because when you know that, you can direct her attention to pieces you're selling that match her likes, or you can refer her to someone who makes something more in line with her tastes.

To learn what she likes, you ask probing questions. The more general the questions, the more information you will elicit from your prospect.

So, in the example above, my next question would be:

“What kind of jewelry do you usually like to wear?”

When you ask that question, the prospect will begin to get images in mind of the jewelry she owns, and she'll then start describing it to you.

As the prospect is telling you what she prefers, do this very simple exercise: Imagine in your own mind the type of jewelry she's describing.

This technique is recommended in Harry Beckwith's amazing book *You, Inc.*, and it's the best advice about listening I've ever read.

The reason this works is that conjuring an image in your mind of what another person is describing helps you get close to what they're imagining. It also leads to excellent follow-up questions, because those questions will flow from the images they're conveying to you.

Another tip Beckwith gives is to wait one full second before your respond. Pausing a beat assures the prospect that you've been listening, not simply waiting for an opportunity to start talking again.

Remember to avoid defensiveness. I watch people selling jewelry at their booths all the time, and a common mistake at this stage is to hammer the prospect with information, “Well, that’s not just ANY bead! I bought that bead from the guy who made it. It’s actually made out of wood, not stone, and then he painted it.” If you respond defensively like this, you’ve already lost the person because the conversation should be more about them.

Take your time and learn as much as you can about them.

Your goal is to get off the subject of what she doesn’t like and on to what she does like. You will learn much more about this client when she tells you about the jewelry that she does like ... and you’re going to pause for a second after you’ve imagined it in your mind and then try to learn if there is a match between what she says she already loves and what you make.

Here’s the entire conversation to this point:

Prospect: It’s too much.

You: It’s too much?

Prospect: Yes, it’s too big and chunky. Too much for me. I think I look silly when I wear jewelry that big.

You: What kind of jewelry do you usually like?

Prospect: I almost always wear silver – gold doesn’t look good with my skin tone – and I like blue and red stones generally.

Match her preferences to your jewelry (or offer an alternative).

Now, you want to direct her attention away from the things she says she doesn’t like to what you have that’s similar to what she likes. Point to the piece or hold it up and ask, “What do you think about this piece?” and learn even more about her preferences.

She may be looking to stick with what she already likes. Or, she may be looking for a new idea. Or she may be shopping for someone else!

The point is that probing questions that elicit more about her likes and dislikes will help you match your inventory to her preferred style.

I once talked with a prospect for 45 minutes at the booth before making a sale (of a jewelry book, not a piece of jewelry). I did not respond to any of her objections for the first 20 minutes – I just kept asking her about what she liked and didn't like, what she was looking for, when the last time that she bought something similar was, etc.

Conversations that start out with no sale often end up with a sale if you hang in there and keep learning about the person.

In fact, I believe that during the objection-handling process, you should be forming a connection with the person, and that connection is what ultimately takes over, engendering the trust you need with a new prospective client.

So, learn from your prospect what makes her feel good, then direct her attention to things you have that match that closely.

What if there's no match?

If your prospect says, "No, I'm not interested in that," you might say to her, "If I were to make something in the future that I think you would like, may I contact you?"

Now you're in a position to become her personal shopper, her personal jeweler. She loves that, right? You get her name, a way of contacting her, and in the future, if you make a piece you think she might be interested in, you can write her a note and say, "We met at the Bazaar of Nations show in August and I thought I'd send you this note because I know you're interested in _____." (Fill in the blank!)

You can also keep a network of other jewelry makers in mind whose work contrasts with yours, so that you can refer clients to them appropriately. Your personal referral to someone else will make points with the prospect, and your jewelry-making colleagues will thank you for sending them a pre-qualified prospect! It's a win-win-win.

Practice, practice, practice.

The best way to get good at handling objections is to practice these techniques and this model over and over again.

To take it one step further, if you look at the process of handling objections as an opportunity make friends with people, even ones who start out saying, "I can make that myself," you will ask the right questions and make the right decisions in terms of matching what they love to what you make (or referring them to someone else).

Handling objections is something you can get better at through practice. Develop a core set of questions that you can use to learn more about prospects. And see how the process of asking probing questions, and learning as much as you can before responding, sets the stage for more productive and rewarding selling.

Good probing questions:

- What brought you over to my booth?
- Is there something you saw that you liked?
- What types of jewelry do you usually like to wear?
- What pieces are most special to you? Why?
- Tell me about that _____ you have on? (Refer to a piece she is wearing.)
- Is there something you've always wanted but haven't found yet?
- Is there something here that's similar to what you usually like?
- Is there a style of clothing or type of fabric you feel looks best on you?

Further reading: I have used Brian Tracy's sales CDs and books and found them to be effective. Check out: www.briantracy.com.

Briefs

Connect to your “base” computer when you’re away from home



These days, many of us have laptop computers, and hotels and cafés everywhere offer easy Internet access, making it a cinch to drop in on all your favorite websites when you’re on the road.

But do you ever wish you could check your network e-mail or have access to data you’ve saved on your home or office computer, like maybe a Word document or Excel spreadsheet, while you’re out and about?

Now you can! Websites like Logmein.com and GotomyPC.com are making it easy to access all your files in real time so that any computer with an Internet connection can become a virtual home computer. Both sites offer free 30-day trials and have programs you can download in just minutes. Then all you have to do is leave your home PC on and connected to the internet, and off you go!

After the free trial, GotomyPC charges \$19.95 per month or \$179.40 per year for one PC (which is transferable), and LogMeIn charges \$69.95 per year per computer. So now you can start working on your PC as if you were sitting in front of it – even if you're thousands of miles away.



How would you like to take your sales to new heights? Sell more jewelry than ever?

Attend *The 5 Keys to Selling Handcrafted Jewelry!*

In this dynamic and powerful program, Dr. Weiman teaches you the strategies you need to become a more confident, poised and effective seller of the product you know better than anyone else: Your jewelry! Friday, August 22, 2008, 5-8 pm, Bead Fest Philadelphia. [Click here for more info.](#)

Selling to the “Tween” Market



Most jewelry is bought by adults, especially women. But Hollywood, the recording industry, clothing retailers and businesses of all kinds have discovered that “twens,” or girls ages 8-12, are a huge buying force in today’s economy.

According to a 2007 article in [USA Today](#), 10 million tween girls spent \$11.5 billion from their own pockets in 2006, and [MSNBC](#) says that their parents spend another \$176 billion on them each year. And those numbers are growing. According to the marketing research group Packaged Facts, the combined buying power of tweens and younger teens (two groups comprising 8- to 14-year-olds) will reach \$43 billion in 2009.

One popular brand that caters to the tween crowd and offers jewelry is [Limited Too](#). Their website shows that popular styles are simple ones that feature peace symbols, stars, hearts and butterflies. Also popular are bangles and “gypsy hoop” earrings printed with polka dots and floral patterns. Prices range from \$6 to \$13.



On the higher end is the [Juicy Couture](#) girls’ jewelry line, where selections include chain necklaces and bracelets (see example from their site shown and linked at left) with dimensional heart pendants and charm bracelets with enameled Scottie dogs, hearts, crowns, rings and cherries, with prices ranging from \$35 to \$95.

So next time you’re busy dreaming up designs for your sophisticated grown-up customers, why not devote a piece or two to their daughters and nieces? The designs are simple, and the returns could be great!

REALLY Personal Jewelry!



Two big trends in jewelry — and in many other retail items these days — are personalization and memorialization, and technology is making it easier all the time for companies to offer products that cater to this craze.

One company, A Charming Life (photo from their site linked above), is making charms that sport exact, three-dimensional likenesses of customers' loved ones and pets.

Working from a photo the customer provides, artists at A Charmed Life carve a raised wax image of the subject, make a mold and then cast the piece in gold or silver. Each charm costs between \$179 and \$505 and can also be engraved or embellished with birthstones.

The metal portrait can either stand alone or be mounted on a round, dime-sized background to make a charm that can dangle from a bracelet, necklace, brooch or key chain. The most popular requests are for charms of pets, babies, grandchildren, spouses, grandparents and couples.

Check them out online at www.a-charminglife.com. Maybe you can find some personalization inspiration for your own designs!

Jewelry Selling INSIGHTS

S T A F F



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