

Building Rapport in Today's Covid-19 Environment.

Selling in the time of the coronavirus requires several small but critical changes.

SMART STRATEGIES IN REMODELING & RENOVATION SALES

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I recently held a virtual sales training event for a group of in-home salespeople. After the session, one of the attendees sent me an email with three good questions. In today's selling environment dealing with Covid-19, I thought this information would be good to share here as well.

The three questions were:

How would you handle the inability to give a firm handshake at the initial greeting and at signing the deal?

With masks covering both my facial expressions and the customer's, what is your suggestion to show smiling behavior?

What other things would you do differently to make customers feel comfortable about having a stranger in their home?

As far as handshakes, I think you'll do more harm than good by offering your hand to somebody that is uncomfortable with that due to Covid-19 precautions. At the introduction I would probably say something like "I'm not sure how you feel about this, but elbows seem to be the new handshake" and offer my elbow with a big smile on my face. The key would be to take control and be the first person to mention it. When signing the deal, I would probably say something like "I can't think of a better way to seal this deal than a little elbow bump". Humor helps.

Concerning smiles and facemasks, you're right, masks hide everything below the eyes and makes this much more difficult. I've thought about this often as I'm out and about in the community and see friends and acquaintances while wearing a mask and thinking how do they know I'm happy to see them? The answer, I believe is with the

eyes and voice. Your eyes will not look much different with a little mouth turned up quasi-smile, but they will look different with a big, exaggerated, full smile. You can also show warmth, energy and enthusiasm with your voice. I have also seen a face shield that I'm going to look at for conducting presentations myself as travel restrictions begin to relax and allow more opportunities to get face to face with other people. It's a clear plastic shield, hinged at the bottom, that hangs around the neck and appears to be protective in blocking, or re-directing what your exhaling. It appears comfortable and easy to operate.

Check it out at www.tryzshield.com

Last, but not least, regarding making people more comfortable with your presence in their home. This seems to be all about the customer and what they're comfortable with... and everybody can be different. For that reason, I would probably address that upfront as well with something like "Mr. and Mrs. Smith, with Covid-19 still an issue, I want you two to be as comfortable as possible and feel safe with me in your home. May I ask, do you all generally have some family rules in place when visitors come over that you would like me to follow today as well?" I can imagine that you run across the spectrum during in-home visits... anywhere from people who to strictly stay outside and 30' away from each other, to those that say "come in here and give me a hug, we ain't afraid of no Covid", and everything in between. You may have your own set of protocols that you have to follow and can always fall back on that when visiting the people who don't think Covid-19 is a big deal and don't believe in masks. The fact is, both you, and your customer need to feel comfortable, and the old techniques used to connect with people are not as effective in the restrictive environments we find ourselves in today. We're all learning as we go.



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