

E-Tool #9 Role Playing Sales Training Kit



The best tanning sales personnel are the best trained personnel and role playing can be one of the more effective ways to get the new as well as the veteran employees focused on the real life situations of selling and how to handle them. Besides offering a training approach that is informative and fun, research shows that people learn better from their peers than they do from “bosses”. Also it can help new employees bond with the rest of the staff by sharing ideas and questions that eventually produce identity and commonality between all workers. This starts the necessary team bonding that exemplifies great salon productivity.

The object of role playing is for the sales person role, and all other sale employees to learn something about the customer role player, to form some commonalities with them and to build trust. We prefer to buy from those we know, like and trust. Unfortunately, most role playing is not done correctly. They tend to embarrass employees and actual inhibit the process of learning and bonding. Most of this comes from role playing with little or no planning or prepping the participants.

Attached, in this Farr Factor E-Tool, are scripts that your employees can and should use to set themselves up to have meaningful dialogue and reduce the either, uncreative exchanges (after all, most people are not natural “actors”) or impede the real learning process. To guide you in your quest to help your team learn selling techniques via role playing, here are some tips for your “selling theater”.

1. **Announce to your employees** prior to a planned meeting that “we’re going to have some fun at our next meeting with a selling training session utilizing role playing”. Yes, some employees may choose to be sick that day or night to avoid the horror of having to “perform” in front of their peers and bosses but it’s better

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to let them know in advance so they don't feel that something, that some might consider negative, might be part of a future meeting. Employees need to trust their bosses.

2. In your announcement **explain that there will be breakout groups** of three employees each group. One role will be an observer, one the role of the sales person and the third role as a customer. Let them know who will be what in each group of three. Even if you have one salon with only 5 or 6 employees, you can still have 2 groups with all three roles and that provides comparisons of the results.
3. **Your observers** should be your middle performance folks who are still learning. This role will force them to watch closely to report back to the reassembled meeting group about the observed best practices from the role playing.
4. Your person assuming the **role of sale person** should be one of your best to offer examples of how to create a selling and buying atmosphere that you want emulated. That person will need to gain a rapport with the "customer" thru various approaches and by ascertaining the customer's tanning needs and wants. Most important, they need to demonstrate the various products and services options for the customer to be able to make an informed buying decision.
5. **The customer role** can be played by anyone, new or tanning veteran who merely assumes the character of any typical customer who wants to get value from their time and money invested.
6. **All three roles have a supplied script from this e-tool.** Scripts are not to be shared with all parties. The customer and sales person roles are to be kept to themselves. The observer should have a copy of each to better understand what each person is thinking as the role playing starts.
7. Immediately before the role playing starts, each of the three players needs to **read their individual script.** It's not mandatory that the scripts be followed to the "T". Role playing should include creative thought and animation. Remember, role playing should educate but should also be fun.
8. After selecting and gathering your groups of three, **tell the groups how long they have to "perform" and then assign three different physical areas** of your meeting venue for them to construct their role playing away from everyone else. Using role playing as a part of a monthly or quarterly meeting of all employees is best conducted when renting a hotel or motel meeting room. That allows break out space for separating the groups. Holding this type of meeting away from a salon makes the meeting look more professional and sophisticated like a professional meeting should be conducted.
9. Each group separates to their 'corner' of the meeting venue and **conducts their role playing** with the scripts as a guide and conversation starter. Both seller and customer know their background by reading their individual script. The observer takes notes about what went well with the sales person's approach to the customer. Focus on the positive performance and stay away from criticism of acting performances or negative aspects of the attempts to sell.



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When the role playing is completed, reassemble all meeting attendees and let the observers report on what they saw that worked well in getting close to the customer to gain their trust and hopefully their purchase. Keep notes up on a sheet of meeting paper (3M has a good adhesive backed large note pad that can be placed up on any surface without the concern of damage to the walls).

About the scripts: In many ways we live in a “Jerry Springer” world. There may not be more personal drama going on today than in earlier eras but social media has been a force to publish every issue or highly-published event perpetuated by people. One fact that is undeniable, issues of divorces, bad bosses, and dating disasters are always fodder for the media mill. The characters created in the scripts reflect the “real” world of everyday issues that many folks are experiencing. The scripts are written to mirror what is easily the reality of relationships and lives in transit. But what we have attempted to do is add humor which we feel all salon employees might identify with. Certainly you are free to rewrite your own versions. However, I’ve done these role playing characters with many salon chains and individual salons and they are both educational and entertaining. But, get creative if you want and make them as colorful but realistic as you want. Get your employees involved with a rewrite ... get them to be part of your acting roles. I hope your employees and your salon gets an Oscar and ramped up sales!

SALES CONSULTANT SCRIPT

CASE STUDY: "How to sell Carmen"

ROLE: Megan, the sales consultant

Carmen has just come into your salon driving her 11 year old Toyota that says ... *"She's on a budget!"* She's wearing a cute Michigan State t-shirt, has blond hair with hi-lites, some unusual small crescent-shaped earrings, a bracelet with two birthday tokens with names of kids on them, and a visible tattoo that says "Mom" and the same two kids names scrolled inside the tattoo.

You do not recognize her as a past (your salon name here) tanner.

How can you gain a rapport with her? How can you gain her trust in your tanning judgment? Remember, "we tend to buy from those that we KNOW, LIKE and TRUST". Look at what she's driving, what she's wearing, and her body language. Is she stressed? Happy? Is there something about her you can positively comment on to start a conversation? Compliments usually work, or a sincere question asking what kind of day she is having.

You greet her "Hi, I'm Megan and welcome to (salon name). How can we be of service to you today?"

There are only two other customers in the salon and they are in tanning rooms at the time Carmen walks in. There is one other employee on duty and she is cleaning beds.

It is up to you to build a rapport with Carmen. Ask if she has tanned before and how long it's been since she has tanned. Ask what her tanning goals are or what else you can discover to develop a dialogue. Is her interest in tanning for a specific event or does she want to look better long term? Maybe she wants to have opportunities to just relax and escape for a few minutes every other day.

Discover some commonalities. (FYI, you "Megan" are married for the second time, you're 31 years old and have 3 kids: 7, 9 and 11, and you're one of the few people in (your salon name here) market, it seems, that is NOT a local and your second husband, "Shorty", is from Michigan. You married your first husband, Buster, 11 years ago at a frat party. Marriage to him convinced you to never go to another "kegger" again!)

Back to Carmen. Find out where she tanned before coming to (your salon name here) and what her experience was like. You'll need to share information on (your salon name here)'s pricing, equipment, lotions etc. Included here are details about features and benefits of the various equipment and other products. Does she have lotions and eye care products? Does she know about after-tan moisturizers? Is a tour of the facilities in order on paper or a physical salon tour?

Your goal is to sell Carmen on tanning and closing her on a commitment, but mostly to get her collaboration and long term comfort with (your salon name here).

What did you conclude with her about her needs, desires, wants, budget, tanning plans, her expectations for the money and time she spends in the salon etc?

CUSTOMER SCRIPT

CASE STUDY: “How do we help (and sell) Carmen and do it so we get and keep her return business?”

ROLE: Carmen, the customer

Carmen is a 27 year old divorced mother of two kids, a boy (5) and a girl (3). She earns approximately 31k per year at her job as a tech analyst for a cable company. She drives an 11 year old Toyota (“POS”!) and has just recently reentered the dating scene. She tanned in her previous single life 7 years ago and has no concerns for “skin typing” when she’s tanning. Originally from Detroit, Carmen moved to (your salon’s market) with her now ex-husband for his job 6 years ago. She has an Associate’s degree in fashion design from Michigan State University.

She has gained a few pounds from her pregnancies and could use a self-esteem boost (hence the desire for tanning). Just lately, she started tinting her blond hair with hi-lites. She got a little crazy one night and had a tattoo done on her shoulder (visible with the shirt she’s wearing today) that features the word Mom with the names of her two kids scrolled inside of it. Also, she’s wearing some small quite attractive crescent-shaped earrings.

Her now ex-husband (“Dick”) left her for a younger woman, a 20-year-old also fashion major student from Michigan State who was babysitting their children ... and apparently ... Dick as well. Carmen gets about \$750 a month for child support from her ex-husband. She could get more if she took him back to court, but then he stated he would intentionally earn less. (“Dick” is self employed. Dick is a ... fill in the blank here)

Carmen has to watch her budget carefully. There are school functions for the kids that “Dick” does not support and other costs, so, re-energizing her self esteem is something she needs to carefully cost out. (No more wild dollar donating evenings with the girls at the local male stripper bars). She will probably be shy about signing up for EFT packages commitments, but might be convinced. If the price and the value for the money and her time seems like a real deal.

Carmen has come into your salon to inquire about tanning, see if she wants to get back to looking a little better, and to see if she can afford it. Price is a concern for tanning, but so is the fact that she has a homecoming event to go to in (fill in a month) and also wants to look better in the online dating scene as soon as possible. Carmen’s lonely and would like some companionship other than her two children who are making her consider valium! Her company awarded her a trip to Mexico for her and a guest in the next two months for her work achievements. Because of all of this she feels she needs to invest in a longer term UV package that she can afford. She lives within a mile of the salon in a 2 bedroom apartment. And because of her loneliness, she would probably share some of her goals and life frustrations if asked. About now she would share them with a Cocker Spaniel if given the opportunity!

OBSERVER ROLE

CASE STUDY: You will observe and be prepared to comment on the interchange of communications between Carmen (the customer) and Megan, (your salon name here) selling associate.

ROLE: Observer

Your job is to be an observer of how Megan handles this prospective new customer “Carmen” and determine what she, Megan, does correctly and what she could have done better in handling this selling situation. To better understand what Megan is dealing with, with Carmen, read over the roles of Megan and Carmen provided in this etool before role playing begins. The person playing the role of Megan does not have access to Carmen’s background and must build a rapport with her to see if she can collaborate with her as a customer and also as a (your salon name here) “fan” – a long term client who really needs the environment of a (your salon name here) visit.

After observing the role playing, all observers will report back to the reconvened role playing session group about what they observed. They will report how well the seller, Megan, handled her efforts at achieving rapport with the customer, Carmen. How well did she take her through a presentation of tanning suggestions and options to fit the requirements of the customers reasons for visiting the salon? Ultimately, Megan wants to close a sale with Carmen and help the salon develop a long term customer.