

DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY INSTITUTE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING GUIDE



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Note: This information has been sourced from the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute Encyclopedia which covers all aspects of drycleaning and management.

8.THINK SMALL: SELLING ADDITIONAL SERVICES

CATEGORIES: CUSTOMER SERVICE

When members think about boosting sales by offering additional services, they often think about major diversifications that require lots of money and equipment. What goes overlooked and underappreciated are the several other smaller services that are easy to incorporate and have the potential to generate a nice stream of extra revenue. Because of their low startup costs, many cleaners offer things like waterproofing, alterations, and shoe repair. Yet they seldom are requested because customers are not aware of them. Take a fresh look at promoting such services. By enlisting the support of the customer service staff and placing a few signs up, members can let customers in on these services. To that end, this bulletin is intended to help customer service personnel understand the important role they play in marketing and selling additional services.

THE ART OF SELLING

Word of mouth is the best form of advertising- and the same can be true inside your store. By seamlessly working in a service pitch into a conversation with a customer, a Customer Service Representative (CSR) may plant the seeds that bloom into a full-blown sale down the road.

Broaching the subject of additional services for new CSRs may seem awkward at first, but after some practice and a few receptive customers their confidence should improve. Although salesmanship may seem to come naturally for some, becoming a better salesperson is something anyone can learn with the right attitude.

Signage and handouts can aid counter staff in their word-of-mouth campaigns, but monthly specials in particular can be of great benefit. First, they are easy to talk about and give CSRs something obvious to push. Second, since a special is only available for a limited time, it creates a sense of urgency for the customers who are interested in the offer. However, specials or not, any service can be promoted with the right approach. Counter staff should seek to plug whatever extra services currently are being offered, keeping their eyes and ears open for opportunities that present themselves.

SALES EMERGE OUT OF CONVESATION

Conversations with customers are the building blocks to future sales. Establishing a dialogue before diving into a service pitch is a must. By treating customers like individual's other opportunities will emerge over the course of conversation and as the CSR gets to know the patrons better.

Before the end of every encounter, consider posing the following: "Are there any other needs we can help you with today, Mrs. Smith? Keep in mind that we're a full-service dry cleaner." Mentioning you're a "full service cleaner " is a good line to keep in mind, in general. Customers may ask what you mean by that, or if they pause, showing that they're listening, then you have the opportunity to go into the various

extras available.

The situation and the patron will dictate the opportunities available. You want to establish a rapport with every customer. Memorizing and greeting them by name is a great start. Beyond that, find a connection with customers to keep the dialogue going.

All CSRs should instinctively size up the customer before deciding whether to launch into a sales pitch. If the customer appears in a rush, even then, you can establish a rapport by acknowledging the patron is short on time: "Looks like you're in a hurry, so I'll try to speed this up. Any special problems our cleaner should know about? Is there any special occasion you need this back in time for?"

SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICE STRATEGIES

The remainder of this bulletin addresses different services cleaners offer and approaches CSRs might be able to take to market them. Of course, each CSR must develop his or her own style; the suggestions here are merely starting points to get you thinking about effectively promoting the add-on services your company offers.

REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS

Best time to promote: Anytime!

A customer comes in with a bundle of clothes. While checking over each garment, the CSR notices the hem is out on one pants leg. Many customer reps will bring the hem to the customer's attention and note it on the ticket, but how many will mention your expert tailoring services to the customer? This is a task numerous customers would gladly pass on to a cleaner.

To increase the potential for additional revenue from alterations:

- Inspect all garments carefully for loose, missing, or broken buttons.
- Examine zippers for working conditions.
- Check pockets for holes.
- Look for loose seams.

CSR's should promote the plant's tailoring services whenever any of these problems are noticed.

Talking Point: "The hem is out on this pants leg. Our seamstress will repair it for you if you'd like for a low additional charge." (Take care with your wording: you don't want customers to assume there is no additional charge for the extra service.)

SHOE REPAIR

Plenty of cleaning establishments offer shoe repair service, but they don't all inform their customers about it, thus losing business to specialty shoe repair shops instead.

Talking Point: "We can restore dress shoes for a fraction of the cost of a new pair."

BLANKETS AND COMFORTERS

Best time to promote: Anytime a household textile is brought in for cleaning or repair

Many cleaners have commercial size washers and dryers that can more than accommodate large comforters and blankets. For cleaners, they are relatively simple to handle, usually washable, and can command a premium price for the amount of work involved.

Talking Point: "By the way, Mrs Jones, are you aware we also clean draperies, pillows, etc?"

GARMENT STORAGE

Best time to promote: End of summer and winter

People often have more clothes than they have space to store them. Storage boxes are an inexpensive and easy method of keeping garments protected and organized. The boxes can also be sold to customers for home use.

Talking Point: "We have a spring cleaning special running now where we'll clean and store winter items. If you're interested, you should know this special runs only through the end of the month."

MOTH PROOFING

Best time to promote: Spring and summer

Many customers store their clothes at home and would be very willing to pay for extra protection against possible insect damage. Likewise, all garments brought in to be stored by the dry cleaner should prompt the CSR to suggest moth proofing to the customer as well.

Talking Point: "Do you have any clothes you'll be storing until it warms up/gets cold again? I ask because we offer moth proofing, which gives your clothes added protection while in storage."



WATER/STAIN REPELLENCY

Best time to promote: Rainy season or before/after storm

Re-applying water/ stain repellants is a quick and easy way to keep customers dry during the snow and rainy season and a good profit generator.

Did You Know? Manufacturers often apply water repellants to items, but these finishes are not always permanent. After a few cleanings, the water repellent finish may be diminished or completely removed. Use this as an opportunity for more revenue.

Talking Point: "What's the weather like outside today?... I hear it's going to turn nasty next week. I don't know if you were aware of this already, but we can apply additional water repellents to your Jackets to help your clothes stay dry."



WEDDING GOWNS

Best time to promote: Spring and summer

Spring and summer months are the prime time for pushing this service. In addition to cleaning wedding dresses, cleaners can also offer to package them in boxes for an additional fee.

Getting the word out about this service is the most difficult task. One idea is to offer customers a discount or store credit for every referral that leads to a direct wedding gown cleaning sale.



CONCLUSION

There are a number of special services your business can offer to increase cash flow, but none will help if your customers don't know about them. Raising awareness through subtle promotion and reinforcement can pay dividends over time-and Customer Service Representatives can help market these services.

Have your customer service staff tout a different service every month. Newer CSRs should start with the basics, like learning customers' names and proper inspection at check-in, then work on their marketing messages.

Window and wall signs work well, but too many signs can be useless. Instead of having several signs up all the time, try rotating them, displaying them one at a time. Customers will begin to look for what "new" service you are offering.

Another way of promoting your available services is to have them printed on your garment bags, caped hangers, invoices, and so on. Computerized POS systems allow you to print customized notices on invoices, reminding customers of the services you offer when they are not in your store.

While it may be easy to assume big changes are necessary to make great leaps in revenue, thinking small can be profitable as well.