

HOW TO...

CLAW BACK SOME MARGIN

The magic of 'try before you buy'

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Everyone in business with common sense knows there are only four things you can do to achieve this: put your prices up (oh yeah, when the customers demand prices go down each year, and the competition encourages them to believe it is the norm!); reduce your costs (a depressing 'negative' exercise when you have made all the obvious 'cuts' you're left with unbundling core parts of the operation which work well at the moment); buy better (difficult to see how while maintaining quality and logistics support and the magic 'soft money' seems to get soaked up before my level on the food chain); sell more profitably (sell more! I can sell more, I just have to sell at or below cost and I can be a busy fool too...).

There are some simple steps you can take to help, it involves knowing the products and identifying those manufacturers who believe it's important to support the dealer.

One such manufacturer is Sigel, a long established private company which has the long term vision to invest in that key activity; 'selling the product out'. A major European player in PC associated, paper-based products, their approach to photo papers and business card systems represents a significant enhanced profit opportunity for dealers everywhere.

Its product groups, such as the 'good, better, best' family of photo paper, have several things in common: they are not price driven,

they are growth markets with every type of business large and small, and consumers want to 'try before they buy'.

In all cases Sigel offers a continuous rolling programme of promotional ideas for retail and commercial dealers, packs with 50% extra free, are typical. Sample packs to mail or 'seed' are freely available so customers can 'feel and see the quality'.

With Sigel photo papers and Sigel support any dealer can capitalise on the back of the huge boom in digital photography now. The same with the Sigel business card systems, let your customers try the Sigel free sample packs including the software and several sheets of cards and they can see for themselves how easy it is to use.

If all goes to plan then, with the profitable sales that will come as a result of the sampling exercise, you can also sell the wide range of business card cases, boxes and accessories.

Just a couple of ideas on 'How to' put some profit back into your business while giving your customers what they want: quality innovative products that work, promotions that represent remarkable value for money and free samples so they can 'try before they buy'. ■

TOP TIPS

>> 1.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS. SEGMENT THEM BY THE TYPES OF 'DEALS' THAT THEY RESPOND TO

>> 2.

SEEK OUT THE MANUFACTURERS WILLING TO INVEST IN YOUR SALES GROWTH DIRECTLY AND SUPPORT THEM

>> 3.

BE DIFFERENT, SELL A SOLUTION THEN SELL THE 'VALUE ADDED ACCESSORIES'