



POINT

**Offer Your Services,**

**SAYS FRANK SCHIPANI, SALES TRAINER.**

There is no "best way" to work a client.

Because great sellers have unique personalities and different methods, reading from a script is not advisable. But great sellers have one thing in common: a genuine desire to help the client. A good part of their job satisfaction derives from making the client's life a little better.

While the initial contact should never be about the sale (and should always include a smile and an introduction),

your opening should offer your services.

"How may I be of help to you?" is perfectly appropriate, as is "How are you? What brings you in today?"

If the client is wearing an overcoat, offer to hang it up. Take his wet umbrella and offer him a cup of coffee or a drink—but then get down to business. Your visitor/client is looking for a trustworthy authority, someone who won't waste his valuable time. If someone wants to "just look around," then let him know who you are and that you'll be there to help him with any queries. Remember, he is "just looking around" in your home.

**Bottom line** It's about sincere hospitality, unique service, and true professionalism. What you are really selling is a positive and memorable experience.

*Frank Schipani is a sales trainer, available at talk2fas@optonline.net and 203.324.5533. His book "Frank's Rules: How to Sell Menswear (and practically anything else) Extremely Well" will be coming out soon (see review page 55).*

COUNTERPOINT

**Make a Friend,**

**SAYS ROBIN WALKER, STYLE CONSULTANT.**

To lift a line from *Jerry Maguire*, it all starts with "hello." By that I mean a real introduction, none of that generic stuff like "Hi, how are you today?" or "Can I help you with something?" Instead, how about something as simple as introducing yourself and asking their name too. Maybe even a handshake.

That's how most friendships start, why should a retail relationship be any different? (For the record, few friendships evolve when the implied ending of the greeting is "Can I sell you something today?")

**Introduce yourself** No more "Welcome to X boutique, my name is X." Say YOUR name first as a gesture of kindness.

**Ask for their name** Remember, people buy from people AND people like to hear their own name.

**Show interest** Your first questions should be completely unrelated to you and your inventory. Note: Asking about the weather is cliché, so dig a little deeper and make a list of noninvasive questions that you can rotate among.

**Compliment their outfit, if appropriate** Or comment on something going on in town, or in the world. Think friend first, and customer second—they'll likely come back for more.

*Robin Walker is an image consultant available at 312.431.9662, www.MyWardrobeCompanion.com*

