



SleepSavvy

October 2012

The magazine for sleep products professionals

The cover story

Create great store videos

And forge new
connections
with consumers

RETAIL ROAD TRIP

Connecticut's Sleep Etc.
sticks with what works

BE MY GUEST

Stop focusing on the close
& try 'selfless selling'



new ideas

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Jeff Klein, owner of Sleep Etc. in southern Connecticut, follows a family tradition of offering customers value, selection and satisfaction.





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WAKE UP CALL

from the editor

Susie's stellar customer service

About once a week, I go to a nearby pizza place for lunch. I like the food and I can easily get in and out in an hour. I also like Susie.

Anyone who's worked in a restaurant knows it's tough. (I did a stint as a hostess one summer during college and the manager was visibly thrilled when it was time for me to quit and start classes again.) Diners can be demanding, the work is physically taxing and the pay, except at the toniest restaurants where tips can really add up, isn't great.

Susie has worked the lunch shift for years. The pizza place is a busy one and for hours

every day, Susie hustles from one task to another, seating customers, taking orders, keeping the salad bar stocked, serving food, rolling silverware, cleaning up after messy children. She never rests.

Still, she greets every customer warmly and quickly gets to know the likes and dislikes of regulars. On most of my visits, Susie isn't assigned to my table. (Usually my server is Willie, who's also a good guy.) Whether Susie is my official waitress or not, she makes me feel welcome and checks regularly to see if I have everything I need.

When she is my server, I try to tip her generously. But Susie isn't nice to me because I tip well. She treats all of her customers graciously, regardless of how many dollars they might leave on the table. (And I've seen plenty of people stiff her.)

Susie is a good waitress because she treats people with respect and care, not to earn a big tip but because treating her customers well is the right thing to do. She cares about people: her grandchildren, her friends, her new husband—and her customers.

In this month's Be My Guest column, Michael Penny, founder of mattress maker Savvy Rest, discusses a concept he calls "selfless selling." (See Page 30.) Rather than focusing on closing the mat-

Susie is a good waitress because she treats people with respect and care.

tress sale, Penny suggests that retail sales associates will be more effective—and happier—if they have empathy for shoppers,

seeing each as a person rather than a potential commission.

As Penny writes, "Selfless selling is a matter of intention. In a sales situation, the first question you ask is actually of yourself: Is my goal to close a sale or to genuinely serve and have an authentic relationship with a customer?"

Susie exemplifies Penny's idea of selfless selling.

If more RSAs did the same, mattress shopping would be as pleasant for customers as my visits to the pizza place. ●



Julie A. Palm

Julie A. Palm, editor in chief

VISIT US AT HIGHPOINT M528

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SNOOZE NEWS

stuff you can use

Mattress care 101

for consumers



As retailers well know, mattress owners are notorious for neglecting to care for their mattresses and foundations.

To help your customers ensure lasting comfort and an optimal return on their mattress investment, pass along these easy-to-follow tips for mattress care from McRoskey Mattress Co. in San Francisco.

1 Flip and rotate. This is not an old wives' tale—a two-sided mattress should be flipped and rotated at regular intervals throughout the year. (Single-sided mattresses should be rotated routinely.) McRoskey recommends flipping a two-sided mattress in the winter and summer (head end to foot end) and rotating it in spring and fall. A box spring requires once-a-year rotation. As a service, consider sending your customers a friendly reminder when it's time for them to flip or rotate a mattress.

2 Protect the mattress. Encourage your customers to use mattress protectors, not only for warranty protection, but simply to keep their mattresses clean, dry and free from stains. Explain why: Introducing any liquid into a mattress can mat the filling materials inside, causing a depression and possibly rusting any springs. Another worry is mold and mildew buildup. Use a waterproof mattress protector for maximum protection, McRoskey advises.

3 Clean spills and stains. For customers who don't use a mattress protector, suggest they follow these steps to clean a spill:

- For liquid spills that soak into a mattress or box spring, use towels to blot. Apply gentle pressure to absorb the liquid. Do not press the liquid into the mattress.
- When cleaning stains, use a mild soap with damp cloth or a spray carpet cleaner. Let the mattress or box spring dry completely before dressing the bed.

4 Use proper support. Purchasers of mattresses should use a bed frame with a rigid center support that supports the head, foot, sides and center of the mattress and box spring. If using bed slats with a mattress and box spring, use at least three rigid, no-sag slats.

5 Stay ahead of mildew. Let customers know they should allow for good air circulation around and under their mattress and foundation. Suggest they air the mattress occasionally and brush or vacuum the top panel when possible.

I've learned to treat sleep with the same respect that I do other aspects of my health. I can't eat chili cheese fries every day and expect to fit in my pants. And I can't go to bed at a different time every night and think I'll feel OK. I've learned that sleep is a big part of who I am—and I want to be the best version of myself.

—David K. Randall,
author of
Dreamland, quoted
in the September
issue of Oprah
magazine

Pillow talk

How can consumers know if their pillow should be replaced? The Better Sleep Council, the consumer arm of the International Sleep Products Association, recommends folding the pillow in half and squeezing out the air. When released, the pillow should spring back to its original shape and fullness. If it doesn't, it should be replaced—and your store should carry an array of pillows to help them choose just the right one for them. (Used pillows make comfy beds for pets.)

88

percent of Americans say
a comfortable pillow is important
for a good night's sleep.

Source: Carpenter Co.

RETAIL INSIGHTS

A DIY approach to improving the consumer experience, part 2

Practically speaking, how can the mattress industry create a better shopping experience for female shoppers?

Last month's column described how a shopper's experience is influenced by her interactions with a variety of touch points and introduced the idea of conducting participant observation to examine shopper behavior.

This month's focus is on how to analyze those insights using "experience design." Its principles are guided by two key questions: Is the design practical and is it desirable? In other words, does the store design help the shopper accomplish her objectives and does she enjoy the process?

A retailer's assessment of experience design hinges on how useful, findable and accessible products and information are in the store. Effective experience design ensures that the shopper can find what she's looking for in a way that makes sense to her. If she's looking for a foam mattress by a specific manufacturer, she will first scan the floor to figure out how the beds are grouped and then look for the specific mattress she has in mind. If she can't easily make sense of how the beds are grouped on the floor, she may have a negative shopping experience.

Recently, the Info Retail team assessed a bedding gallery that featured a separate room dedicated to natural sleep products, where the retailer strived to create a spa-like environment. The room's decor and music were soothing, but the researchers found that shoppers squinted to read signage in the low lighting and frequently commented that the room was too cold, which discouraged them from lingering long enough to lie on the beds. As a result, a space that was intended to promote a zen-like atmosphere actually created a frustrating, uncomfortable experience.

With that in mind, here are some ways to begin analyzing a shopper's behavior:

- Map out a shopper's journey through the store, noting her

activity and interactions. Start with a floor plan of the store and trace a line to show the path she took through the space. The line should indicate what actually happened based on observation, not what you assume the traffic flow to be based on the store layout.

- Go back over the line and circle areas where the shopper paused or took notice of her surroundings. Perhaps it was a directory sign at the entrance of the store or a material demonstration at the foot of a mattress.
- Mark an X over any area or display that the shopper seemed to ignore.
- Create a new shopper journey map for each of the customers you observed.
- Review the maps and examine the Xs and Os marked. Is there anything surprising about shoppers' behaviors and interactions throughout the store? What seems to be working well? What is going unnoticed?

Each X and O represents a leverage point in the store design that can influence the shopping experience. These leverage points can be investigated and redesigned so that they work together as a system, acting as guideposts that lead the shopper to her purchase decision.

Next time: How to investigate these leverage points and begin the design phase.



Betsy Gardner is an account planner at Info Retail and a perpetual student of smart design. Her background is diverse—store planning, strategy, architecture, assistive technology—and she believes each of these disciplines is dependent on understanding user behavior. Gardner can be reached at betsy.gardner@info retail.com. Learn more about Info Retail, a customer experience integration firm based in Atlanta, at www.info retail.com.

Great dates for promotions

OCTOBER

- Oct. 8:** Columbus Day
- Oct. 20:** Sweetest Day
- Oct. 31:** Halloween (It's time to get rid of that creepy old mattress!)

NOVEMBER

National Sleep Comfort Month

- Nov. 4:** Daylight saving time ends ("Fall back" into a new bed set!)
- Nov. 6:** Election Day (No matter who wins, you deserve a new mattress!)

Nov. 11: Veterans Day

Nov. 22: Thanksgiving

Nov. 23: Black Friday

Nov. 26: Cyber Monday

DECEMBER

Dec. 9: Hanukkah begins

Dec. 21: First day of winter

Dec. 25: Christmas

Dec. 26: Kwanzaa begins



Pointers for reaching your target online audience

Ideas to try for effective online ads

Can't decide between lavender and crimson for your store's online ad? Not sure what kind of incentive to offer? Steelhouse, an e-commerce marketing firm specializing in behavioral commerce, offers these tips when you create an online ad:

Headline text: Create a headline using all capital letters to catch the online user's attention.

Background color: Vary background colors based on the season or your store's colors.

Button size and color: Make sure the button size is big enough to easily click and that the color attracts the user's eye.

Personalization: A simple message that says "Welcome back!" or "Thanks, loyal shopper!" can mean a lot to customers.

Offer an incentive: Vary your offers to see which one shoppers prefer. (Free shipping is often more effective than 10% off.)

Segment your site's visitors

If you're operating an e-commerce site along with your brick-and-mortar store, Steelhouse offers these suggestions for segmenting different types of site visitors to "get the most bang for your marketing buck."

Engaged nonpurchasers: These are shoppers who have visited your site two or more times in the past but still haven't bought anything.

Cart abandoners: Shoppers who have placed items in their cart but never check out.

Loyalty shoppers: Shoppers who frequently purchase from your site.

New customers: Shoppers who are first-time visitors.

High-value shoppers: Shoppers who regularly spend above a certain dollar amount.



Yes! Yes! Yes! Questions that work

Here's a little business secret from Inc.com: Short questions can help improve your sales-to-close ratio. Did you know that?

The technique, known as "sales tie-downs," involves adding short questions throughout a sales pitch to engage a shopper so she'll agree with you. That way, she'll be accustomed to saying yes before you ask for the sale.

"Too often, sales reps simply regurgitate their presentations and expect to land the sale," Inc.com's Harvey Mackay writes. "It doesn't work. Shoppers tune out because they aren't engaged in the process. The remedy is to ask little questions along the way and monitor the feedback."

For example, rather than asking questions such as "You know what I mean?" or "Are you following me?" end your sentences with questions like "Wouldn't you agree?" or "Is that right?" Other magic questions: "Isn't it?" "Can't you?" and "Shouldn't it?"



● EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

"The greatest manager has a knack for making ballplayers think they are better than they think they are."

—Reggie Jackson

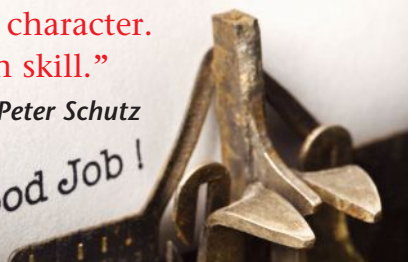
"I don't pay good wages because I have a lot of money; I have a lot of money because I pay good wages."

—Robert Bosch

"Hire character. Train skill."

—Peter Schutz

Good Job!



Is now a good time to renegotiate your lease?

While the country's current slow-growth economy presents hardship for many mattress retailers, it presents at least one good opportunity: the availability of store space. According to business writer J. Tol Broome Jr., retail vacancy rates have been above 10% the past few years.

To take advantage of that trend, retailers can consider moving to a new location (or adding a store), where Broome says you can improve your traffic and most likely reduce your rental rate, even if you upsize.



"Even if your lease expires in 12 to 18 months, some property owners hungry for new

tenants might be willing to help with your current lease buyout," Broome says.

If you don't want to relocate, your current landlord might be willing to negotiate a new lease.

"For instance, if you are currently paying \$15 per square foot with two years remaining on your lease, try renegotiating at \$13 or \$14 in exchange for, say, a new five-year lease," Broome says.

"You'll be rewarded with a lower lease rate, and your landlord will receive peace of mind that you will stay longer in the space."

Buyer beware at yard sales

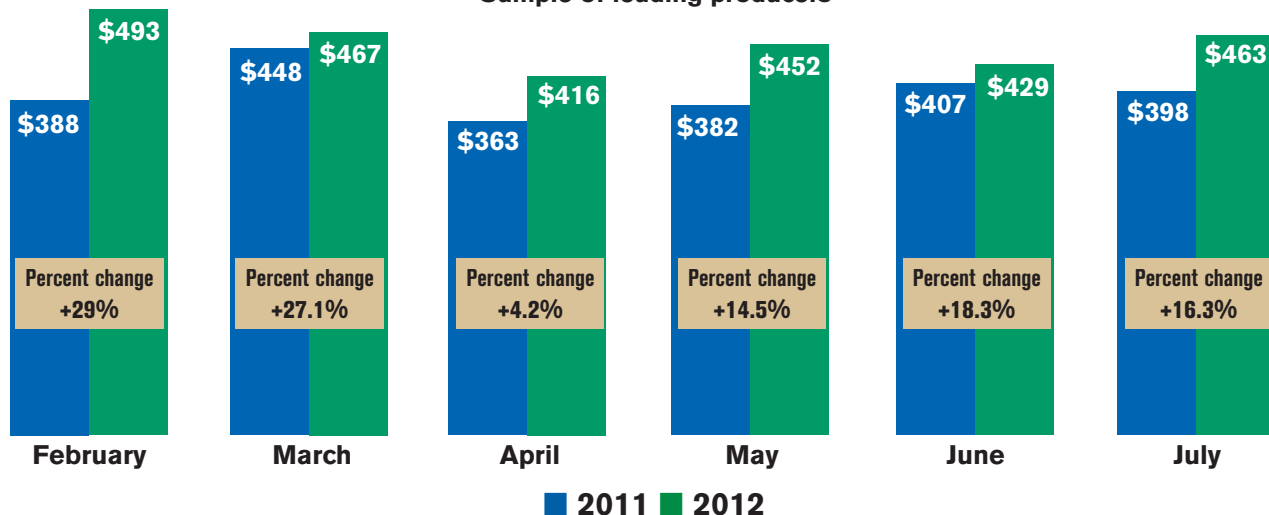
An article in the July issue of *Money* magazine gave readers 10 tips for getting the most value out of shopping yard, estate and moving sales. Tip No. 10 told readers what product categories to avoid buying: "Mattresses, upholstered furniture—forget 'em. The risk of bedbugs is too high." The editors of *Sleep Savvy* couldn't agree more. Although the article didn't mention it, consumers buying used mattresses also take a risk that the beds don't meet the latest flammability safety standards.

BEDDING BIZ BEAT

Sales continued upward in July with unit shipments of mattresses and foundations rising 15.6% over July 2011, according to the *Bedding Barometer*, a monthly sales report from the International Sleep Products Association. The dollar value of those units increased 16.3% compared with the same period last year. The average unit selling price remained essentially flat, creeping up just 0.6% over the same month a year ago.

Mattresses & foundations in millions of wholesale dollars

Sample of leading producers



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Study: Hospital noises leave no rest for the ill

The cacophony of noises commonly heard in hospitals can disrupt a patient's sleep, negatively affecting brain activity and cardiovascular



function, according to a study by Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital and Cambridge Health Alliance.

"Hospitals and actually most urban sleep environments are increasingly noise-polluted,"

says Dr. Orfeu Buxton, assistant professor of sleep at Brigham and Women's Hospital and co-lead author of the study. "This study highlights the importance of sleep for restoration and healing that is particularly important for hospitalized patients."

Twelve healthy adults participated in the three-day study. They were presented with 14 recorded sounds commonly heard in a hospital—intravenous alarm, a telephone, voices in the hall, outside traffic, a helicopter—that grew progressively louder during specific sleep stages.

As expected, the louder the sound, the more likely it was to disrupt sleep, but the type of sound also was a factor. Researchers found that of all sound types, electronic sounds were most arousing, even at a volume just above a whisper.

Even subtle sleep disruptions can cause a temporary elevation in a patient's heart rate. Although the increases were modest, researchers are concerned that repeated disruptions could jeopardize the health of high-risk populations.

The study was published online in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* on June 12.

Research links rare sleep disorder to head injury, environmental factors

Research shows that smoking, head injury, pesticide exposure and farming are risk factors for a rare sleep disorder that causes people to act out their dreams, occasionally causing bodily harm. The disorder, known as rapid-eye movement sleep behavior disorder, is often a precursor to neurodegenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's and dementia.



The disorder is estimated to occur in only 0.5% of adults, but studies have shown that more than 50% of

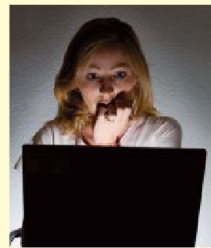
Sleep Shorts

people with the disorder develop a neurodegenerative disease.

The study, led by Dr. Ronald Postuma of the Research Institute at the McGill University Health Centre in Montreal, appeared in the June 27 issue of the online journal *Neurology*.

Light at night compromises sleep

The American Medical Association warns that excessive exposure to light at night, including the use of computers and smartphones, can disrupt sleep or exacerbate sleep disorders, especially in children and adolescents. Long-term exposure to light at night also can cause unsafe driving and an increased risk of cancer, the group says.

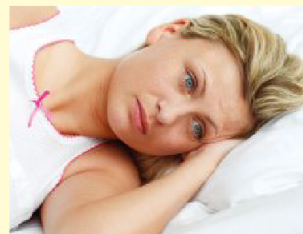


"The natural 24-hour cycle of light and dark helps maintain alignment of circadian biological rhythms, along with basic processes that help our bodies to function normally," says Dr. Alexander Ding, an AMA board member. "Excessive exposure to nighttime lighting disrupts these essential processes and can create potentially harmful health effects and hazardous situations."

Sleep loss can affect food choices & increase anxiety levels

Sleep deprivation can both increase anxiety and impair a person's ability to choose healthy foods, according to two studies from the University of California Berkeley.

In one study, functional MRI scans on 18 healthy adults



indicated that when sleep deprived, the emotional centers of the brain trigger emotional dysfunction and risk. The more naturally anxious a person is, the more vulnerable he is to the effects of lack of sleep.

The second study used MRI scans on 23 healthy adults to show how sleep deprivation impairs regions of the brain where food choices are made. Lack of sleep significantly impairs the frontal lobe, which controls behavior and decision-making. The study of the scans may help shed light on the link between sleep loss and obesity.

The abstracts were presented in June at the annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies in Boston.

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The cover story

Create great stories

And forge new connections with consumers

We all know that mattress shopping has an image problem. It's a subject we address often in the pages of *Sleep Savvy*. But, retailers, did you know one cure to mattress shopping phobia is at your fingertips? It's called Web video.

Video can add an engaging, humanizing new element to your website, blog, Facebook and LinkedIn pages. It can give shoppers a window into your store and create emotional connections to you, your people and your products.

Best of all, video is easy to do and offers a number of value-added benefits.

"Video is such an effective communication tool," says Boston-based Steve Garfield, a speaker, teacher, Internet TV host, video blogging pioneer and author of *Get Seen: Online Video Secrets to Building Your Business*. "Video really helps you tell a story, makes your company and brand stand out online and rank higher in search engines."

Not only is video an antidote to fear and mistrust, today's consumer has come to expect video—from their friends, their families and the companies they do business with. They see video everywhere they go and carry it with them on smartphones and tablets.

"In an era of instant gratification—where people would rather watch than read—it's easier to get your point across and sell more product by showing rather than telling," says Catharine Fennell, chief executive officer of videoBIO, a Toronto-based technology company that offers video creation and video distribution solutions.

There are many topics retailers can cover in simple, engaging Web videos. Are you carrying a new product line? Are you opening a new store? Have you hired an outstanding new manager or sales associate? What are the 10 most common questions shoppers ask when browsing your store? What valuable sleep tips can

you share with consumers?

Now is the time for your store to get video savvy. It's far easier than you may think. Here's how:

Do it yourself

You don't have to spend \$50,000, or even \$20,000, and you don't have to make the ultimate, glossy store video with high production values, say the experts *Sleep Savvy* interviewed. The best way to add video online and in-store is to do it yourself.

"There are tremendous opportunities to create simple videos using consumers and your own employees," says Cliff Pollan, founder and CEO of Visible Gains, an interactive and video solutions provider in Waltham, Mass.

Probably the most difficult and costly video to produce may be the first one that comes to mind—the store overview, or the video equivalent of an "identity brochure." Don't start there, experts say.

Think more simply, Pollan says. For instance, have the person at your company who is most knowledgeable and passionate about your newest or most popular product line discuss and demonstrate it.

If you're especially proud of your white-glove delivery, capture your delivery crew in action. Shoot shoppers testing beds in your store or get footage of your store's next special event.

When shooting video, it makes sense to produce "variations on a theme and test reaction to the different versions of your video to see what resonates most with the audience," Pollan says. "Don't expect to get it right all the time—always plan on throwing the first one away."

Brick-and-mortar retailers can take a lesson from successful online retailers, Fennell says.

"Companies like Zappos and other large online retailers are using more and more video of real people testing product on their websites.

re videos

By Barbara Nelles

Zappos shows people trying on and wearing their shoes, testing their products and talking about them,” she says. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for your company to connect and communicate with other consumers, and it’s becoming a standard tool online.”

Use video to encourage shoppers to come in and give your newest adjustable base a try. Shoot and post a 60-second video demonstrating the bed’s easy operation. Include a close-up of someone operating the hand-set or smart device.

“If mattress shopping has a bad reputation among consumers, turn that into an opportunity,” Fennell says. “Consider approaching the subject head-on in your videos—and with humor. Point to the elephant in the room, then show how your store is nothing like the stereotype. Look for ways of creating new, interesting and funny mattress conversations. How often do people get to talk about their mattresses? Not very often—maybe it’s time they do.”

‘In an era of instant gratification—where people would rather watch than read—it’s easier to get your point across and sell more product by showing rather than telling.’



THE COVER STORY

create great store videos

'Business casual video'

In his book *Likeable Social Media: How to Delight Your Customers, Create an Irresistible Brand, and Be Generally Amazing on Facebook*, social media marketer Dave Kerpen advises companies to regularly create and post "slice-of-life videos" to websites and social media platforms.

Aim for authenticity: Don't allow a "scripted manner" to creep into your videos, Kerpen says.

Marketing and leadership strategist David Meerman Scott calls it the "business casual video," Pollan says. "It has low production values, is authentic and, therefore, is seen as more trustworthy. It's a video that doesn't feel like a commercial."

Video is powerful because it "activates the human voice," Fennell says.

"Video can be really, really effective in doing that," she says. "Think about recording your cus-

The best way to add video online and in-store is to do it yourself.

tomers' testimonials and reactions while they are lying on beds in your store, then posting them online."

You don't need to hire actors for your videos. In fact, according to Pollan, you shouldn't.

"Above all, never hire talent for your videos—viewers will know it's an actor," he says.

Some videos are easy to make; some are more difficult.

"If you're just starting out, pick the easiest subjects with the biggest payoff," Pollan says. "Don't think you're going to make a viral video, but do try to have some fun and inject some humor into your video."

Kerpen advises companies to "shoot simple videos of your team and the space where they work. ... Share video from an organization's summer outing, the opening of a new location or an insider's view of the CEO. The slice-of-life video will be effective in humanizing your brand and letting customers get to know the people behind the company, hopefully building their trust in your organization."

What messages translate well into video? Just about anything. Companies are even sending video emails. Think about embedding a video invitation into your next email about an upcoming sale or store event.

Begin building a video archive of happy customer testimonials. These can be posted to the Web on a rotating basis.

There are many ways to gather testimonials. When following up with customers post-purchase, ask them to speak about their experience with your store and their satisfaction level with their new bed.

For the camera-shy, an audio-only phone interview can be paired with a customer photo. You can ask satisfied customers to email a 15-second testimonial they shoot themselves on a smartphone or webcam. Equip every store with a pocket camcorder for capturing impromptu shopper testimonials.

Ready for your close-up?

One of the easiest ways to get started with a video strategy is to shoot a simple, short (under 90 seconds) video of yourself.

Digital marketer John Jantsch, author of the Duct Tape Marketing blog, suggests launching your video strategy right now, while you're seated at your desk, using the webcam in your computer or tablet.

If you're the store owner or CEO, you can shoot a welcome video for

Tips for video interviews

Cliff Pollan, founder and chief executive officer of Visible Gains, an interactive and video solutions provider in Waltham, Mass., offers several tips for video interviews on his Visible Gains blog (<http://blog.visiblegains.com>):

1 Prepare questions. "Think about what you want to communicate, so you ask questions that get you the right content," he says. "Write down your questions and make sure you have a few open-ended ones."

2 Have interviewees identify themselves. They should give their name, company and title or role. "This is always a good lead-in to your video," Pollan says.

3 Start slowly. Ask just one question at a time, Pollan says. Start with easier questions to help the interviewee relax and feel comfortable.

4 Be quiet. "When the interviewee is talking, remain silent," he says. "It's OK to nod, but you want to record only their voice, so all the content is usable."

5 Use a microphone. "It often helps to put a microphone on your subject," Pollan says. "Good sound is very important to making an engaging video."

6 Get permission. Even when interviewing an employee, make sure to ask the person on camera if it's OK to post the interview online and otherwise distribute it.



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create great store videos



Begin building a video archive of happy customer testimonials. These can be posted to the Web on a rotating basis.

posting on your store's Facebook page. (Just be sure to leave off the sales pitch.) Facebook makes it easy: Click "Add Video," then "Use Webcam" and begin talking.

If you keep the message simple and the length short, you won't need to concern yourself with learning sophisticated editing software just yet.

"Try to capture a video in a single shot," Jantsch says. "Make

it personal. Talk directly to the camera and keep the camera at eye level."

YouTube also makes it easy to record yourself and share short videos. First, create a YouTube account, then click "Upload" on your account home page and select "Record from Webcam." Start talking and when you're done, use YouTube's basic editing tools to finish the video and publish it.

Embed your completed video on your company's website and share it through social media.

If you blog regularly, you can add a dynamic new element by regularly posting videos.

Next, tape an interview

Your next assignment is to shoot an interview. Subjects to consider: a candid customer testimonial, a vendor explaining a product's benefits, the store owner or CEO talking about what sets the company apart or a sales associate discussing her role in helping a shopper choose the right mattress.

Limit it—and all your video projects—to less than two minutes.

When interviewing people, keep the focus on the interviewee—the interviewer doesn't need to be seen or even heard on camera.

"Ask the interviewee one question at a time to make them less nervous. Have them rephrase the question before they answer and edit yourself out of the video," Pollan says. (See more tips on Page 14.)

Upload the finished video to YouTube, embed it on your company's Facebook page and website home page, and link to it through

Equip yourself

The equipment you need to shoot a good quality video is surprisingly affordable. A pocket camcorder, lapel microphone (good sound is critical) and small external light typically are all you need to get started.

In an introduction to videography course, Steve Garfield, a Boston-based speaker, teacher, Internet TV host, video blogging pioneer and author of *Get Seen: Online Video Secrets to Building Your Business*, recommends that beginning videographers purchase the following (prices quoted are from Amazon.com):

- A high-definition pocket video recorder (camcorder), such as Creative Labs Vado HD (\$150), Kodak PlayTouch (\$100), Sony Bloggie Touch HD (\$80) or the compact Sony HDR-CX160 High-Definition Handycam (\$390).

- For camcorders with a microphone jack, buy an external lapel microphone—a Lavalier (\$25) or a Sony ECM-AW3 wireless microphone (\$159).
- Monopod—a portable, single-pole "tripod" to steady your shot (\$15).
- Small LED video light and mounting bracket (\$40).

For more on equipment, as well as essential shooting and editing tips, read Steve Stockman's book *How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck: Advice to Make Any Amateur Look Like a Pro*.

Basic video editing software, such as Microsoft Windows' Movie Maker and Apple's iMovie, comes bundled with most new computers. For more advanced editing, the three most popular programs are Adobe Premiere, Avid and Final Cut Pro X.



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create great store videos

other social media and via your correspondence.

Experiment with multimedia

As you or the staff member you've designated as the official store videographer become more comfortable with the medium, remember that you don't always need to shoot full-motion videos.

Many good "videos" are actually a combination of video and still photographs. Basic editing software, such as Apple's iMovie, makes this type of production easy to assemble.

Incorporating still images with video adds visual interest and can help you smooth over rough spots in your production.

As Pollan cautions, remember

that you're shooting real people—not actors—"and most of us are not that great on camera or we'd be in Hollywood or Washington."

He adds, "You can combine a voiceover with still photos and just a little bit of video, perhaps as an introduction."

Publishing your video

For do-it-yourselfers, posting videos on YouTube and linking to them around the Web is the easiest way to go.

Google ranks video highly—especially videos on YouTube, which it owns. (In 2011, YouTube surpassed Yahoo as the second-largest search engine, after Google.)

"But be sure to optimize your video for search. Remember to

use a descriptive title and write a descriptive description. Put the URL of your website in the first line of your description, making sure to include <http://> so the URL is clickable. You'd be surprised how many people don't do that," Garfield says.

When posting a video to your website or including it in an email, use a call to action in the headline, such as "Click to Watch" or "Watch Video Now" to get more views. Place videos "above the fold" on your website to encourage more clicks.

Don't forget to air your videos in your stores, too. They offer a refreshing change from endless loops of TV commercials from you and your vendors.



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THE COVER STORY

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Getting professional help

Although the experts *Sleep Savvy* spoke with recommend bringing everyday video production in-house, there are a wide range of video professionals—from recent college graduates with excellent technical skills to high-priced production houses—available to handle larger projects. Find someone you can work closely with.

“But realize that once you make the decision to hire someone on the outside, everything is going to slow down,” Garfield says. “You’ll start asking to edit and make revisions and create scripts. Try doing it on your own or delegate the responsibility to someone on staff. Give them complete authority and autonomy in creating the video.” ●

Learn more

- **Video:** Ann Handley and C.C. Chapman (authors of *Content Rules: How to Create Killer Blogs, Podcasts, Videos, Ebooks, Webinars (and More) That Engage Customers and Ignite Your Business*) on why video is important to business (<http://blog.visiblegains.com/ann-handley-and-c-c-chapman-on-using-video>)
- **Video:** “How to Shoot Video That Doesn’t Suck: Official Book Trailer” with author Steve Stockman (<http://youtu.be/jF0z9k93Y9Q>)
- **Wikipedia entry:** “Rule of thirds” on how to frame a shot (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_thirds)
- **Blog:** Adam Westbrook on “How I Develop My Online Video Projects” (<http://adamwestbrook.wordpress.com/2011/05/23/how-i-develop-my-online-video-projects>) and “The Five Principles of Editing” (<http://adamwestbrook.wordpress.com/2011/04/21/the-five-principles-of-editing>)
- **Blog:** John Jantsch on “The Easiest Way to Create Videos Right Now” (<http://www.ducttapemarketing.com/blog/2010/11/22/the-easiest-way-to-create-videos-right-now>)

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RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene

Sleep Etc.



Jeff Klein, (right),
president of Sleep Etc.,
with Anthony Montero,
general manager.

Connecticut retailer
attracts customers
with high-quality
selection & service

By Mary Best

In a time when mattress retailing is frequently associated with superstores, price wars and carnival-like promotions, Jeff Klein, owner of two small sleep shops in southern Connecticut, subscribes to a calmer, gentler retail philosophy.

Some might consider his a David and Goliath tale, but with the Klein family's longevity and reputation, the store's broad selection of mattresses and Klein's dedication to his customers, the Sleep Etc. owner has a trio of weapons in his competitive arsenal.

The Klein name is familiar to residents of the New York metropolitan area. Klein's grandparents owned a store in New York in the late 1950s. And his uncle Herb Klein opened the first Kleinsleep store in New York in the 1950s, growing the chain to some 35 stores over the course of several decades. Klein's father opened two sleep shops in the 1970s—one in Norwalk and one in Stamford.

Even though Klein worked in the stores part time when he was in high school and college, he says he never had any intention of going into the furniture or mattress business. But after college, he briefly

managed one of his uncle's stores.

"I just enjoyed it and improved the store greatly," he says. So, when his father began entertaining thoughts of retirement, Klein bought his two stores in 1993.

Since then, Klein has made significant changes to the relatively small sleep shops. First, he and his brother Steve, who was involved with the store for a while, changed the name from Kleinsleep to Sleep Etc.

"The Kleinsleep name was owned by my uncle and we decided at the time that we would be better off not being part of a chain," Klein says. "We wanted the flexibility to run the business the way we saw fit, from merchandising to marketing. I guess we wanted to put our own stamp on the business that the previous generation had built."

Less is more

Today, the Sleep Etc. exterior remains much the way it was when Klein's father opened it, except for the sign in the front bearing the new name. The 3,500-square-foot store in Norwalk sits in a blue-collar neighborhood surrounded by strip shopping centers and restaurants. In the significantly larger city of Stamford, the 3,000-square-foot store is in a slightly more upscale commercial area.

Klein subscribes to a less-is-more philosophy, which is immediately obvious when shoppers walk through the door. The store is scrupulously clean with a crisp, open appearance. There are point-of-purchase signs facing outward on the glass storefront windows, but Klein says he tries not to overcrowd the inside with them. Beds are neatly organized into rows, with few headboards. Klein's wife, a theater scene designer, suggested he remove most of them.

"We felt they chopped up the way the store looked," he says. "It made

Wearing the distributor's hat

Jeff Klein has been so successful selling Carpe Diem Beds that three years ago, he became the brand's U.S. distributor.

"I'm responsible for everything from shipping to warehousing to marketing to shows to maintaining warranties," he says. "Having a piece of the distribution makes me feel like I have expanded my business."

it look cluttered and smaller. We have very little in the way of posters and banners. We don't have balloons."

Because Klein has expanded the product selection and slanted toward higher-end mattresses in recent years, he has divided the showroom into two sections. Occupying about two-thirds of the showroom are what Klein describes as "traditional" mattresses—inner-spring and specialty foam bedding—sold in many sleep shops.

The remaining one-third showcases his niche—Carpe Diem Beds, a high-end brand of Swedish mattresses carried by few U.S. retailers. Overall, price points range widely—from \$399 to \$30,000. Annual sales are in the \$3 million to \$5 million range.

The "traditional" side of the showroom has 30 models on the floor, in a familiar arrangement. In an effort to dress up that area a little more, Klein says he's hanging oversized lifestyle images in uniform frames "so that it will be colorful and interesting."

Until recently, a wall unit divided the two sides of the store. Klein planned to replace it, but when he removed the old one, he says, "it was like breathing a breath of fresh

air. It made the whole store feel larger and less claustrophobic, so we left it that way. Definitely, with every change we make, it's going in the less-is-more direction."

The presentation of eight Carpe Diem models is strikingly different. The sleek area has a more contemporary design, with hardwood floors, spotlights, back lighting and oversized lifestyle graphics in modern, metal frames. Beds are spaced farther apart to give the customer adequate room to examine each model. (Plus, Sleep Etc. is a low-traffic store, Klein says, with usually only a couple of customers in the store at a time, so privacy for testing beds is usually not an issue.)

"I am proud of the Carpe Diem side of the store," Klein says. "I think it's beautiful."

One challenge Klein routinely faces is space, or rather the lack of it. With small showrooms, he finds his options for display limited. But it's a limitation he's willing to accept. While Klein wishes his stores were larger, he adheres to the adage that if it's not broken, don't fix it, and he's not likely to relocate into larger spaces anytime soon.

"What keeps me here is that we've been here for so many years. I'm nervous about losing that momentum," he says.

Sleep solutions abound

What Klein lacks in square footage he makes up for in selection. Customers can choose from a wide variety of brands, including Englander, Simmons, Symbol and Tempur-Pedic. The store also carries private-label mattresses from Symbol and Englander, which is the retailer's best-selling bed. Carpe Diem is the only Swedish sleep system the store carries.

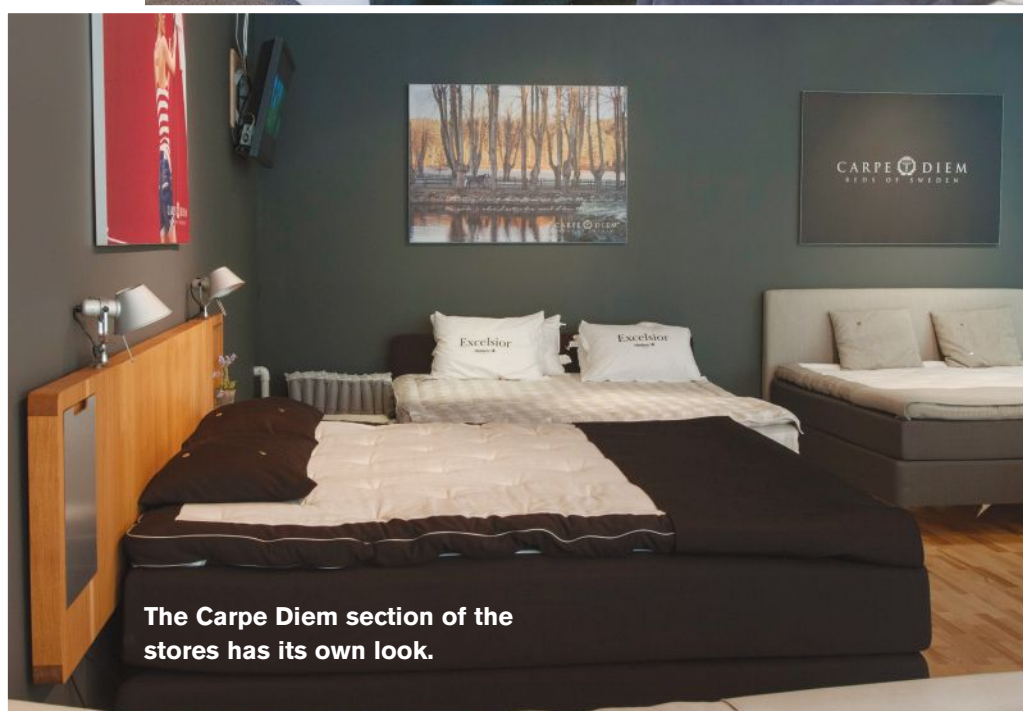
Though Sleep Etc.'s price points vary widely, Klein caters to the higher end. His line of Simmons,

RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene



Sleep Etc. is known for its broad selection of mattresses.



The Carpe Diem section of the stores has its own look.

for example, includes a selection of luxury Beautyrest Black models, and his Englander offerings include the eco-friendly Nature's Finest latex mattress.

"Although we offer a selection at every price point—from \$399 for a queen set—we only have one bed at \$399," Klein says. "Whereas some stores might have a very heavy

selection of medium- to low-end beds, I have a couple of beds at the lower end just to make sure they're available and might be a good match for somebody, but our typical customer is spending more." Carpe Diem mattresses range from \$7,000 to \$30,000. The average ticket among other brands is \$2,000.

Sleeping on the job

Sometimes owning your own business and being a family man means merging the two—bringing family into work. That's exactly what Jeff Klein did on a recent Saturday evening. He took his 4-year-old daughter, 13-year-old niece and 14-year-old nephew to his store for a slumber party.

"We had a sleepover in the store because they thought it would be fun," he says. "And I got some work done after they fell asleep."

Klein adds that Sleep Etc. has been able to attract—and keep—affluent customers from throughout the tri-state area because "they know that our display is slanted toward the higher end and our selection is at the higher end."

In addition to bed sets, Sleep Etc. carries an assortment of mostly private-label down pillows from the

RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene



In the retail business since the 1950s, the Klein name still resonates with consumers.

Spreading the word

Like most of Klein's retail philosophy, his approach to marketing, sales and promotions is understated. He does little advertising in conventional media; the majority of his marketing is online, which he says is critical to attracting customers around and outside the metro area. He doesn't host huge sales and promotional events. What drives his business is word-of-mouth.

"We've been here for 40 years and it is specific merchandise," Klein says.

Half of the store's high-end business can be attributed to Klein's ability to convert walk-ins into high-ticket sales. He says those sales come from customers who enter the store intending to buy a more mod-

United States and Europe, as well as mattress protectors from companies including Protect-A-Bed. He also sells and distributes a chiropractor-designed pillow called the Chiro

Pillow, which is a contour pillow with an adjustable aspect to it.

"We do have some nice accessories and that's an important part of our business," Klein says.

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RETAIL ROAD TRIP

the selling scene

erately priced, “traditional” mattress, unaware that Sleep Etc. carries ultra-luxury beds.

“But when we expose them to luxury, they think it’s right for them,” he says. “When you educate shoppers on the different kinds of technologies and brands that are available, they are more likely to select what you recommend for them.”

Gaining trust

Customer care is a priority at Sleep Etc. and the retailer’s sales strategy is low pressure. On the sales floor, Klein takes a consultative selling approach so customers don’t feel pressured to make a selection. He spends a considerable amount of time with each customer, gaining her trust by asking qualifying questions, show-

ing a genuine interest in matching her with the correct bed and explaining a mattress’ pros and cons so she can make an educated decision.

“I’m quick to point out, for example, that the lowest-priced Carpe Diem mattress is the same quality as the highest priced, so if the lower-priced model feels more comfortable and gives them better support than the model above it, that’s the reason to choose the lower-priced one,” he says. “What I might give away in dollars in that sale I make up in volume because our customers like us and they send their friends and family to us.”

To Klein, sales training is an “attitude adjustment.”

“If the customer doesn’t trust you, they won’t buy from you, so be

completely honest and educational and informative,” he says. “Prove to them you’re a good resource and someone they should trust.”

Customer service continues after the sale. Klein offers a three-month guarantee and says his nine employees “pitch in to get the job done.”

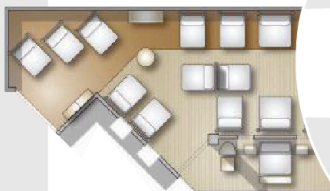
“We have our responsibilities, but we take the approach that if you have something to do, you just get it done,” he says. “We’ll do what needs to get done, even if I have to go to a customer’s house to check things out to make sure no mistakes are made.”

Klein continues: “My father’s philosophy, which has always stuck with me, was to be honest with people and offer a good value, and they will want to buy from you.” ●

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HER BED POST

by **Delia Passi**

5 tips for talking to women

Much of human interaction is selling. We talk to our kids about what they should do, but often we're really selling them on the idea of being better people. We talk to our co-workers, but frequently are trying to sell them on doing a better job. The whole idea behind dating is selling yourself to another person.

No matter who you are or what you do, you need to have some decent selling skills to get what you want.

Because so many men struggle with talking to women, I developed a set of simple rules of thumb for men to remember when communicating with women. They apply to a wide variety of situations, from dating to interacting with co-workers—and, of course, mattress retailing. Here are the rules, using the letters of my first name as a memory aid:

D - Don't interrupt. Men interrupt each other in conversation routinely, but women don't appreciate it. Wait for her to finish.

E - Eye contact. Women appreciate when a man looks her in the eye when talking to her. Don't look around or stare at things you shouldn't.

L - Listen. This should be a man's mantra when communicating with women. Talk less; listen more.

I - Image. Look your best. Sloppiness doesn't count with most women. Being clean and neat does.

A - Attitude. Be positive, friendly and nonthreatening. Carry yourself with confidence.

Men who practice these five DELIA rules will find they have greater success selling to women in the mattress showroom—and in dealing with women in their families and social circles, too.

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Delia Passi, the nation's leading expert on selling to women, is president and chief executive of Medelia Inc. She's also founder of WomenCertified, which awards businesses

and brands the Women's Choice Award for meeting a higher standard of customer experience among women.

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RedPlum Purse String Study

Deal-seeking shoppers have a 'forever frugal mindset'

Nearly two-thirds of consumers spend as much as two hours a week trying to spend less on their purchases, according to the fifth annual RedPlum Purse String Study from Valassis, a media and marketing services company based in Livonia, Mich. Those same consumers' efforts pay off, saving them as much as \$30 a week.

The survey found consumers are getting more efficient when seeking deals.

"There was an 18% increase this year versus last year in those spending less than one hour looking for coupons, deals and savings from all sources, yet the average savings dollars remained consistent," according to the study.

Lisa Reynolds, Valassis vice president of consumer engagement, says the "findings indicate that consumers are still very interested in savings and have developed a forever frugal mindset. They have become so accustomed to searching for value that these deal-seeking behaviors have become second nature to them. They clearly value the dollar, as well as their time."

The 2012 RedPlum Purse String Study is based on online responses from more than 9,100 consumers gathered June 12 through July 11. Valassis' RedPlum division works with companies to offer deals to consumers through in-store, in-home and "in-motion" media.

What would consumers do to earn further discounts? In order to save

In order to save 25% or more on a product, 75% of respondents would sign up for an email newsletter.

25% or more on a product, 75% of respondents would sign up for an email newsletter, 67% would "like" a page on Facebook and 17% would Tweet or retweet a deal to others.

According to the survey, 83% of consumers share or swap coupons and deal offers with their family and friends, and these "social" shoppers tend to save more: 50% of respondents who "always" share deals save \$31 or more weekly, compared with 18% of those who "never" share.

Shoppers are using both traditional print media and online sources to save money—and often compare prices between print and digital, according to the survey.

Some 71% of consumers most often get their coupons and deals from newspapers. Other key sources of savings include email/digital coupon alerts, retail circulars, Internet searches and mail, the survey found. Interestingly, the percentage of consumers who most often use mobile

phone text messages to get a deal doubled in 2012 from 2011.

In general, more consumers are using mobile coupons and apps since last year:

- 79% of respondents who use mobile coupons and 82% of those who access online coupons save as much as \$50 a week.
- 88% of respondents visit their favorite savings or deal websites at least weekly.

Consumers use coupons and deals most often for groceries, followed by dining out/restaurants and clothing, according to the survey. But consumers look for deals on everything from travel to dry cleaning. ●



BE MY GUEST

by Michael Penny

'Selfless selling': It's about creating a genuine relationship



Nudging. Maneuvering. Manipulating. Schmoozing. Bamboozling. CLOSING. How great would it feel to give all that up—and sell even more successfully and happily?

I'm an odd "authority" when it comes to pitching consumers. I lived in a yoga community for 20 years. I didn't watch TV or read magazines. With an allowance of \$1 to \$3 per month, I rarely bought anything.

But when that chapter of my life ended, I had no resources and a family to support. I thought, "Maybe I can sell, if that's what it takes."

So I signed up to sell satellite TV. (Natural fit, right?) Boy, did I tank. Things went better when I worked in a futon store, but I still didn't feel

like myself. Eventually, I opened a small mattress store and, a few years later, founded Savvy Rest. We manufacture natural latex mattresses and have done quite well, landing on the *Inc.* 500/5000 list of America's fastest-growing companies for the past three years.

But before Savvy Rest's success, there was the "selling thing" to learn. I was baffled.

What did I know about convincing people to pull out their wallets? The idea was anathema to me. Still, I needed to succeed. I listened to tapes and read books and blogs about selling, but something didn't feel right. The techniques and programs I encountered seemed based on manipulation. The goal always was to take control, close the sale and maximize profit. It seldom seemed to reflect real concern for a customer's needs.

What did I know about closing? My yoga life had been about opening—opening the heart to others and opening the mind to the present moment. But maybe my unconventional background could lead to a successful sales philosophy. I kept returning to what I knew and ultimately found that what works for me—and for Savvy Rest—is what we call "selfless selling." Here's how it works: Selfless selling is a matter of intention. In a sales situation, the first question you ask is actually of yourself: Is my goal to close a sale or to genuinely serve and

have an authentic relationship with a customer?

It's easy to determine the answer. Just relax and observe your thoughts when you're with a customer. To the degree that you're tensely thinking about closing the sale or earning that profit or SPIF, you're not really present with your customer. Here's a pressure-relieving thought: Profit should be a byproduct of your products' benefits and your relationship with your customers, not the goal itself.

The truth is that it's hard to have an authentic relationship with someone if you want something from her. And the more strongly you want something from someone, the more tense you become.

The inspiration behind selfless selling is that the only goal is to relax and have an authentic relationship with your customer. The relationship itself is the reward, and that liberates you both. What will best fulfill their needs? Your customer is a human being with human needs. No one wants to be manipulated. If the products and information you offer meet the needs of your customer in the present moment, a sale will be the natural outcome. When everything is aligned, including factors you can't control, everything will unfold as it should.

If you make a sale just to make a sale, a few things happen that aren't covered in most how-to-sell programs:

- You miss the opportunity to have an authentic relationship with another human being.
- Your customer misses the opportunity to have an authentic relationship with you.
- There is nothing in the experience that a customer might “pay forward” to another human being.
- You make no difference in someone’s life—other than to sell her an object.
- You make no difference in changing the dominant values of our culture or world.

There are several ways to practice selfless selling. For me, the best starting place is to relax. Next, I recognize the vulnerability of the person coming into the store. After all, I’m asking this individual—someone who doesn’t know me—to lie down on a bed. Most people feel a little awkward; some are intensely uncomfortable. Then I ask a few gentle questions, trying to empathize with the shopper as

if she were a family member, friend or neighbor.

I try to treat all customers this way. Some of them will purchase; some won’t. Just as if I used manipulative sales techniques—some will buy; some won’t. But if I treat everyone selflessly, I can stay relaxed. And I’m never left feeling that I’ve taken advantage of someone’s vulnerability.

Selfless selling certainly simplifies things. There are no mental contortions. It’s just me being present, trying to help, and getting myself and my fears of succeeding or failing—closing or not closing—out of the way. I believe that when customers experi-

ence this kind of encounter, odds are good that when they leave one of our stores, they’ll feel very differently about mattress shopping.

It helps to remember that we are all vulnerable and we are vulnerable together. Why forget this truth just because we are selling something? Selflessness is a powerful practice. The hardest part is letting go of the techniques that so many retail sales associates are taught and practice earnestly. When you drop all that, it’s very freeing.

Selfless selling makes us all happier—not just our customers, but our salespeople, too. ●

Michael Penny is founder and chief executive officer of Savvy Rest, a manufacturer of natural latex mattresses based in Charlottesville, Va. Since its founding in 2005, Savvy Rest has ranked three times on the *Inc.* 500/5000 list of America’s fastest-growing companies. Penny traveled an unusual path to mattress manufacturing. Before starting out in business, he lived in a yoga community for two decades. Insights from his experiences have contributed to Savvy Rest’s success. Penny can be reached at michael@savvyrest.com.

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CLOSING WORDS

by Gerry Morris

Do your eyes see what mine do?

As a mattress rep in North Texas, I was always impressed by how beautifully well-kept all the Havertys stores in that region were.

One time, I asked a store manager why that was. He told me his general manager—and industry legend—Fred Bates would always say to store managers as he made his location visits, “My eyes see what your eyes see every day. Do your eyes see what mine do?”

What a clever way of making the point that people who become too familiar with their surroundings can lose awareness of them. It’s just human nature. The problem is that our surroundings incrementally deteriorate unless we take care of them on a regular, consistent basis.

Mr. Bates understood this and he made sure every one of his stores had a system for regular cleaning and maintenance.

Beyond that, he created a culture that made his employees proud of their stores and that made them want to feel like they were part of something special. They kept their stores looking great because they wanted to, not because they had to.

I was reminded of the value of Mr. Bates’ wise leadership recently

when I was in Las Vegas to speak at a buying group’s national convention. The event was held at Caesars Palace, and my wife and I got to stay there for three nights. (It was a tough assignment, but no need to feel sorry for me. I got through it.)

Caesars Palace was immaculate—as close to perfect as I have ever seen a hotel. No wonder: They clean and maintain it 24/7.

But, like Havertys, Caesars goes beyond cleaning. Caesars creates a culture of teamwork and a sense of belonging and a purpose that it seems all of its employees share. Everyone we encountered greeted us with a genuine smile and a kind word. They communicated the message

that we were their guests—in their house—and they were glad that we were there. We were glad, as well.

When I went for coffee early one morning, I encountered an employee having a great time singing and dancing as she polished the floors. Her name was Zee and she was a hoot. Zee told me she had worked the 1 a.m. to 9 a.m. shift at Caesars for 22 years and she loved it. Can you imagine having that kind of enthusiasm working those hours? She told me she feels like she’s part of something special at Caesars. She is.

When we go back to Las Vegas, guess where we want to stay.

What do your eyes see?

- Look at your store from the perspective of a shopper seeing it for the first time. Make a habit of doing that every day.
- Like Havertys and Caesars, put a system in place to keep your store looking great. Don’t wait until things look like they need cleaning.
- A good rule of thumb is to have a place for everything and have everything in its place. Another good rule of thumb: Clean as you go.
- Treat everyone who visits your store as a guest. Understand that consumers can shop anywhere, but have chosen to give you an opportunity to earn their business. Having pride in your store will help you do just that.

I’m sure Mr. Bates never thought his stores would be compared with Caesars Palace, but the similarity is there. ●



Gerry Morris is an author, consultant and training coach. With more than 20 years of experience in the mattress industry, Morris has helped manufacturers, retailers and retail sales associates around the world increase their sales. To find out what Morris can do for your company, call 903-456-2015, email gmorris@innerspring.net. Visit his website and blog at <http://sellmorebeds.com>.

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