

A Top 10 List for Successful Green Selling

By Mike Sawchuk

With all the talk about Green cleaning, I still run into jansan distributors who tell me the concept is not yet making a difference in their business; they hear a lot about Green cleaning, but it's not necessarily translating into sales.

Trying to understand why some distributors are so successful selling Green cleaning products while others struggle has taken some time to unravel. However, it has finally come together, and from what I have learned, I have created my "Top 10 Tips For Selling Green."

1. Desire – the salespeople that succeed at selling Green, as well as most any other product, have a strong desire to sell Green, excel at their profession, and help their customer. Oxygen, family, money, and selling Green are about the most important necessities in their lives.
2. Enthusiasm – selling Green starts at the top. The best jansan salespeople work with companies and have sales managers that enthusiastically believe Green cleaning is very important to the industry and should be wholeheartedly endorsed.
3. Education – selling Green is not like selling a new toilet bowl cleaner or mop head; it takes some education and understanding, especially the knowledge that Green Cleaning is a system with many components. Those successful at selling Green have a good overall appreciation of why Green cleaning is important, how to convince the customer of this, and how to help the customer implement Green cleaning into their facilities.
4. Plan a strategy – selling Green involves planning and strategy. A factory may not yet be interested in transferring to environmentally preferable cleaning products, but a school, office or medical center may be just waiting for a salesperson to walk in the door "talking Green." Successful Green salespeople choose their clients and prospects wisely.

5. Night work – custodial workers tend to resist change. Many believe that if the same traditional cleaning chemicals or products has worked well for decades, no matter its impact on them or the environment, why change.

Successful Green salespeople work with cleaning crews – often at night – to demonstrate the performance and effectiveness of the Green cleaning product. A little night work with the cleaning crew usually turns into a sales order the next day with the facility manager.

6. Consultants – most salespeople like to discuss the features and benefits of the products they sell. Selling Green requires something else, though. It asks that salespeople also become consultants – the man or woman the facility can turn to if they have a cleaning, maintenance, or Green problem. Successful Green salespeople become consultants to their clients.
7. Uniqueness – being an expert on Green cleaning helps the successful Green salespeople differentiate themselves from other janitor distributors. Many even see Green cleaning as their “specialty” and let their prospects and customers know this.
8. Communication – many of the most successful Green salespeople I have met frequently give talks before school boards, parents groups, medical facility administrators, and others about Green cleaning and environmentally preferable products. They know the subject, believe in the subject, and this enthusiasm is communicated to their audience.
9. Ability to listen – the facility manager of one school district told me the students and staff in many of his schools complained about allergies and respiratory problems in their facilities. No one was sure what was causing the problem until a distributor sat down with the manager as well as some teachers and to listen to their concerns.

It became clear after the meeting that the allergies and respiratory problems were likely caused by some of the

cleaning products used in the schools. When these products were removed and Green cleaning counterparts were substituted, the problems went away.

10. Creativity – successful Green salespeople find new and interesting ways to promote themselves and their Green offerings. They meet with local chambers of commerce, church groups, attend community events and shows, and have even been on radio and television.

Some distributors have written columns for local newspapers on Green cleaning or have managed to have their local media write about them and Green cleaning. Successful Green salespeople find creative ways to get their message heard, which almost always translates into sales and success.