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THE HOG RING

5 THINGS TO GIVE CUSTOMERS FOR FREE

By Nadeem Muaddi, Trimmer & Founder TheHogRing.com

You didn't open an auto trim shop to give your services away for free. But there are five things that you can offer your customers – free of charge – that will improve your customer service and encourage them to keep coming back. Best of all, it'll cost you next to nothing.

1. Cup of Joe

You drink coffee all day, right? So why not brew a few extra cups for your customers? Being hospitable can go a long in building rapport. "Hey, let me grab you a cup of coffee while you look through those swatches of fabric. How do you like it?" Best of all, offering customers a refreshing cup of Joe can help lower their guard. They may have walked in fearing a rip off, but quickly found a friend. Plus it's a lot harder for a customer to play hardball after you've been so nice. Just make sure your coffee is good. You don't want to be known as the shop that serves its customers sludge.

2. Tips & Advice

As a professional trimmer, you not only know how to upholster cars, but also protect their interiors. That knowledge is invaluable to your customers. Passing it along will help them see that you've got their best interests at heart. "I noticed that the leather on your seats is starting to harden. You should condition them before they crack. It'll save you a lot of money in the long run." You could even use this opportunity to hock any products you sell – like leather conditioner.



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3. Quick Wipe Down

The number one rule of auto service is to never return a customer's car dirtier than when it arrived. But what if you returned it a tad bit cleaner? Detailing a customer's car can be costly and time consuming, but giving its cabin a quick vacuum and wipe down isn't. And because most of our shops smell like cigarettes and exhaust fume, a dash of air freshener couldn't hurt either. The whole process shouldn't take longer than five minutes or cost you much. However, it'll show customers that their cars are in good hands.

4. Company Swag

Plenty of businesses give away t-shirts or baseball caps marked with their company's logo – but that can be expensive. A cheaper alternative is pens, magnets or key chains. In fact, if you buy them in bulk, they only cost pennies on the dollar. Before returning a car, my father always attached a company keychain to customers' keys. It was a little red car that had the name of his shop and phone number on it. Customers loved it. And because it was on their keys, they basically carried his business card everywhere they went. Other shops splurge on calendars – which is a fine option. Just be careful not to fall into the trap of bikini calendars. It looks unprofessional and can be offensive.

5. A Reason to Return

If you do quality work, customers will return. But sometimes they need a little prodding. The best way to ensure that customers come back is to give them a reason to – like a future discount. "While fixing your headliner, I noticed a cigarette burn on the base of your front passenger seat. If you come back to have it fixed before the end of next month, I'll give you 10% off." Write it down too. A coupon or certificate makes your offer official and serves as a reminder to your customer that the offer stands.

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.

FOR THE UPHOLSTERY & TRIM TRADES

Dog Day Deals

Back in ancient times, it was noticed that when Sirius, the 'dog star' was visible, it got hot. We call that time the month of August now, and things still get hot under the gaze of Sirius. Check out these scorching specials and promotions out!



As the hot sun of August beats down, almost everyone looks for a scrap of shade to shield themselves from the unrelenting glare.

And this is why your customers need awnings! An awning provides shade, enhances the look of a building, and can lower energy costs as well!

Our 47" Outdura awning canvas starts at **\$15.49** for solids (premium colors at **\$17.49**) and **\$15.69** for stripes. Call today to get your awning project started, and your customers cooled off in style!



In honor of Labor Day, we will be closed September 3rd



Have you ever had a job where Herculite is the perfect product, only to have your customer balk at the price?

DLT has your answer! Champion MVP is the same construction as Herculite, a bit lighter weight, and around 1/3 the price! No kidding - where Herculite 80 is \$18.75 per yard, and Herculite 90 is 15.47 per yard, Champion MVP is only **\$7.69** per yard! Currently we are only taking full-roll orders, but will keep you posted when that changes.

Champion MVP comes in 18 colors (a dozen more than Herculite!), is mildew and UV resistant as well as flame retardant, and child safe. It has a leather grain finish and scrim style backing. Champion MVP offers savings and quality. Give it a try on your next job!

	Champion MVP	Herculite 80	Herculite 90
Width	61"	61"	72"
Roll	75 Yards	50 Yards	25 Yards
Adhesion	28 lbs/in	14 lbs/in	14 lbs/in
Break Strength	365x348 lbs/in	329x280 lbs/in	235x215 lbs/in
Tensile Tear	92x83 lbs	104x96 lbs	120x120 lbs
Cost (Full Roll)	\$439.50 @75yd	\$796.85 @50yd	\$348.50 @25yd

Pres-N-Snap - #1 Selling Tool!



The Hoover Pres-N-Snap tool is, at first glance, the unwieldy hybrid of a C-clamp and Vise-Grip pliers. In reality, however, it is a simple, effective tool for setting grommets and snaps into any fabric you desire. The Pres-N-Snap is made of cast aluminum, so the lack of weight has no bearing on its strength. The dies snap in with an audible click, so it's easy to hear that they are properly seated. They also just snap in, there is no screwing or lining up notches required. The Vise-Grip like handle locks into place. When it is in the closed position, a simple tap or flick outward snaps the tool open, allowing true one-handed use.



The Pres-N-Snap wholesales for **\$159.99**. Replacement die prices range, depending on die, from **\$24.99** to **\$44.99**. With the range of options the die sets offer, and the durability offered by the cast aluminum frame, the Pres-N-Snap is one tool that will pay for itself time and again, and become the go-to setting tool for everyone in your shop.

Winter Is Coming

It doesn't feel like it yet, but winter is indeed on the way. Now is the time to encourage your outdoor sports customers to get their repair orders in to avoid the rush! We know it can be hard to talk up a new snowmobile seat in this heat, but if you remind your customer that getting it done now means he is ready to go on the first snow - while others are just realizing they need work done, you can sell the job and not have it be a rush order.

And we have your seating material! **Apollo** from **Futura** - rubberized all the way through for grip, 6-way stretch for ease of install. And priced to move starting at **\$16.99!** Use the Apollo to cover a piece of Gelee Foam (a steal at **\$89.99**) to keep the seat soft in the cold! Call today to beat the rush.



Aqua-Tite = Eco-Friendly Waterproofing



Aqua-Tite Green is a premium grade water repellent that also provides stain protection. Aqua-Tite Green is available in gallon jugs for **\$68.99**.

Unlike most other available water repellents, Aqua-Tite Green has a very low VOC level, meeting all known country, region, state and area regulations.

Even though it is the most environmentally friendly water repellent on the market, you don't give up performance. Aqua-Tite Green easily outperforms its closest competitor, and is safe for the environment as well.

Important Glue Information

We were recently made aware of some regulations covering adhesives and glue that may impact our customers, and it is important that we keep you up on these changes.

All glue uses something called volatile organic compounds (VOC) to work and hold the materials together. But these VOCs have a problem - they are thought to cause or contribute to global warming. In order to combat this, several states have created a ban on all products considered 'commercial' in nature (usually meaning nothing more than being more than 16oz to a container) with high levels of VOCs.

At this time, the states banning these products are California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Massachusetts is expected to pass a ban this year, with other states to follow soon.

What does this mean to you? For now, probably not much. But this is worth keeping up with. Based on the current situation in the states listed, both **DAP Weldwood** and our **Litebond 2065** are banned in those states. Only our **DuGrip 301** meets the VOC regulations. As these rules spread, getting contact cement like **Litebond** or **DAP** will become a problem.

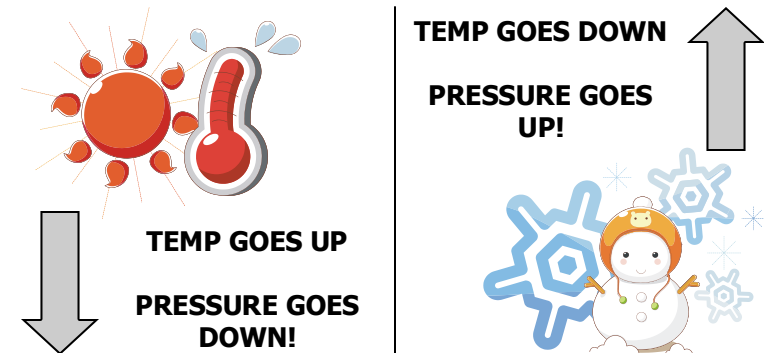
What can you do? **Vote!** Make your voice known, and make sure your representatives know how much losing good adhesives can impact your business. Let your voice be heard. There are thousands of shops that would be impacted or even shut down by these laws.

It may seem odd to have this next to a piece promoting an eco-friendly product. As an industry we need to be as eco-friendly as possible - but we also need to be able to know we have produced quality product. Banning effective glue makes everything we do harder, and less durable. Small shops are not the problem, but will bear the bulk of the punishment. And that just isn't right.

Simple Glue Tip!

With the any major change in temperature, adhesive performance changes dramatically. This leads to spray problems, and adhesion problems, which is often seen as the glue failing or just not acting correctly.

But there is a simple solution! In hot weather, dial your air compressor pressure **down** a bit, it helps the glue spay on a bit heavier, and combats the heat. In cold weather, dial your air compressor pressure **up** some to overcome the increased viscosity.



What Do You Think?

Every so often, we like to poll our customers to see how we are doing, and we think this is a good time for such a survey.

And we want to thank you for helping out! Just go to survey.dltcorporation.com, and let us know how we are doing. For every customer who completes a survey between August 1 & August 31, we will drop a **\$30.00 credit** on your account to use whenever you want!

And for our customers who don't like the computer, we will have paper copies on hand to allow us to hear your voice too!

At DLT, we listen and respond to our customers. Thank you for taking the time to complete these surveys.

