As retailers, we deal with many different personality types on a daily basis. Of course each customer is unique, but there is universal agreement that there are four basic personality types. These are the main customer personalities specific to the retail environment.

**The Director**

As the name implies, this personality is generally associated with demanding people. They are the take-charge types. They want what they want when they want it — and they want it now! In extreme cases they can be intimidating know-it-alls. Directors are generally not into small talk; they want the facts in order to make a decision as quickly as possible.

If you try to get in the way of their goal they will plow through you and, as the expression goes, “take no prisoners.” They don’t care about anyone’s interest other than their own. Their goals are very clear. They want the best possible product at the lowest possible price delivered when they want it -- which is usually immediately.

**How to Deal with the Director Personality**

Eliminate as much small talk as possible, lay out the facts, give your reasons why they should purchase something and make it brief and to the point. Generally these personality types have high self-esteem, almost to the point of being obnoxious about it.

One of the most valuable tools you can use here is to compliment their direct style and decisiveness. The one thing you never want to do is to tell this personality type they are wrong or they are not listening. You must let them make their own decision. You can try to make suggestions, but make sure they are short and to the point. Remember, the Director gets turned off when you present yourself in any way as a roadblock to their goal.
Remember: Never confront the Director -- stay out of their way!

The Analytical Personality

These types usually have professions that require accuracy and analysis. These would include jobs such as accountants, engineers or scientists, whereby they conduct research and analyze all the possibilities before making a decision. Just reading that line generally conjures up an image of someone you know who fits the mold, am I right?

Motivators

What motivates this type of personality when they come into a retail store to buy? Facts, details, product descriptions, Consumer Reports information; this personality type wants data. They read manuals, directions and the fine print. Like the Director type they are unaffected by small talk or the niceties that can accompany a retail store visit.

How to Deal with the Analytical Personality

Give them facts and data. Do not make a statement unless you can back it up with pertinent information. If the product has detailed labeling, give it to them. There is one major advantage when it comes to dealing with the analytical personality.

They have done their homework and/or comparative research. In many cases they will actually know more than a salesperson or owner, which makes them a valuable source of information.

Don’t be afraid to ask them why they came into your store -- because there is a reason. The biggest asset they have is all the research they have done about the product you are selling. And they have it neatly filed away in their iTouch or Smart Phone so it can be easily referenced in seconds.

Motivators

Analyticals have all of this research and knowledge, yet generally have no one to share it with! Analytical people rarely partner with other analytical people. So they do all this research on a product and their partner could care less about their efforts.

Here is an opportunity for you to be the one who cares! Simply ask them, “What have you learned?” or “Where have you shopped?” They will be thrilled that you asked and will start sharing everything they know. This is where the line “Tell me about...” is so powerful. We can learn a lot about our products and our competition by simply asking the Analytical shopper a few pertinent questions and their opinions.

Remember: Asking someone’s opinion is considered the silent compliment.

The Belonging (or Relater) Personality Type

Many times this personality is referred to as the “Relater.” Relaters/Belonging types have a strong need to feel part of a group. I like to use the “my” test on this personality type. This means when a customer refers to “my accountant,” “my doctor,” “my garage,” “my electrician,” “my lawyer,” or “my store,” your store becomes part of their network. These people are usually three calls away from getting anything they want. They always know someone who knows someone who knows someone — the classic example of “three degrees of separation.”
How to Deal with the Belonging Type

The reason we refer to this shopper as the “Belonging Type” is because they take an ownership position in anything they do. The easiest way to sell to this personality type is to simply ask them, “What is your opinion of this product and do you think we should carry it?” Their response might be something like, “I think it looks good and I think you should carry it. I might like something like that. Let me see it.” The bottom line is to include them in any way you possibly can, because they want to feel a part of the decision making process.

One word of caution: The Belonging Type of customer can come into the store when the owner is not there and report back to the owner if someone isn’t doing their job. On the plus side, they are wonderful customers to have and a sensational source of never-ending referrals.

Remember: Inclusion is the name of the game with the Belonging customer.

The Socializer

Socializers are exactly as the name implies. They are outgoing, love to talk and love to make new friends. The Socializer wants to build a relationship with people who work in the store. This personality type places likeability as one of the most important buying criteria. If they don’t like you they are not going to do business with you.

The most important thing to the Socializer is to build friendships. If you talk to them like an Analytical personality, with facts and figures, they will shut right down.

As similar as they might be to the Belonging type, loyalty to one source isn’t as important to the Socializer. If they can develop friendships in several different stores then they will go to several different stores.

Socializers love to receive and give compliments. However, they tend to be self-centered. They want to go to a store where they are made to feel important. This is the one group that retailers, owners, managers and salespeople relate to the most, because the majority of retailers will fit in this category!

How to Deal with the Socializer

The most important thing to remember is that it’s not all about the merchandise; it is about the relationship. Always remember that the first thing you are selling is yourself. You can be giving merchandise away, but the Socializer won’t care if they don’t like you. Use compliments liberally. Do whatever you have to do to remember the names of these people. Don’t lose sight of the fact that although they look at the shopping experience as a fun, social event, your goal is still to sell them merchandise.

Remember: Keep the Socializer focused, yet be light enough to make their shopping experience fun and entertaining.