

You Can Beat The Internet Every Time

Operating an RV Parts Department in an increasingly online world may cause you to feel at a disadvantage. The online sellers view themselves as having the upper hand since they have less overhead and can offer deep discounts (not necessarily true as you saw in our article on MAP pricing). At the same time, the number of brick-and-mortar stores continues to increase and 94% of all retail sales still go to brick and mortar stores. (1) (2) It's great to know that there are real advantages to brick-and-mortar stores, especially for RV dealerships. Advantages come from beneficial planograms, great packaging, and attention-grabbing shelf talkers but the greatest advantage to beating online sellers is **you**. How does your interaction with customers affect your business?

Knowledge

Your customer assumes you have the knowledge that they need to choose the right product. One that will provide years of trouble-free usage. At the same time, you receive benefits such as:

- **Relationship:** I am sure you are familiar with the adage that customers “don't care how much you know until they know how much you care” (Theodore Roosevelt). By giving customers great advice, they will see you care about them, and they will reciprocate the feeling. Having that relationship will make them look forward to visiting you.
- **Trust:** Once customers see that your advice worked well for them, they will develop confidence in your facility and your staff. That confidence helps to foster customer loyalty and a long-lasting relationship. In one report it was found that 68% of customers will pay more for brands they trust. (3)
- **Profit:** One study says that companies with a well-trained staff realize a 25% increase in profit margins (not just gross sales). (4) That makes sense to me as I have walked out of stores that did not seem to care about me and/or where I did not trust they knew what they were talking about. Have you?



Upselling & Cross Selling

Upselling has a negative connotation in the mind of many. That is because some use it in unethical ways. Ethical Up-Selling is recommending a product **that will fill the customer's need better** than the one they are considering (upselling someone from Landing Gear with a one-year warranty to one that has a six-year warranty). Similarly, but not the same, Cross-Selling is **recommending products that work well with the primary item** (like a jack cover when the customer is purchasing a tongue jack). The customer gets a more appropriate product, and you increase the sale an average of 10-30% and lifetime purchases by that customer by 600% - 1,200%. (5) To do it best, you need to remember a few things.

- **The right recommendations:** Going back to the theme of training, if you are trained on why & when one item is better than another, you can make confident recommendations, confident that you are helping your customer. (6)
- **Active Listening:** You cannot make a great recommendation without understanding your customer. Putting yourself in the customer's place will help you understand “the need behind the need.” A customer complaint about a tongue jack could be pointing to the need for greater stability that could be resolved by tire locking chocks or a kingpin stabilizer.
- **Ask questions:** Customer issues are resolved by digging deeper. This requires questions to drill down to the actual need. If a customer is inquiring about scissor jacks, obvious questions

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would be about the size of their RV. But a deeper question might be “what happened to your current jacks?” “Do you want a 90-day warranty or a lifetime warranty?”

Builds Relationship

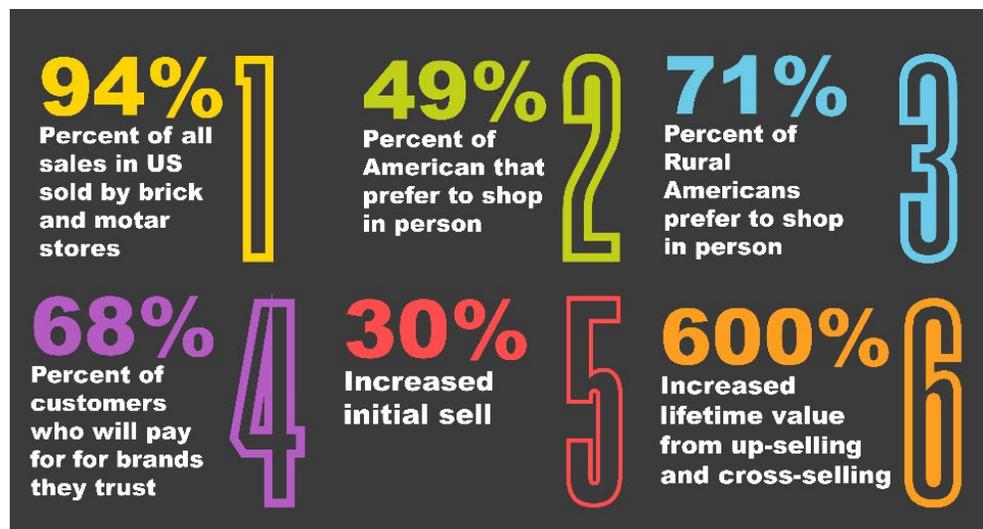
A great relationship starts with the correct application of your product knowledge and the confidence they develop from upselling and cross selling. 68% of customers say they will pay more to buy from a company where they have a relationship. (7) A great relationship creates a happy and loyal customer. To attain that level of relationship, there are a few reliable steps.

- **Be Friendly:** It seems obvious, but having a warm smile, a friendly tone and showing a sincere interest in your customers deepens the relationship and stirs customer loyalty. (8)
- **Confidence:** Have you ever felt that if low confidence were an Olympic sport, you could take the bronze? Displaying confidence (not bravado) makes the customer feel comfortable with the answers they receive. You can gain the needed confidence through great education and practice. Roll playing with fellow employees will get you ready for customer conversations.
- Relationships are built by open dialogue over an extended period. This can come from follow-up phone calls, emails and even sending marketing pieces. This dialogue must not get too personal but should demonstrate that you value their business.
- **Offer a little more:** Surprising your customers with something extra improves the relationship. Surprisingly, asking the customer to do you a favor (look at a new product, visit for a promotional event or write a great Google review) also improves that relationship.

Conclusion:

Great customer interaction allows development of confidence in your knowledge. Up-Selling and Cross-Selling ensure they get the most enjoyment and utility from their RV. These are the building blocks of a great relationship. Once that is established you have a customer

for life. This is doubly true for internal customers like your technicians or the Sales Department (click here to read our article about interacting with internal customers).



Ultra-Fab:

Ultra-Fab loves helping our resellers develop relationships with their customers. It starts with providing you with the product through our online training videos (ultra-fab.com/dealer-videos), in one-on-one webinars and even in person. We also help them build customer trust by always having the longest warranties in the industry.

For more information on how Ultra-Fab can help grow your sales and especially your profits, feel free to check out our dealer website (ultra-fab.com/dealers) or contact Raymond Padgett (404.754.8928 or raymond@ultra-fab.com).

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Our training, our quality and our array of great products are three more ways that Ultra-Fab shows we are determined to help you make more money.