

Sell Products In Your Gym Without Being Pushy

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You need any help finding anything? No, I'm just looking.

This may be the most common first interaction between a retail employee and a customer. The employee is trying to help while the shopper is usually just getting their bearings and figuring out what they want. There's no harm in this method of helping customers, but it's not always effective.

Being a good salesperson in a climbing gym without coming across as overbearing can be tricky, it comes down to reading each individual customer and knowing when to step in and when to sit back.

Be in Reachable Distance

Truc Allen is the buyer at [Edgeworks Climbing + Fitness](#). In addition to ordering the ropes and holds for the climbing routes in all three of their gyms, he purchases the gear sold in the retail space next to the front desk of each facility. He also educates the Edgeworks front desk staff to sell retail effectively.

"The goal is to make our retail easy to get what you want and see what you want," Truc said. He encourages his staff to "be in reachable distance" whether that means physically or within hearing distance to the customer.

If the front desk staff is too busy chatting among themselves to notice a customer's interest in an item, or the consumer feels that the staff is too occupied, a sale might be missed. At the same time, if an employee is hovering over the customer, they may feel pressured to buy something without being ready. Being reachable means being available at a moment's notice without being

overbearing. Being ready to give someone a moment to be available and moments where it needs to be being

Understand Body Language

The key to capitalizing on a retail opportunity is to read body language effectively.

“Give them a moment, read their body language, make eye contact, and then say, 'Can I help you?’” Truc said.

He recognizes that his staff knows if someone is new to the gym vs. a regular member, and this affects how an interaction goes down. “People come in to shop for a specific item and might not be members,” Truc explained.

Selling retail to these folks will be a much different experience than selling to a member that has been climbing for years.



Sean Cameron is a sales representative for [Sterling Ropes](#) and has been in the outdoor sales industry for several decades. “Try to build relationships with the customer first before you sell them something,” Sean said. This relates to body language as it’s important to engage with customers appropriately. Some customers be more standoffish and need space, while others want to buddy up right away.

Adapt to the Way We Shop

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He sees most people shopping with their phones out to learn about products. He wants to get his staff and customers more engaged in retail. "The hope is to get retail [in the gym] into an experience," Truc explained.

Sean sees techniques used in other industries translating to the outdoor industry. "Like getting your haircut, they just put product in your hair, and then sometimes it resonates and sometimes it doesn't," he said.

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Since products can be so easily bought online, gyms need to turn a transaction into an experience rather than just a sale. "Making the gym a place to hang out and not just climb and retail is a part of that perspective" is what Truc strives for. In this way, selling retail will come across as seamless rather than as something forced.

Build Trust

Selling climbing equipment in the gym can draw in new climbers or keep experienced ones coming back. It's also a way to build trust and make more money for the gym. Doing so in a way that brings climbers into the fold rather than pushing them away is key to creating a strong retail presence. When push comes to shove, don't force it, and lean into building a community around retail rather than making a sale just to make a sale.

I noticed you looking at climbing shoes, what type of climbing are you focused on right now? A good salesperson will lead with a sentence such as this, drawing in the customer with a question that shows interest and engagement and requires an honest answer that will start a conversation. Some people may have a natural disposition to sell, while others may hate it. With a little practice, some go-to techniques, and a friendly and inquisitive attitude, anyone can be effective at selling retail in a climbing gym without coming across as overbearing or pushy.

The CWA's Retail Webinar Series is the perfect resource no matter where in your retail journey you are.

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About the Author



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