



FASHION BRAIN ACADEMY

Scripts to Use With a Retail Buyer

The purpose of this report is to run through some common scenarios you'll face when you're selling your product to boutiques. We want to help you be prepared, sound like you've been there before, and get over your fear of contacting a buyer.

Calling on the Phone

Let's run through when you call on the phone.

General tips: Never call on a Saturday or a Sunday. (If you stop by on a Saturday, I would not approach the buyer unless it occurs naturally and easily. They're usually just too busy). Tuesday – Thursday mornings are best to call. Mondays are fine too but often the owner has the day off.

If you call the buyer, and you don't get a real person, I probably wouldn't leave a message the first time. I would try to get somebody on the line first. And if you call three or four times, and you can't get anyone, then go ahead and leave a message. And your message has to be short, and it has to be about THEM and not all about YOU.

Please do your research and know the buyer's name! I suggest checking out the store's social media accounts to get the most up-to-date details about the store, including what types of products they carry and current pricepoint and target customer info.

Scenario #1

You call and the buyer is not available

"Hi, this is Jane from _____. May I speak to _____ name of buyer?"

Shop employee: "She's not in right now."

JH: "OK, well I'm a designer and we make _____ **this product** for _____ **this customer**. Now don't just ask for an appointment right away– you want to let the buyer know what you do and get warmed up."

"I've looked at your Facebook page / Website and I think my line would hang well with what you're currently carrying (you can name some brands). I sent you a mailer/email with pictures of _____ (explain your style) and I would love your feedback on the line. – or ...would love to make an appointment..."

Do you know a good time to reach her?

Shop employee: "She'll be in on Wednesday morning."

"Great. Do you know if she prefers a call or an email?"

Shop employee: "Just email her."

Jane: "Sounds good. What's the best email to use?"

Shop employee: she may give you a better email than the one you have. Try to get the buyer's personal email, not the one listed on the site.

Jane: "Thanks. And what's your name?"

Then you may get a chance to chat with the employee and ask her more about the store, what lines they carry, their target customer, etc. Make an effort to connect, be likeable, and ask questions about THEM.

As soon as you hang up the phone, shoot the buyer a quick email. Re-introduce your line and tell them why you're contacting them, etc...

If you had a good chat and a nice "connection" with the person who answered the phone when you called, consider using that employee's name in the email. Let's say her name is Sandy...

Your subject line could be: I just talked to Sandy...

CAREFUL: This is a pretty cheeky thing to do so only use this strategy if you really did have a nice chat with "Sandy" and it feels authentic.

Keep in Mind: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE CALL? To get feedback? To get an appointment? To get them to order online ASAP? To get them to agree to a Trunk Show? To get them to see you at a Trade Show?

Scenario #2

You call and get the buyer on the line

"Hi, this is Jane from _____. May I speak to _____ name of buyer?"

Buyer: "Yes, that's me"

Jane: "Hi! My name is Jane Hamill and I'm the designer of _____ **this product** for _____ **this customer**. Do you have a quick second to talk?"

"I've looked at your Facebook page / Website and I think my line would hang well with _____ and _____ (name brands they carry). I sent you a mailer/email with pictures of _____ (explain your style and describe what you sent) and I'd love your feedback.

Then see what they say and respond.

If the buyer does not recognize you or your line, you can suggest that she/he goes to your website RIGHT NOW while you are on the line to take a look. If the buyer is willing to do this, it's a GREAT way to connect, answer questions, and see if it's a fit.

If the buyer looks and says no thanks, ask why. Is it the style or price? Is the timing off right now but maybe it would be a possibility at a later time? Can you contact them again later and keep in touch? If it's a real NO, ask if they know any other stores that might be a fit.

Keep in Mind: Do NOT say, "Hi, this is Jane from the Jane Hamill Collection. I send you a line sheet in the mail, did you get it?" This phrase annoys buyers.

Scenario #3

Leaving a message is THEM, not about YOU

Try not to talk about what how great your product is. Keep the focus on what you and your product might help their store.

Here's a sample message:

"Hi, this is Jane from Zane Designs. I sent you a postcard (or an email) with a picture of _____ (say what it looked like) and we make _____ **this product** for _____ **this customer**."

For instance, one of my clients makes dog sweaters. When I asked her what was special about them she said "they're made of Alpaca". The problem is the customer won't really care about that detail. What's good about that for the customer? I asked my client... "well, they're softer and warmer than the average doggie item – not scratchy". BINGO – that's much more interesting to a buyer.

Continue.... "I would love to follow up with you and get your feedback on my line. Our sweaters are softer and warmer than the typical dog sweater and they're not scratchy.

Your store is just the kind of store we love and we think could be a good fit. Here's how you can reach me. Here's my email, phone etc., I look forward to talking to you, and thank you so much."

DON'T SAY: I just know my line would be great for your store. As a former retailer I can guarantee this will bother them – they don't think YOU know what's right for them and they take this seemingly benign statement the wrong way – *don't tell me what's right for my store...*

Scenario #4

Stopping by a Shop

You walk into a shop...Amy is the shop owner

Jane walks in the store. "Hi! Are you the buyer?"

Amy: "May I ask why you're asking? Do you have an appointment?" -- *buyer's already on the defensive, thinking "maybe I am the owner, maybe I'm not".*

Jane: "Uhhmm no, I was just wondering..."

Amy: "Because if you don't have an appointment..."

Ooops -- this will get you off on the wrong foot. Let's do it another way.

Scenario #5

Let's try it again. JH walks into the store

Amy drinking coffee, 50 pieces of mail on desk, looks busy...

JH – I walk in and just start to look around. I am looking around to see if the store's a good fit for my product and to not be aggressive in my approach.

Amy: Hi, barely looks up

JH takes a look around still...

Amy: "May I help you find something?"

Thanks, Actually I'm designer I make this product for this type of customer and I am wondering if you can tell me the name of the person in charge of looking at new lines?

Amy: "oh well she's not here but what do you do?"

JH "I make....."

Oh, do you have any in your bag?

Sure, here's a picture, my line sheet, and here's a sample...

Amy: "OK, I will definitely give you the name of the owner, These are cute, etc..."

Jane: "Great – and does he/she prefer to be contacted by phone or email? Are there good times to reach her?"

Scenario #6

Amy is buyer

She shuts me down scenario...

JH comes in the store...

Actually I'm designer, etc.... Are you the owner?

Amy: That's nice but I'm in the middle of things- shuffling papers

Jane: "Oh no I was just .. I don't want to interrupt, I'll just leave this here (line sheet, postcard, lookbook – whatever you brought to leave behind)."

Amy: "Well..."

Jane: "Absolutely—I don't want to interrupt, I don't have an appointment, I'll leave this here and contact you next week." – and you leave gracefully.

What may happen is they let you go – fine, you left something behind and you'll follow-up later. Or they stop you and say, as long as you're here, what do you do, etc....

Remember this:

No response from a retailer does not mean NO.

No response means MAYBE. You have to keep following up again. Maybe the buyer hasn't seen your line sheet yet. This is where most sales people stop. A lot of

entrepreneurs don't get an immediate response and they don't follow up. They stop trying and they stop too soon.

You don't know what's going on in that store or with that buyer. Maybe they're on vacation – maternity leave – just lost their store manager - whatever. Follow-up is KEY to getting an order.

Also, remember the quote:

“68% of all sales are lost due to poor 'follow-up' methods.”

- Jay Conrad Levinson, author of Guerrilla Marketing

Good luck!! Try to have fun with the process, keep your confidence up, and know that when you go out and get some “No's”, you're also going to get some buyers saying YES.

Sincerely,

Jane

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