



Selling diagnostics is easy

You don't need to know all the answers, just where to find them

by Phil Sasso



Selling diagnostics equipment can be very profitable. It can also be a little intimidating. You probably already know how profitable it can be. You don't just make money on the initial sale, but also on options, add-ons and upgrades. Beyond that, technicians that buy diagnostic equipment from you are also more likely to buy your hardlines.

So, it can be worthwhile to push past your comfort zone and promote more diagnostics.

Selling diagnostics feels intimidating because you probably think you need to be an expert. I'll let you in on a little secret: You don't need to know as much as you think.

Know-it-alls are rarely good salespeople. Actually, in most cases, talking too much about technical details can work against you. I remember watching one salesman spew out facts and technical jargon, thinking it made him

look smart and impressed his prospect. It didn't. It intimidated his prospect.

Today's promotional materials can quickly brief you on the latest equipment. I've learned a lot from developing print and digital materials to help toolmakers educate dealers and techs. A little time spent with a product DVD or literature can turn you into a diagnostics selling machine.

Don't try to memorize every fact and figure. You can always refer back to the material as you present the product. But you do need to have a working knowledge of the key features and benefits. Once you know those selling points, all you need to know is the price and financing options to start selling more diagnostics.

I may be exaggerating slightly, but a little knowledge can go a long way. I find technical knowledge breaks down into several distinct categories:

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1. Your prospect already knows it.

When a tech is in the market for something very specific, like TPMS equipment, they already know what it is and what it does. These techs tend to be ready to buy and know what they want. They may want your assurance that they're making the right choice. But other than that, you just need to ask for the order. Other techs aren't quite ready to buy. They just want to do their homework. A brochure and website address can go a long way toward educating them.

2. Your prospect doesn't know enough to ask.

You're probably most intimidated about being stumped by a really tough question. That can happen, but it's rare. Most difficult questions won't surface until a tech has been using the tool for awhile. A technician won't usually think about something like saving or importing a wave pattern on his labscope until he needs it. That's what the user manual and tech support hotline are for.

3. Your prospect doesn't need to know (or care).

We tend to assume anyone buying diagnostics needs to know every feature and how it works before they'll buy it. All they really need to know is how a feature makes their

life easier. No one really needs to know how bi-directional tests work. And they'll learn how to use that feature once they buy the scan tool.

For instance, I use the coffeemaker at work everyday. I don't care how the heating element works. I just want to know that when I push this button, coffee comes out. Some features are lost on me—I think the clock has been flashing 12:00 since I bought it.

But more important than giving your customer a list of features is the benefits of those features. Don't just tell them what it does. Tell them what it does for them.

Don't waste a lot of time anticipating questions. Worse yet, don't answer questions that haven't been asked. Information overload can actually unsell your customer! Don't offer more information than asked for. If they need to know, they'll ask.

4. You already know.

You know a lot more than you probably realize, even before you study the material: Do you have one in stock? How soon can I get it? What's the warranty? Is there an extended warranty? Is the carrying case included? Does it come in red?

A lot of the questions techs ask you will be more practi-

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cal than technical. And if you don't have a quick answer, you can always look it up. More important than knowing every answer, is knowing where to find the answer.

5. They don't expect you to know.

Few customers expect you to know every detail about every one of the thousands of stock and special order items you carry. You're not a product engineer, you're a mobile distributor. But they do expect you to know how to get an answer. That's why you have detailed product specs at your fingertips in your catalogs or online. Those specs will answer most common questions: What's included? Does it use resistance or carbon pile? What's the capacity? What are the dimensions? How much is it?

For that one tough question that's not answered in any of the material, many manufacturers have a sales support hotline that you can call to get quick answers. They're there to support you. Just be honest with your customer: "I don't know, but I'll find out and call you."

Whatever you do, never guess! Get the right answer from the right source. You wouldn't guess on the price, don't guess on a technical answer. Customers will forgive you needing time to check your facts. They may never forgive for giving them the wrong facts.

A few self-taught seminars can arm you with all the technical information you need to sell more diagnostic equipment. And don't worry about knowing every last technical detail. You already know the most important thing: your customer.



Phil Sasso is president of Sasso Marketing Inc. (www.sassomarketing.com), a technical marketing agency focused on tools and equipment. Phil is also a speaker, trainer and consultant. And his coffeemaker has a pause-and-pour feature. Visit his sales and marketing blog at philsasso.com/blog.

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