5 THE DEMONSTRATION

1. INTRODUCTION

You are now ready to begin to demonstrate the value of La-Z-Boy to the consumer. Enthusiastic product demonstrations delivered in your consumers’ modality put them in their best position to say “I’ll take it!” even before you have the chance to ask for the sale. Terrific, creative presentations tied to specific consumers’ wants, needs and desires make easy transitions to closing sales by enhancing the shopping and purchase experience for consumers.

A. **Demonstrate According To What You Learned In The Interview** It will be impossible to match the personal wants and needs of your consumer or show why they should buy from your store if you have not effectively gathered information. As an essential part of a highly effective sales presentation, the interview and sketch processes are inseparably linked to your demonstration.

   1. Know your consumers’ true needs, wants and desires and demonstrate accordingly.

   2. Remember not to use all your information at once. Appropriate timing is important.

   3. Be empathetic. Use Intellitek to affirm decisions. Make consumers comfortable by displaying patience and empathy.

Each Demonstration Has Two Major Goals

- Establish a value of our La-Z-Boy product in the consumer’s mind.
- Enthusiastically create a desire within the consumer to own our product now!
B. Everything Is Too Expensive Unless Value Is Attached To It

Establishing value involves much more than justifying price. Value can be defined as the total benefit a consumer derives from making an informed investment decision. Once a consumer understands value, price becomes understandable. Value is a personal matter. We buy items that have value to us. Even when trust is established, there is little chance of a consumer purchase when strong value is not established.

2. DEMONSTRATION STYLE

Communicating with your consumers in their modality will give them a clearer picture (visual), greater understanding (auditory) and stronger sense of appreciation (kinesthetic) of the awesome value of La-Z-Boy. Together, these three elements help provide an exceptional consumer experience.

- **Visual** Demonstrations for visual modalities will tend to focus on the physical appearance of the product and how it will look in the home. Use photos of the product from brochures, catalogues and Intellitek to give consumers another perspective of its appearance.

- **Auditory** Auditory modalities will be more interested in the detailed facts and explanations of specific features and benefits of the product. Demonstrate how the product will fulfill their “checklist.” Auditory modalities often appreciate fact sheets, brochures, warranty cards, measurements and other items from your store library that will give them...
additional information. Facts and data (written and verbal) that are pertinent to their priority list will create and/or heighten desire of ownership.

- **Kinesthetic** When demonstrating product for a kinesthetic modality, be sure the consumer feels good about the product, both tactically and emotionally. Touching the piece and sitting on it are important. As the product’s features are explained, discuss the mood that is created in the consumer’s room. Soft tones of voice, kind and gentle body language and an explanation of features relative to the atmosphere and comfort of the room will create and/or heighten desire of ownership.

3. **DEMONSTRATION TIPS**

A. **Get The Consumer Involved** When shoppers participate in the demonstration, they develop a subconscious emotional commitment to own the furniture. This commitment, in turn, boosts the consumer’s trust in you, expands the value of the furniture to consumers and enhances the shopping experience by increasing their desire for ownership.

B. **Features Never Sell – Benefits Do** Features are not really what cause consumers to buy – consumers are shopping for what **benefits** them. A feature’s benefit to the consumer justifies her releasing her money. Highly successful sales associates carefully choose the points they demonstrate, focusing on the benefits their consumers are shopping for. Be sure to focus on your consumer’s taste, not your own.
C. Create The Desire For Ownership  Most of us spend more than we need to on consumer goods, because we look for more than practicality. As with most purchases, the motivation is more emotional than physical; people want the feeling that comes with having the merchandise. It may be comfort, security, happiness, status, relaxation, etc. And a skilled, spirited demonstration can enhance that emotion. For example, your excitement about a particular La-Z-Boy product being perfect for making consumers feel relaxed and pampered in their new home may be contagious. Once the trust and value are clearly established, your enthusiasm will create the type of exceptional shopping experience that inspires the consumer to want to own the La-Z-Boy product. Giving every consumer your very best, energetic demonstration every time places the consumer in the best position to make buying decisions.

D. Pride Of Product Relates Value To Consumer  Would you treat each chair differently if you believed it was worth a million dollars?

- Showing furniture and/or home accessories in a careless or aloof manner communicates a lack of respect and appreciation for the product.

- Handle it respectfully and you will increase its value in the consumer’s mind.
4. BEFORE THE DEMONSTRATION

A. **Gather Information Thoroughly And Completely**  Never be so anxious to move on to the demonstration that you shortchange the process of interviewing and sketching. Whether you are assisting a commodity/in-store or an in-home environmental consumer, this process is the key to an effective demonstration of the right features and benefits for the right piece. It also ensures that you will maximize your sales opportunities now or later. Sketch and gather all information necessary to make the best sales demonstration with *every consumer, every time, thoroughly and completely*. This is how you passionately create consumers for life ... one exceptional experience at a time.

B. **Credit Applications**  Before you begin your demonstration, when you are making the transition from gathering information to showing the consumer a piece of furniture, it is important to *offer every consumer a credit application.*

This is the perfect time because you have already built rapport, and most likely, the subject of price has not come up. Consumers will either be comfortable accepting the credit application or say they don’t need it. If you wait until discussing prices to give them a credit application, you run the risk of implying they can’t afford our product. The credit application is presented without being condescending or pushy.
Make your explanation casual and say something like:

“By the way, (say the person’s name), here’s some information on our credit program. I give it to all my shoppers to give them an idea of what we offer.” (Hand application to consumer; be quiet and wait for a response.)

This way, you introduce the idea of payment options, which may help later if you are dealing with the issue of price. The credit application is often given with several other handouts, such as sale fliers, brochures, wishing well forms, etc. To give credit applications to some consumers but not all could be construed as discrimination. To give it to consumers once you realize “they need it” could be perceived as embarrassing. Some consumers who want a credit application are too embarrassed to ask. Alleviate all these tensions by simply offering a credit application to every consumer, every time.

5. DEMONSTRATION TECHNIQUES

A. Frames Before Fabrics The fabric wall will often overwhelm and confuse consumers due to our large selection. It is best to leave consumers during their assignment to “test drive” the top frame choices while you go to the fabric wall alone. These statements have proven themselves to work: “Mrs. Simpson, please compare this sofa to the blue one and the brown one. Sit on each and look at their features. I’ll be back in a few minutes.” Leave, select fabrics and return to determine the favorite sofa. Then show fabric options you selected for that frame.
B. **Start Off Right:** A great way to start your demonstration is:

- “One of the nice things about this sofa is...”
- “One of the great things about this chair is...”
- “One of the terrific things about this line of sleepers is...”

These statements set a positive tone and imply that there are many nice things about our furniture.

C. **Features, Advantages And Benefits (FAB)** Establishing value and increasing the desire of ownership is facilitated through the FAB method of demonstrating our merchandise. This technique involves translating the product’s features into reasons for the consumer to buy (benefits).

- **Feature** A feature is a physical part or characteristic of a product or a related service: what it is made of, how it is made, the color, design, shape, size, the warranty and so on. Every piece of upholstered furniture in the world is composed of various features the manufacturer selected to be similar to or different from the competition’s furniture. A feature is a fact about the individual piece, line or collection.

- **Advantage** The advantage is tied directly to the feature. The advantage is the gain you get by having that feature versus not having that feature.

- **Benefit** The benefit is tied to the advantage. A benefit is what the advantage will do for the consumer. Why is it important to have?
Check Your FAB

Which Means it down

Why it up

A single feature will have multiple advantages and benefits. Determine which FABs to present to each consumer based on the information gained from your sketch. Keep the message concise and clear for the consumer by attempting to present only one advantage and one benefit for each feature.

1. **Putting It All Together** Understanding the parts of an FAB and how to tailor them to the needs and wants of each specific consumer is a tremendous tool. The real fun comes when you put the FAB all together.

Sales Associate: “Based on what we discussed, this recliner from our Todd Oldham by La-Z-Boy collection could be an excellent choice. One of the nice things about this particular Todd Oldham chair is its (feature) silhouette of distinctive angular lines, which (advantage) gives the chair a modern, sophisticated look. This (benefit) will help make your living room extra special, don’t you think?”

Consumer: “Hmm, I think you’re right.”

Sales Associate: “Another nice thing about this chair is its (feature) expertly engineered, durable hardwood frame. Because of the durability, (advantage) it holds bolts, screws and staples extremely well. (benefit) You’ll get a lifetime of use out of this chair.”
2. **FAB Examples**

**Item:** Sofa

- **F:** Spun polyester wraparound Foamcore on seat cushions.
  - **A:** Adds cushy comfort to cushion.
  - **B:** Cushions will maintain comfort without losing integrity.

**Item:** Recliner

- **F:** Three-position locking footrest.
  - **A:** Locks into each open position.
  - **B:** Comfortable, safe, secure leg support.

3. **Checking FABs** Once you have constructed an FAB, there is a “check” you can use to make sure it is correct.

**Which Means** it down

**Why** it up

**Here’s How It Works**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item:</th>
<th>“Emotion” micro-denier covering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feature:</td>
<td>Bathed in Teflon (<em>which means</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantage:</td>
<td>Easy to clean (<em>which means</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit:</td>
<td>Looks good for a long time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The covering is bathed in Teflon, which means it is easy to clean, which means it will look good for a long time.”
"Your sofa will look good for a long time. Why? Because it’s easy to clean. Why? Because it’s bathed in Teflon."

Since logic works in both directions (up or down), the FAB constructed to demonstrate the fabric is correct.

D. Give Possession In The Demo An excellent way to deliver an FAB is to describe the furniture and accessories as though the consumer already owns them. Giving possession in the demonstration persuades the consumer to think of it as his or hers. It shows your confidence that the products selected belong in the consumer’s home and meet his or her true needs, wants and desires. Because confidence is contagious to the consumer, this helps you deliver an exceptional shopping experience that may yield lifetime consumer relationships. Further, it also helps you lead, guide and direct consumers so that they are in the best position to make a buying decision.

6. SELLING THE ROOM/ENVIRONMENTAL SELLING

Use the details from your sketch during the demonstration to sell (not just one piece of furniture, but) a whole environment. Consumers get excited about an entire decorating concept rather than just one piece of furniture. Use all of your knowledge, skills and personality to really satisfy your consumers by selling to their total needs. They’ll appreciate your care and thoroughness when you design the room of their dreams!
7. IN-HOME CALL

One of the most effective services at La-Z-Boy is the In-Home Call. Sometimes consumers are hesitant and unsure of how to coordinate their current pieces with new furnishings. They may be unsure of how it will fit into their room. When this type of consumer seems interested in an in-home environmental sale, suggest an In-Home Call.

“One of the services we offer here at La-Z-Boy is to measure your room and be sure that everything we select will fit and coordinate perfectly. Will that be helpful to you?”

A. Appointments When planning a visit to your consumer’s home, it is important to make two appointments: one for the In-Home Call and one for the in-store presentation. All decision makers should be present for both appointments; otherwise, it is easy for consumers to lose their focus on this process, which could mean losing the sale.

B. Behavior Of course, it goes almost without saying that being invited into your consumer’s home is both an honor and a responsibility. You are not only a guest, but also a representative of La-Z-Boy – and must therefore act with the utmost respect and professionalism. Regardless of where the sales transaction takes place, your goal is to deliver an exceptional experience that fosters a lifetime consumer relationship by providing outstanding service.

Determine whether an In-Home Call is necessary by asking yourself if there is concrete potential for additional business. If the sale cannot be increased by an In-Home Call, the time investment will not have a payoff for you.
C. Expectations  When you and your consumers have clear expectations, no one will be disappointed. Clarify: How long you will be in the home, decision makers’ presence, agenda for the time frame, fabric samples you’ll need, when the in-store presentation will be, samples of carpet or paint you will bring back to the store, etc. This will prevent misunderstandings and confusion, and will place your consumer in the best position to make a buying decision, so you to make a great sale.

You will find the extra work invested will pay off through increased consumer satisfaction, higher average tickets and increased commissions.

8. AVOIDING THE COMPARISON TRAP

Comparing two pieces of furniture in your store can be a trap that could cost you sales.

A. Sell each piece of furniture on its own merit. Explain that the quality of materials, workmanship, attention to detail and type of construction all have an impact on the price.

Things to consider before you handle a consumer’s request for comparison:

- Anytime you speak negatively about any piece of furniture in your store, you could be heard as saying, “La-Z-Boy carries things that are not good.” This could harm your reputation, your store’s reputation and the
company’s reputation. Another potential danger is knocking a $499 chair as you’re trying to sell a $799 chair, to find the consumer only has $499 to spend. Consider the consumer’s perception.

- Comparing furniture is subjective. Imposing your own opinion on your consumers’ preferences is unwise in any selling situation.

B. The Indecisive Consumer  Occasionally it is necessary to make basic comparisons for your consumer’s benefit. Consumers have difficulty deciding for a variety of reasons.

- First furniture shopping experience
- Sticker shock
- Can’t differentiate fact from fiction
- Feel at risk; afraid of making a mistake
- “Can’t afford” what they like
- Unsure of how it will wear
- Can’t get all decision-makers to agree
- Don’t intend to decide now – waiting for a specific life event (wedding, mother-in-law moving in, etc.)
- Unsure of what they want, need and desire (color, size, pattern)
- Shopped for so long they’re confused
- Can’t match an existing piece or color
- Unsure of how it will look in their room
- Waiting for funds
- Schedules/lack of time to focus on project

The general rule is comparison is not typically necessary. Instead, sell each piece on its own merit. Occasionally, you will have indecisive consumers who will require you to make a comparison, because they are having trouble making their choice.
It is your responsibility to instill confidence in your consumer, facilitating his or her ability to progress through the furniture purchasing process.

1. When you give consumers the information they need in the modality in which they can clearly perceive it, you truly place them in the best position to make a buying decision.

- **Visual** Using additional visual perspectives (Intellitek, catalog photos, line drawings, magazine photos/ads, old sale fliers, brochures, etc.) with visual modalities will give them the opportunity to see how the product will look. This will place them in a confident position to make a buying decision.

- **Auditory** Giving additional information (verbal and printed) such as warranty cards, brochures, cutaway diagrams, line drawings, etc., to auditory modalities will enhance their decision-making capability. Clearly presented facts pertinent to their agenda are vital to them being able to make a buying decision.

- **Kinesthetic** Confirming a sense of the emotions that will be created in the consumer’s room by the piece of furniture you are considering will mobilize the kinesthetic modality. Give this consumer a little more time to contemplate and process his or her feelings. Discuss the comfort and tactile feeling of the piece. Clearly and openly talk through the desired atmosphere for the room and its function with the consumer. This will strongly motivate this consumer to confidently make a buying decision.
2. Many times consumers are indecisive because they are uncomfortable with how much they have to invest to get what they want. When you perceive that price is the issue, try to show three different options that represent three different price points (e.g., Home Theater, Designer’s Choice and American Home). Gain an understanding of the consumer’s “price comfort zone” and proceed accordingly. You must determine if the consumer does not see the value in the product (but can afford it) or simply does not have the budget.

C. When Asked Your Opinion  If your advice is solicited, advise consumers based on the right choice for them, not your own preference. If consumers need your help to make basic comparisons, offer them knowledge and guidance.

1. Provide the basic furniture knowledge that you feel your consumers need.

2. Show three different options that represent three different price points.

3. Emphasize the option that you have determined would best satisfy the consumer.

9. HANDLING THE “EXPERT” page 5.34

Your objective is to sell furniture to consumers while simultaneously getting agreement from their “expert” friends. The simplest way to achieve this goal is by pointing out the FAB to the consumer, and directing a comment designed to gain agreement to the
expert. You’ll know if they see this piece as an option. The thorough sketch must be referred to often as it will serve as an anchor for the consumer’s priorities.

A. **When The Expert Is A Decorator/Interior Designer** You must position yourself as a partner with the designer to achieve the consumer’s common goal. You and the decorator are not competing for the consumer. You both want the same thing – to lead, guide and direct the consumer while providing an exceptional shopping experience that places him or her in the best position to make a buying decision.

B. **When The Expert Is Not There** Sometimes consumers only bring the “sound advice” of the expert with them. When the sound advice doesn’t seem sound:

1. Ask more questions to clearly understand the situation (the expert has probably seen the consumer’s home – you have not). Make sure your sketch is correct.

2. If the sound advice isn’t sound, anchor to the sketch. Reason with the consumer as to what is wise. Understand who the expert is and the perspective of his or her advice. Find the “happy medium.”

Occasionally, the consumer’s expert turns out to be a salesperson at the competitor’s store. *Don’t knock the competition.* Sell La-Z-Boy on its own merit. Know your competition – preparation! – so you can give pertinent and complete information to your consumer.
10. HANDLING CONSUMER OBJECTIONS

Objections are buying signals. They let you know consumers are processing information about a specific product to the extent that they have questions about whether it will work best for them. Consumers only trek down this path if they are trying to make their best investment decision and are interested in the product you’re showing. A lack of objections could equal a lack of interest and commitment to the product you are demonstrating.

A. “I’ll be back!” Determine (by open probes) the unanswered question(s) that is causing them to say “I’ll be back” instead of deciding today. If in reality they should decide today, lead, guide and direct them to do so. If they need to “be back,” try to schedule an appointment for them to come back.

B. Work With The Consumer Successfully overcoming objections depends on a sales associate’s ability to work with consumers. Follow these steps:

1. **Listen To The Entire Objection**

2. **Acknowledge The Objection** By restating their objection verbatim, preceded by “I can understand...” or “I can appreciate...,” you put yourself on the consumer’s side.

3. **Get Permission To Continue** It’s important to seek permission by asking, “May I ask you a question?” This entreats consumers to find a solution with you.
4. “Do you like it?” Such a broad-based, direct question often encourages consumers to open up and tell you exactly what’s on their minds.

5. The “Smoke-Out” As you go through the FABs again, confirm the consumer’s satisfaction with each. Try to smoke-out previously spoken and unspoken objections and determine the best solutions.

6. Ask The Consumer About Price Always ask this question last, after all other objections have solutions. Phrase it in a non-threatening way.

   “How do you see the price?”
   (visual modality)

   “What do you think about the price?”
   (auditory modality)

   “How do you feel about the price?”
   (kinesthetic modality)
11. HANDLING THE PRICE OBJECTION

If you’ve gone through steps 1 through 5 in the preceding section, and still haven’t discovered the consumer’s concern or objection, it is almost certainly price. At this point, it is time to move on to step 6: “Ask The Consumer About Price.” Because many people are sensitive about money, phrase your question in a nonthreatening manner in the consumer’s modality. The response will either be that it’s too high, or it’s fine.

A. “It’s fine.” If the consumer truly believes the price is fine (and you have covered all other issues with the consumer), then he or she probably perceives the product to lack value. Explain that La-Z-Boy furniture is a great value and it’s important to you that your consumers understand that. Then it’s time to pull out your "cannon" – your strongest selling point/FAB.

B. “Too high.” If consumers tell you the price is too high, you need to determine whether the price is high in relationship to their budget or to the value of the furniture. When a consumer objects to a price, acknowledge his or her feelings: “I can certainly understand your concerns about the price. Things are expensive today, aren’t they?”

1. “Is the price of this particular chair (sofa, loveseat, lamp, etc.) too high, or is it more than you wanted to invest today?”
2. “How much did you want to invest?”
3. Offer an alternative.

Seek objections and deal with them openly. Buying signals are beautiful things!

Check out the flow chart on page 5.51
If all else has failed up to this point and the consumer is still not prepared to make a buying decision, you have three options to choose from based on each individual consumer and circumstance. These options are provided below, in order of preference.

A. **Write up the order as pending, get a deposit and set a date for delivery.** The delivery date can be the perfect tool for presenting this option to your consumer, as you can see in the following example (follow your store’s office procedures).

Sales Associate:  “Mrs. Jones, I know you want to make sure your new sofa is delivered by the end of the week, since you’re having the party. You’re still a little uncertain about which sofa to take. Why don’t we go ahead and reserve a date for the delivery on our calendar, since our delivery people get very busy around the end of the week. I would hate it if we couldn’t accommodate your delivery wishes should you make your decision too close to the deadline. I’ll just write up your two choices on an order form, collect a nominal deposit from you, which is completely refundable, and call you in a few days for the go-ahead. What do you think?”
Consumer: “Why do I need to give you a deposit?”

Sales Associate: “It’s the only way I can reserve a delivery date for you. The deposit is only $100. When you decide which sofa you want delivered, your spot on the truck will be reserved. You’ll have your sofa for your party. Isn’t that what you really want?”

B. Make a “be back” appointment. This “commits” consumers to return at a certain time.

Sales Associate: “Mrs. Jones, I really do want to make sure you find the perfect sofa and loveseat for your living room. Let’s schedule an appointment for you to come back in a few days so we can work on this some more. Here, I’m available on Monday and Tuesday evening. Since you work so close, would after work on either of those days be good for you?”

C. Make an In-Home Call appointment. Offer to schedule an appointment to visit the consumer’s home to measure and/or bring fabric samples. Work within your store’s policy. In-Home Calls should only be made when there is concrete potential for additional business. The consumer must be serious about buying.
Note: In general, it is not a good idea to let a consumer take fabric samples home. Some consumers shop a variety of stores, picking up fabric samples to take home and study. They will have no guidance at home from you about how La-Z-Boy products are superior to the others which they are comparing. To truly lead, guide and direct this consumer, you would need to be in her home studying all the options with her.

A high percentage of loaned fabric samples get returned on your day off, dropped off by a child, dropped at the front of the store with another sales associate or are never returned. We seldom have requests to borrow the less popular fabric samples. Note how many samples are “missing” from your wall due to unreturned loans. Protect your business – don’t loan.

If you do loan, use high deposits and a tight tracking system. This weeds out consumers who are not really serious about buying. As a La-Z-Boy sales professional, you’re responsible for delivering an exceptional consumer experience that encourages a lifetime of consumer relationship. However, this becomes a real challenge when you can’t show your full line of fabric options and the best fabric choices to your current and future consumers because the fabric samples are in a consumer’s home. When a consumer sincerely needs the fabric in her home to make her best buying decision, she also need her sales associate there to lead, guide, and direct her toward the best option.
13. CONCLUSION

As you can see, opening, gathering information and the demonstration are wrapped up in a creative, supportive, caring and efficient presentation. As a La-Z-Boy sales associate, you have a lot of tools in your toolbox: The skills you’ve developed thus far, your personal charm, Intellitek, design training, the La-Z-Boy name and quality and a wide variety of well-designed merchandise displayed to perfection. By maximizing the use of all the tools, you will be able to professionally lead, guide and direct every consumer, every time, thoroughly and completely while providing outstanding consumer service.

Notes

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