



Closing The Sale – Not Just Price

case study



“Some claimed we were selling a commodity where price is the only thing. So did we. So did our sales group. We thought price, price, price,” said Byron Sharron, Sales Manager for Unifi, Inc., as he described a major issue that his company faced.

“We are a synthetic yarn producer of polyester and nylon, so that’s what we sell,” notes Sharron of his company. “Our products are used in home furnishings, automotive seat covers, medical hosiery,

socks, intimate apparel, swim wear, and in many other common products.”

However, Unifi had some sales-related challenges, primarily in a commodity product line facing serious foreign competition. Says Sharron, “We were down about thirty-five percent. Our big goal in life is to keep our assets running full, so we have to take every bit of business we can find.” Price seemed to be a driving factor, but Unifi needed to get away from being so price dependent.

Sharron notes, “When we started this project, we brought everybody together, all the salespeople, our tech service group, executives, and operations. We came up with a group that had about a thousand plus combined man-years of sales experience.” Involving a broad group in brainstorming ideas was critical, because, according to Sharron, “We got too caught up in that daily routine of price, price, sell, sell. We just needed to bring in people from the outside and get a fresh approach to this.”

As to measuring experiment results, Sharron states, “Key Measure – if you sell it, it worked; if you didn’t, it failed. No room between, no gray.” Unifi tested thirty ideas out of eighty-four that were brainstormed, producing both some interesting and unexpected results. “We thought that downstream market sales and tech support were kind of iffy, but that turned out to be a big deal, a very important part for our customers. A change in how pricing was presented helped.” Surprisingly, factors like special pricing, expedited shipping, and executive visits did not help.

Unifi implemented the findings, and Sharron notes, “All thirty-nine customers targeted in the experiment had actually bought none of this product from us previously. During the experiment, over fifty percent of the customers that we targeted, we sold. Over 750,000 pounds of new sales per month, and these sales came within sixty days of the time we started.”

“Isn’t it great to see a U.S.-based manufacturer demonstrating and receiving incremental value compared to foreign competitors?” asked Art Hammer, Vice President of QualPro Inc. “I am very proud that our MVT® process is helping our manufacturers make competitive breakthroughs.”

“It was beneficial, it was fast, and it was effective,” Sharron concluded. “Our market share has gone up over twenty percent!”