

Reach Out and Touch Someone!

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The Power and Value of a Handshake

An article on the power and value of a handshake may seem relatively rudimentary compared to the complexities of today's housing market. However, my experience in the homebuilding business reveals that all too often many sales people do not get up to greet customers when they visit our communities, let alone shake their hand. As both a sales person and the VP of Sales, I personally mystery shopped the competition. I would not just drop in and grab a price list on my way back to the office after a Monday morning sales meeting. I would shop the competition on my days off. Dressed in jeans, a t-shirt and comfortable shoes, I would hide behind dark sunglasses and conduct my reconnaissance shopping incognito. The scary thing is more often than not, the sales person did not greet me. Even if I was greeted in the sales office, often times the salesperson did not offer to shake my hand. This is a problem and could be costing you, the sales person, and the company big bucks in lost sales!

Establishing a human connection! The power and value of a handshake is in the touch. Touching someone is invaluable fundamental to establishing a human connection. By starting your greeting with a warm, sincere, and professional handshake, you will find that your customers are much more likely to be open to sharing their needs, wants, desires and current living situation with you. The exchange of contact through the touch of a hand immediately helps puts the customer at ease. If they are at ease they will allow themselves to be transparent with you. Couple a warm handshake with eye-contact and the customer immediately assesses you and your company, your product and service, your reliability and professionalism, and whether you are trustworthy or just out to make a sale.

Incognito reconnaissance shopping revealed that the salesperson did not offer to shake my hand.



*Hi, Welcome to ABC Homes.
My name is Christine Hamilton.
And you are?*

It is said that purchasing a home can be one of the most stressful situations in a person's life. A simple handshake helps relieve pressure in what otherwise may be a stressful situation. It reduces anxiety, tension and stress. If the salesperson skips this invaluable step, the prospect may not reveal a thing to you and chances of advancing the sale are OFF. There is something magical in the exchange of energy that takes place while shaking hands. Two people become energetically connected!

Touch releases brain endorphins

The initial handshake is more than a polite gesture. It sets the tone for interpersonal communication. It is a way of communicating love. Science proves that touch triggers the release of brain endorphins. Buying a home is emotional, not intellectual. Touch conveys the emotional feelings of love, acceptance, respect and understanding. It is an important habit that drastically increases your chances of successfully closing a sale. Touch also provides comfort. It makes us feel secure because it unites us with an affectionate, loving, and feeling human being. A warm handshake begins the process of establishing confidence and trust in the Sales Professional. It affects the psyche in such a way that the prospect is primed to capture dreams and to take risks. A heartfelt handshake can make or break a sale because it helps reduce worry and fear of buying a home. Let them feel your love, your love of them as fellow human beings, your love for your work, your builder and your homes. Shaking hands conveys love. Love causes the natural release of brain endorphins. Endorphins make us feel good. And when we feel good, we spend big bucks!

Handshake → Conveys Love → Release of Endorphins → Customer Feels G☺☺D → "Yes" Buying Decision

Immediate feel for personality type

Additionally, as the Sales Professional you also get a lot out of initiating conversation by shaking the customer's hand because the exchange of energy is two way. Just as they get a sense for you, you likewise instantly get a feeling for their personality type. If the person has a very firm grip, chances are they are a driver, controller or bullish type. A wobbly, excited handshake may reveal that they are expressive, promoter or tiger like. Soft and flimsy hands may indicate that they are more friendly, supportive or lamblike. A curt, formal shake may indicate an analytical or owlsh personality type. So even starting with something as seemingly innocuous as shaking your prospect's hand can provide you with valuable insight into how you should proceed with your greeting, needs assessment, presentation and closing style.

Both Sales Professional and customer are human receptors.

Additionally, just as you will be more receptive of the personality type of your customer, likewise they will be more receptive to what you have to say. As the saying goes, "I don't care what you know until I know how much you care." Show them you care by offering your hand 100% of the time. Even if a customer chooses not to shake your hand, making the effort sends them a positive message. Those that do like to, want to and enjoy shaking hands, will get a lot out of it!

I asked one of my top Sales Professionals if she greeted every prospect with a hand shake and she admitted that she did not. That is honest! Sales Professionals, ask yourselves honestly, if you get up to greet every prospect. If you do, do you shake their hand always, every time, without fail? The previous sentence is redundant for emphasis. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of greeting the customer with a warm, friendly handshake always, every time, without fail! First, you owe it to the company because that is what they are paying you for. Moreover, you owe it to yourself because by establishing a connection with the customer, you also increase your chances of closing a sale and being compensated.

Shake the Woman's Hand Too!

And don't just shake his hand when a couple comes in. You had better to be sure to shake her hand too! It is a known fact that when it comes to the purchase of home, women make or powerfully influence 85-95% of the buying decisions. So please extend your hand to the woman and give her the courtesy, respect and attentiveness that she deserves.

*Shake your Customers' Hand
Always, Every Time,
Without Fail!*

Of course, the handshake is not the only factor involved in a customer's "Yes" buying decision but it is one of the simple, basic and crucial steps true Sales Professionals always take to improve their odds of connecting with the customer and closing sales today!

You never know who may visit your community, a competitor, potential employer or better yet, a serious home buyer who needs to feel a connection with you before they will risk a "Yes" buying decision. It is this simple initial connection that distinguishes and differentiates true Sales Professionals from mediocre salespeople, Winners from losers. So here's to a 100% Handshake Day! Go ahead...Reach Out and Touch Someone and watch your closing ratio increase! Guaranteed!

*Christine Hamilton is the Past Vice President of Sales for Beazer Homes Northern California (BZH:NYSE). She is a three-time winner of MAME Salesperson of the Year 1997-99 and won Rookie of the Year her first year in the business. Hamilton was awarded the 2000 NAHB Silver Award for Salesperson of the Year California/Nevada regions and in 2001 won the NAHB Gold Award for NATIONAL BEST SALESPERSON OF THE YEAR. She is a Certified Sales and Marketing Professional (CSP, CMP) and has 27 years sales and marketing experience. Now an International Speaker, Sales Trainer, Sales Coach and Author. Christine Hamilton is the authoring the book **Sh*t HOTTT Sales – A Guide to EXCEPTIONAL Sales(wo)manship**. To pre-order, view video clips, schedule a training event or for a free consultation, check out www.ChristineHamilton.com or **CALL NOW** toll free (877) 630-5525.*

