

Speaker 1 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PGTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor, and I am your host.

Speaker 2 00:00:19 When I came to PGT almost was nine years ago. I was blessed with such a wonderful dealer and customer base, and that stands true today, and they are an amazing group of people. And they're a big part of our success.

Speaker 1 00:00:31 Today's Clear Impact podcast serves up some helpful ideas for the sales function of "Running a Successful Business". Brian Covey, our VP of Sales, shares his wisdom regarding relationship building, communication, and follow-up practices. He also shares some great ideas on how to leverage your showroom to maximize results. This is a fun conversation, reinforcing that it's okay to joke around with the people we work with.

Good afternoon, we are here on the Clear Impact Podcast. And once again, we have the ever-elusive Brian Covey in our studio today. Hey Brian, what's up?

Speaker 2 00:01:04 Hey! Thanks for having me here again. And looking forward to that. Have you?

Speaker 1 00:01:08 Yeah. Okay. Well, I've been looking forward to it too. You're one of my favorite people here. So we are in the series of Running a Successful Business, and you oversee a lot of the sales function. So you're overseeing the sales team, the outside portion of the sales team, and we work with dealers and distributors. And then in turn, they work with the homeowners. So our relationship is ongoing as we serve our customers. But the relationship that our customers have with their buyers may just be a one-time event. How would you speak to our dealer audience around their sales process and what are some good things, some good practices for them to keep in mind?

Speaker 2 00:01:47 Yeah, I would have the dealer look at the relationship is more of, not a one-time relationship, because the experience they give with that customer, that customer has family, friends, neighbors. They're going to share that experience. So that relationship will continue way after the sale, as they continue to promote the company and their experiences that they had with the dealer or with the distributor.

Speaker 1 00:02:10 Okay. So even though they might only be buying windows one time, they still might tell 40 or 50 people what that experience was like.

Speaker 2 00:02:18 Absolutely. Anytime you get something new, or you have a large purchase in your home, as soon as somebody comes in your home, you're excited to show, you know, what's new, what's exciting. You take them, certainly on some of these fantastic iLab products, the bi-fold doors, lift n slides, sliding glass doors. People are going to take their friends and family over and show them their newest products in their house. And so that relationship that you built with that customer continues through their touch points as well.

Speaker 1 00:02:43 That's awesome. What would be three keys that you would recommend to our dealers when it comes to the sales function of their business?

Speaker 2 00:02:50 Sure. First thing that comes to mind is building trust. And it's important when the dealer meets with the customer to tell their story. What is unique about them? You know, what is their family history? Are they a family-owned business, what installers do they use? What training that they have? It could be the financing that they have available, which we talked about Synchrony the last time

we were together. The other options that they have, that sets them being uniquely apart from the competition. And it's important, people buy from people they like, right? And it's important that when the sales team goes out and if it's in somebody's home, or if it's in the showroom, take the time and let them know about yourself. Let them know about the company, how many years you've been in business and why you are successful. So building trust is a big part. I would say my first one.

Speaker 2 00:03:38 Okay. Next I think setting expectations is very important and over communication. We know the year we're in now with some challenges with, you know, supply chain and I mean, it's in every industry. If you go buy furniture, it can take months and months for you to get the product, right. It's important to be up front with the customer. Let them know where the lead times are. Let them know the challenges, give examples, just like I gave there about the furniture or about other industries where you're having some challenges, setting the expectation. Also be proactive in communicating the lead times, the receiving, keeping them up to date. Just because you sign a contract and they place the order, don't wait for the next time to call them is when you have the product. I think it's good to have some touch points in there. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:04:23 It's been three, four weeks since we talked, especially with the lead times are, are longer out there, right? Everything looks to be okay, we're still on task. We're still planning to install your windows on X day. So have extra touch points and not going silent, you know, in a economy right now that has an extended lead times, right? That's a good idea. Also, uh, reinforce why you picked the right dealer. You know, when you talk about the challenges of the market and say, Hey, that's why you bought from me because this isn't my first year in the business. And I not only know how to manage the good times. I know how to manage through some challenging times as well. And communication will be a big part of that. That will help build that confidence throughout the process of changing out the windows.

Speaker 1 00:05:03 That's a good idea. I like that.

Speaker 2 00:05:05 The last thing that comes to mind is the close, and in sales, lot of times people think the close is to getting the signature on the contract and getting a deposit. To me, the close is at the end of the job, making sure you review the project with the customer, make sure you're meeting their expectations. And then the real close is asking for those referrals. You know, at the beginning we talked about relationships that the dealers can have, and it's important that you thank them for the sale, but then you also ask them for future sales and three referrals. And a lot of dealers will tell you that, you know, Hey, I haven't had to advertise, you know, it's all word of mouth and that's a big part of people's business, but I don't think they're out there really pushing, having that conversation at the end. So make sure you close the sale at the end as well.

Speaker 1 00:05:51 Would you recommend any kind of follow-up, like maybe three months or six months or even a year after the install, just to check in and see how things are going. Would that be a good idea?

Speaker 2 00:06:02 That's a great idea. It also comes to mind. Sometimes people will have like a six month tune-up, where they come and they say, Hey, we'll come out free of charge. We'll look at your products. We'll open and close, make sure everything operates properly. And then that's also a time to ask for additional referrals. So it's an additional touch point. Obviously now with dealers being very busy

and install crews being busy, maybe that looks more like, as you mentioned, a phone call a follow-up just to check in.

Speaker 1 00:06:28 Nice. I know a few of our dealers are on social media. And so they do ask for those written reviews. And that is another thing that you can use that information for too. Like, would you mind leaving us a review? Because that carries a lot of clout. You know, people are always looking, we're crowdsourcing our information now, you know, we don't just take somebody's word for it. We look on Yelp and we look on Facebook. We look at all those places to see what other customer's experiences are. Even if it's not a personal recommendation, we can still see what reviews are. So

Speaker 2 00:06:59 Sherri that's a fantastic point you bring up, because when you think of referrals, do you think of a referral of somebody verbally telling somebody, Hey, call this person. But in today's age, a referral is also a good review on social media. And that's something also that dealers can ask. The dealer can send the customer a link to where to go fill out the review as well. So they can even lead them to the right platform to leave a review as well.

Speaker 1 00:07:22 Right? Yeah. Would you mind leaving us a review on Facebook? Would you mind leaving us a review on Yelp? Like, you know, I don't know, maybe I'll send a window cleaning service to your house. If you leave me a five-star review or, you know, just bribe them.

One thing I know that some dealers have, and some dealers don't have, maybe they don't have the space, or maybe they're working towards that, is a showroom. And I know the showroom that we have right now is under construction, under remodeling, but I have been to the CGI showroom, which is amazing. And also the Eco showroom. And I have been to a couple of showrooms here in Sarasota for a couple of our local dealers, just to get an idea of what that process is like. What would you recommend to our dealers for their own showrooms?

Speaker 3 00:08:07 Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics, you can find out more about us at pgtiuniversity.com. You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Speaker 2 00:08:26 Yeah. You know, you bring up the CGI showroom, which is an amazing showroom. And before they moved locations, they had a really nice showroom. This showroom that we have now has set the standards, set the bar. So much so, that I have a dealer that is getting ready to do their showroom. I said, well, before you do anything, you have to go down to Miami and look at CGI's showroom. The reason I did that is a lot of times people want to redo their showroom, they replace it with a lot of things that they've already done. So they might have a new window or a new door, but they're putting in the same opening that they've had there for years. So if a customer comes in, the buying experience, hasn't changed. Nothing's changed, unless you take them over, then show them something new. So some of the showrooms are a little tired.

Speaker 2 00:09:09 And what I recommend is getting a second opinion. Okay. If you go out and you buy something, that's very pricey, it could be a car, same price point could be for window package. You generally shop around and look, I think you should do the same thing with your showroom. You want to make sure that you're outsourcing and getting new ideas and different ideas from maybe even a third party. So I recommend that to get a fresh perspective on what your showroom looks like. If you're going to invest in the showroom, invest right, and make it an experience. When people come in, there's a wow

factor. What makes your showroom different from the person down the street? And that's a great point. It also, it's certainly important to display what you sell. So you always want to have your most popular items for that market. And nobody knows that better than the dealer, right?

Speaker 2 00:09:55 They know what they're selling. They need to know what they're showing, but it's also important to kind of stretch. If your showroom is big enough, your customer base, to have a product in there, that shows what your capabilities are as a dealer. And, you know, I mentioned earlier, it could be the bi-fold door. It could be a pivot door. Suddenly they come in and they're like, wow, what is this door? It's funny. I had my little girl, which she's 19, here yesterday. And we were going through and I was showing her around the offices and I went down to PGT- U and we have that big pivot door. I told her, I said, have you ever seen a door like this? And she's like, no, what is that? And I opened it and she's like, wow, very cool. You know? So when you impress a 19 year old, that's pretty amazing.

Speaker 2 00:10:38 So imagine a homeowner that goes in and they're shopping for windows, the doors might not be the window, or door in this case, the door for their home, but it shows them what you're able to do. It shows them you're at the top of the market, you have the newest option, the greatest new things that are out in the market, where it's not kind of the same old showroom. So I encouraged to show the displays that certainly you need to show to sell, but also show some other things that shows you that you're on top of market. And you're with all the current trends as well. Right.

Speaker 1 00:11:07 So really hit that wow factor. So maybe the front door of your dealership is a pivot door or a bi-fold door or something that's just like completely impressive. And they walk in. They're like, whoa. Yeah, I think that's a great piece of advice.

Speaker 2 00:11:22 A couple of other things to keep in mind. And if you're limited, only as much space as you have, but it's always good to have a meeting space - a place where you can actually sit down with the customer. So maybe if you're reviewing a quote or maybe you need to show them some literature, you need to show them some print outs from our software of what the window or the door might look like. It's always a good idea to have a place where you can actually sit down with your customer. That is a good environment to do so.

Another thing is you've got to have a routine of keeping maintenance on your showroom. What do you mean? You think about all the times that people come in, they open and close doors and maybe something, somebody tries to open something in the wrong way, and they push on it, and there they knock it out of whack. And then the next person comes in and they go to open up that casement, and it just doesn't feel right. It doesn't operate right. Or maybe you're short a part on an install, maybe your, you know, your crew lost it, or maybe we didn't ship it, but maybe they took a part from the showroom. So they could close out a job.

Speaker 1 00:12:20 That doesn't happen.

Speaker 2 00:12:21 It does happen. And then you've got the customer that comes in and they look at the product and it's incomplete. It doesn't operate well. And you got to really keep your showroom top notch. Maintenance, making sure everything closes, operates, and then cleanliness as well. A lot of times with showrooms, uh, people will drop off samples or drop off something and it kind of just sets, and then your showroom becomes cluttered. So, you know, you make the investment to redo your showroom. You want to keep it presentable.

Speaker 1 00:12:47 So do a walk through every morning and just try to see it through fresh eyes. That's hard when it's a familiar space, but it is important to be able to do that. And just to evaluate, like, look around, like maybe I need some plants in here to make it feel homey or, you know, to have a variety of different tints, or variety of frame colors, a variety of styles just to showcase what you can do. Right? Yep, absolutely. That's awesome. Do you have any advice that you would share around the sales process?

Speaker 2 00:13:16 I think it's important to the sales process from a dealer's perspective, that every one of your employees is sales person, every touch point. It's the person that greets you when you come in, and it could be the receptionist. It could be, if somebody is picking up product, it could be your loaders, it could be your delivery people. It's certainly important how your installers handle themselves out. They all represent you as the company. And it's important that all those touch points are pretty uniform. And it's the company message that you want to be out there in the marketplace. Because everything could be done correctly and right. And then you have that one person, that maybe has a bad day or is not good customer facing, says something. And all of a sudden that represents your company, which isn't fair. But as somebody that owns a dealership, you really have to think that through.

Speaker 1 00:14:01 That's a good point. Not just the salespeople are your salespeople. Everybody is your salesperson. Absolutely. Nice. Well, I know sales is a lot of fun and it's a lot about people. It's a lot about relationship building. And I know our team is a lot of fun. I've met so many of the different sales reps that we have. Haven't met a ton of dealers yet, but I'm hoping to do that. And you know, homeowners, you know, they're, they're, they have to trust who they're working with. And so building that rapport and establishing that trust is important.

Speaker 2 00:14:29 Yeah. I tell you, you mentioned being out in the field and meeting the dealers, we got to get you out to meet the dealers. Because when I came to PGT almost nine years ago, I was blessed with such a wonderful dealer and customer base. And that stands true today and they're amazing group of people and they're a big part of our success. And I think you'd enjoy getting out in the field and meet some of those people.

Speaker 1 00:14:49 Yeah, it's slated future. Brian, I'm so glad that we finally had time to sit down. I think you are the most rescheduled guest I have. You don't have to put that on the podcast. That just means that you're worth waiting for, what can I say? Thank you. All right. Have a good day, Brian. Thanks.

Speaker 3 00:15:08 PGTI University is the customer education team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original Eze-breeze porch enclosure line, then became PGT, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows, and Eco Windows and Doors. We create products built to withstand major storms, keeping people safe, secure, and prepared. Our exceptional brands give you the protection you need without compromising design or functionality. PGTI University is here to educate you, our listener, so that you can be a more informed consumer of window and door products.