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THE HOG RING

5 TIPS FOR TURNING CALLERS INTO CUSTOMERS

By Naseem Muaddi, Trimmer & Founder of TheHogRing.com

It sounds silly to think that auto upholstery shops may need help talking on the phone, but you'd be surprised by how often costly mistakes are made. When it comes to selling a job, a simple slip of the tongue can cost you money. Below are five simple tips for effectively communicating with customers over the phone. Even if you don't need help in this department, maybe some of your coworkers or employees do – so feel free to forward this article along.

1. Start with a professional greeting

Never answer the phone just by saying "hello". A professional greeting – like "Jim's Auto Upholstery, how may I help you?" – not only ensures your customers that they've dialed the right number, it also conveys professionalism.

2. Educate your customers

Many customers think that jobs are much simpler than they actually are – which is why some act shocked when they hear our prices. However, explaining the steps you'll need to take in order to carry out a service can help justify the cost. From personal experience, I know that customers appreciate the little bit of knowledge that we share with them. It makes them feel confident that we know what we're doing and that our prices are fair.

3. Watch your tone

Be aware that your tone of voice is just as important as the words you speak. Being sarcastic or condescending to customers while attempting to educate them can be offensive. Answer their questions – no matter how silly they are – politely and professionally. Difficult customers are especially deserving of professional treatment. After all, they're the ones most likely to go about ruining your reputation.

4. Provide incentives for callers to come in

Most callers are looking for a quick price quote. But aside from headliners, auto upholstery work is too specialized to give estimates over the phone. How many times have you heard this: "I'm looking to get a full custom interior in my car. How much is that going to cost me?" Don't get duped into giving a price quote over the phone. When the car comes into your shop, it'll most likely need a lot more work than what the customer let on – yet he'll still try to hold you to the quote. Instead, provide incentives for customers to bring their cars in. Tell them that you have samples of material for them to see and feel, and that you'd like to discuss the design process with them in more depth. If your in-person estimate is free, let them know. This could only work to your advantage, as it's much easier to sell a job in person than over the phone. So set that appointment!

5. Remember the facts

Don't hang up before telling customers the vital facts they'll need to come in for an estimate. These include your business hours, address and directions if necessary. If you scheduled an appointment for them to come in, confirm the date and time. Also, remember to end just as professionally as you started: "Thanks for calling Jim's Auto Upholstery. We hope to see you soon."

Once the customer has arrived, it's up to you to make the sale. Just remember that the hardest part is over. If they're at your shop, they're serious about having their car's interior repaired.

The Hog Ring is the #1 blog and online community for auto upholstery professionals. Here you can read industry news, search jobs and connect with others who share your passion for auto upholstery.



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Auveco parts are specific to the year, make and model of the vehicle, each part is intended only for certain vehicles. To insure a good fit, please let us know what specific vehicle they are for. And since the catalog is phone-book thick, please be patient, it can take a few minutes to find your specific part number.

We also have catalogs! The thick Auveco complete catalog, usually \$10.00 is marked down to **\$7.00** until **August 31**, and the smaller catalogs are marked down from \$2.95 to **\$1.50!** Get your giant green catalog of automotive goodness today!



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FEATURED PRODUCTS

SEM -mer Gets Better!

We know how rare this is, so we wanted to be sure to get the word out!

We have made a deal to drop the prices on our entire line of SEM products. Prices have dropped between \$1.00 and \$1.50 per can, bringing them to **\$14.49** for Classic Coat, **\$13.49** for Color Coat and **\$14.25** for Marine Coat. We also have chip cards to make sure you get the right color for your needs. SEM is a great option for small touch-up work, and minor color changes. Don't forget your SEM Soap and vinyl prep spray! With these, you can be assured SEM will get the job done!

SEM -ple Boat Touch-Ups!

SEM Marine Vinyl Coat is a modified version of the automotive SEM Color Coat (also available) that features increased UV inhibitors to withstand the harsh environments boat seats can be subjected to. The color palate has been matched to 25 of the most popular boat and personal watercraft interior colors, based on watercraft registrations in the United States.



In honor of the July 4th holiday, we will be closed Wednesday. We return to regular hours on Thursday, July 5th.

No Headache Headliner!

When headliner replacement time comes, DLT is your one-stop shop for all your headliner needs!

Our standard headliner comes in a huge array of colors, sure to fit any need. Rolls are 60" wide, with a 3/16 inch foam backing. Wholesale pricing on the PH headliner is **\$8.50/yd**, dropping to **\$7.10** at 5 yards and **\$6.58** at 10 yards.

For a textured look, we have flat knit (FN) headliner in 5 colors, also 60" wide with a 3/16 inch foam backing. Pricing on this style is **\$7.75/yd**, dropping to **\$6.47** and **\$6.00** at 5 and 10 yards, respectively.

We now also offer Silver Lining 1/8" headliner in 20yd rolls! The material is a bit thinner, making it perfect for sunroofs, visors, and economy applications. We currently have all of the 25 different colors in stock! We are offering Silver Lining in 20 yard rolls at **\$89.80** per roll (that is only **\$4.49** per yard!).



When it comes to gluing the headliner into the car, you need a specially formulated product to withstand the excess heat headliner has to deal with. Our hot new **Headerbond FT** (FT stands for Fast Tack) is that product. Specially designed for bonding heavyweight headliners and hood silencer pads where high strength and exceptional heat resistance are needed.

Headerbond FT features a high immediate bond strength with a non-misting, lace-like spray. The spray easily bonds foam, headliners, carpets and insulation materials to metal, wood and plastic. Not suggested for vinyl.

A 12oz can is only **\$11.99**. or **\$10.19** each for a case of 12!

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- | | |
|---|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Apollo by Futura | <input type="checkbox"/> Oxen by Naugahyde |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bourbon Street by Naugahyde | <input type="checkbox"/> Phoenix by Naugahyde |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burkshire by Naugahyde | <input type="checkbox"/> Polaris by Futura |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carbon Fiber Classic by Futura | <input type="checkbox"/> Ports O' Call by Futura |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carbon Fiber Ultra by Futura | <input type="checkbox"/> Promo Plus Automotive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote Vinyl | <input type="checkbox"/> Rogue by Naugahyde |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Essence / Nuance | <input type="checkbox"/> Spectrum by Futura |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Naugaleather by Naugahyde | <input type="checkbox"/> Xtreme by Futura |

OTHER

- 180 Vinyl Embossed Welt
- Automill Leather
- Automotive Windlace
- Auveco Big Book
- Auveco Catalog (Small)
- Carpet - 9000 Series Board
- Carpet - 9000 Series Strip
- Carpet - 9400 Series Board
- Carpet - 9400 Series Strip
- Carpet - Aqua Turf by Dorset
- Carpet - Backless
- Carpet - Berber
- Carpet - Detroit
- Carpet - El Dorado
- Carpet - Neon
- Colorbond Spray
- Cotton Duck
- Foam
- Gelee Foam
- Headliner - Silver Lining 1/8"
- Headliner - Suede
- Headliner - Surcolor 3/16" PH/FN
- Holiday Marine Canvas
- Jet Spray Wood Stains
- Osborne Tool Catalog
- Scroll Gimp
- SEM Classic Coat
- SEM Color Coat
- SEM Marine Coat
- Snap-On Trim
- Thread - High-Spec 69 (Nylon)
- Thread - Q270 Contrast
- Thread - Sunguard 92 (Polyester)
- Vinyl Coated Mesh (VCM)

FABRIC

- 210 Microfiber
- 211 Microfiber
- 220 Microfiber
- 632 Crushed Velvet
- 633 Classic Velvet
- 669 London Velvet
- Bistro Fabric
- Cotton Duck
- Crypton Suede
- Duramax Tweed
- Holiday Marine Canvas
- Mohair
- Mustang Marine Canvas
- Odyssey III Marine Canvas
- Outdura Awning
- Outdura Book
- Outdura Card
- Recacril
- Skins Fabric
- Top Gun Marine Canvas
- Top Notch Marine Canvas
- Vista Marine Canvas
- Windsor Fabric

'Can you match this?' How often do you hear this from a customer?

In an effort to minimize that distraction, we are sending out a checklist to make sure you are able to produce samples of what your customer is looking for. If you could take a minute to fill out the right on the right, then check off what you need, and fax (708-499-2967) or mail it back to us, we can make sure you get the samples you need.

Most available sample requests will be mailed out USPS within a day of being received. Sample not in stock will be sent as soon as they are received. Shipping charges may apply.

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Contact _____

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