

Know Your Competition

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Who your competition is? What their promotional offer is? How often do you shop your competitors? If you cannot answer these questions then you are losing business to your competitors.

Understanding your competition is crucial part of any successful business and is just as important as understanding the products you sell. Many large retailers have full time staff shopping the competition. These folks look at product, price, delivery, installation cost and sales presentation. They then report this information back to management to develop a strategy to beat the competition. These professional shoppers have probably been in your store or called your 800# at some point in the last month or so.

Shopping your competition makes sense for a number of reasons. Here are some of the things to look for when shopping your competition. What models of product do they have in stock? What are they charging? What is their installation offer? Is it free install for everything the customer wants done or is it a free basic professional install? What does the competitor charge for extra services? What is their lead time to get the installation completed? Who is doing the work, is it a company employee or are they outsourcing this to someone else? What is their warranty? Who services the product if it does need repair? Once you have the answers to these questions you will have a better opportunity to sell your customers and overcome their objections to buying from you.

Here are just some of examples of where knowing your competition comes in helpful:

It is not uncommon for a customer to try and play one retailer against another in order to get a better price or product. A customer might come into your store and says that they can get the HDDVR system for \$50 less from the retailer in the next town. Of course you just shopped this retailer and know they do not have any in stock and will not get them for 3 more weeks and is just giving a low price to try and keep a customer. So rather than offering to meet the discounted price you can explain to the customer that you have it in stock and can install it tomorrow so why wait.

Then there is the customer who tells you that the guy down the street will do everything for free. Now you know that this is not the case because you have a copy of their installation form and it states exactly what is considered a basic install and what there an extra charge is for. Show the customer what your basic installation includes and what you charge additional for. Explain to them that you are a professional who is going to take their time doing the work right and ensuring that they are going to be a satisfied customer. Also show the customer the type of materials you use, let them know that you only use the highest quality equipment to ensure a long lasting installation. Lastly explain to the customer that you only use skilled technicians who are trained to do a professional job, show them your industry certifications and letters of reference.

It has been said that knowledge is power. The more you have, the higher the likelihood you will be able to address your customers concerns and turn them into a sale. Taking time to shop the competition should be part of your weekly activity. Consider is part of your overall marketing strategy. If you are unavailable, have your spouse or one of your techs make a call or stop in the store. You will be surprised what you will learn and gain valuable information that can be put to your advantage.

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