

EXAMPLE 9

Stoneware Birdfeeders and Birdbaths

ROLE PLAY PAPER- PART I

I. My product and firm- Newland Pottery

A. Stoneware birdfeeders and birdbaths

1. Five types-

- a. All-Purpose Birdbath- 4 inch deep, 11 inches in diameter, branches inserted on either side, sits on copper pipe, all hardware used is stainless steel or copper (retail \$89.99)
- b. All-Purpose Flat Feeder- 2-4 inch deep, branches inserted on either side, sits on copper pipe, four holes drilled in bottom for water drainage, all hardware used is stainless steel or copper (retail \$89.99)
- c. Tall Covered Feeder- branches inserted on either side to attract more birds, sits on copper pipe, cover on top to protect seeds from water, holes drilled in bottom for water drainage, all hardware used is stainless steel or copper (retail \$100)
- d. Open Hanging Feeder- open on two sides, branches inserted on either side, hangs from garden pole or tree branch, nylon rope for hanging (retail \$47.99)
- e. Oriole Feeder- open on one end, other end has screw for attaching a half an orange, attracts orioles in particular, however, other birds are drawn as well, nylon rope for hanging, stainless steel hardware (retail \$35.99)

2. Purchase options

- a. Can purchase any combination of products as long as it meets the minimum order requirement of \$500 on the first purchase
- b. Additional purchases after first order may be made on an as needed basis, minimum order amount is reduced to \$250
- c. Order can be picked up at studio with no shipping and handling, delivered for an additional 7%, or shipped for an additional 10% of the order
- d. Copper pipes for feeders and baths are optional, but are highly recommended
- e. Can choose to purchase birdseed starter packs as an add-on item
- f. Will make-to-order: either to develop a new product or request a special order

B. Newland Pottery

1. Family owned and run from one location by the artist and his family
 - a. Peter Newland- artist, MA in art, BA in math, also full time math teacher
 - b. Beth Newland- bookkeeping, merchandising
 - c. Stephanie Newland- production, sales
 - d. Jeremy Newland- interactive media
 - e. Michael Newland- production, bookkeeping
2. Mostly seasonal business- May through November due to Peter's full-time job as a math teacher
3. Main outlets for sales are through art shows and a few retailers in the Twin Cities area- been in business over 25 years
4. Does not have the capacity to mass produce or produce large volumes

II. My Buyer

A. Prairie Restorations, Inc.

1. Primary business is to design, restore and manage prairie, wetland, woodland, and other native plant communities
2. Secondary business is the operation of a retail store that supplements the restoration business
 - a. Current products include: garden accessories, bird feeders and bird baths, plant stakes, gloves and tee shirts, other products by local artists
 - b. Retail division is seasonal- open April through November
 - c. In the summer, there is room for both indoor and outdoor display for products, either directly outside the store, or in the gardens and paths surrounding the premises
 - d. Typical consumer is female, 35-54
3. Buyer description- general manager of the retail divisions
 - a. Sole buyer for retail store
 - i. Products are usually either referred or seen at a local art showing
 - ii. Preference toward purchasing from local artists, likes to support community businesses
 - b. Also performs payroll, bookkeeping, and HR functions for the store

B. Buyer's needs

1. Two primary needs-
 - a. Sell a high quality product- currently some of the products are either poorly made, or poorly designed and do not attract any birds
 - b. Increase inventory turnover- right now, some of the nonfunctional pieces are hard to sell since the employees at Prairie Restorations have a hard time recommending a product that will not meet what they believe to be the end consumer's needs- to attract birds
2. Buyer's Customer's Needs
 - a. Attract native birds to the newly restored prairie, woodland, or wetland
 - b. Product that combines functionality with quality

C. What you've done so far with this buyer and the buyer's firm

- a. We've been approached by the buyer after he was referred to our company by an employee who had purchased and was satisfied with the product
- b. Talked to the buyer over the phone about what the company was looking for from a seller and identified two primary needs
- c. Talked with a clerk in the retail store (Lynn) to get some further information about the current products, and where she sees an opportunity for growth in terms of line expansion, based on customer reactions and purchases, she mentioned that customers are often confused as to how to use and care for the feeder properly

III. The buyer's options

A. Newland Pottery- retail range of \$35.99-99.99

1. Strengths
 - a. Strong customer base, been in the business for over 25 years
 - b. High quality
 - c. Hand-produced
 - d. More product features including a care card with each piece
2. Weaknesses

- a. Higher priced than most currently carried products
- b. Not as many "specialty" feeders as some of the competitors
- B. Direct competitor- Anthony Stoneware- also sells hand-produced stoneware birdfeeders in the retail range of \$17.99-55.99, specializes in hummingbird, chickadee, and general feeders- the company is based in Florida, and is currently in good standing with the buyer, however, the employees in the retail store do not like these products because of their low functionality
 - 1. Strengths
 - a. Produces more specialized feeders: hummingbird, chickadee
 - b. Lower priced
 - 2. Weaknesses
 - a. Low functionality
 - b. Does not sell birdbaths
 - c. Does not offer care card with items
 - d. Based in Florida- buyer prefers to carry products produced locally
- C. Direct competitor- Crystal Birds- sells hand-blown glass birdfeeders in the range of \$17.99- 35.99, both the customers and the employees like these products, however, they are prone to breakage due to the nature of the product, and are not leading to repeat sales
 - 1. Strengths
 - a. Differentiated product- made of glass beads, and metal, not ceramics
 - b. Lower Priced
 - c. Excellent hummingbird feeder design and functionality
 - 2. Weaknesses
 - a. Some commercially produced pieces- buyer prefers hand-produced products
 - b. Does not offer care card with items
 - c. Feeders other than the hummingbird feeder do not attract birds
- D. Indirect Competitor- Garden Pals- sells hand-produced wooden birdhouses in the retail range of \$49.99- 224.99, products tend to be an eye catcher for customers due to large size and nice display of the product, produced by a local craftsman
 - 1. Strengths
 - a. Well-made product
 - b. High quality, made of solid oak or cedar
 - c. Durable
 - d. Locally produced
 - 2. Weaknesses
 - a. Low inventory turnover- many of the products have been in the store for one to two years
 - b. Higher priced
 - c. Can be easily constructed by the consumer

IV. Objectives

- A. Primary- close the sale with a minimum order of \$500
- B. Minimum- learn the buyer's current needs, assess if they have changed
- C. Optimistic- close the sale with an order of \$1000

very Amiable

ROLE PLAY PAPER PART II

I. Objections

- ① We have products like this. You can't leave them outside for the winter.
2. Don't you make any more specialty feeders than this?
3. It would be a whole lot easier for me if I could just get a flat discount rate on your products.
4. We already carry birdbaths and birdfeeders.
5. Our customers don't like it when the birdbaths get dirty.
6. We've had customers return products like this before because they are too brittle.
7. How can I be sure that your feeders are going to attract any birds at all?
8. I've heard that glaze contains lead. That's not good for the birds.
9. I don't like the way your feeders are designed.
10. We already carry products that are similar to this.
11. The colors on these are too bright.
12. You look too young to be selling these.
13. I think these seem too expensive.
14. I just want to think about this for a while.
15. We don't really need more of this type of product.
16. I don't want to have to deal with a minimum order amount.
17. I don't understand how these work.
18. I don't understand how the squirrels won't get into these.
19. I don't have enough money to place a minimum order.
20. Our current birdbaths and feeders are cheaper.
21. I'm not sure I want to make a commitment.
22. If you just leave me some information about your products and options, I'll try to look it over later.
23. We have too much inventory right now.
24. I like the products that we are currently carrying.
25. My needs are completely different now.
26. I don't want to see any fancy charts or graphs... I just want to know what you're going to do for me.
27. I don't think I like these.
28. I like everything about what you're offering, but I just don't have the money right now.
29. We can't display these.
30. Prospect takes the portfolio, flips through it and places it on the floor next to him, then says, "Now what did you want to tell me?"
31. The buyer just smiles and says nothing and offers no objections.
32. The prospect is very nervous, even intimidated.
33. The buyer just doesn't grasp what is going on. He seems to be very slow.
34. Immediately after walking in, the buyer says, "My wife just got her cancer tests back and they were positive."

Just Ask clarify questions

II. Responses

1. You're right. It's not advisable to leave them outside for the winter. However, we've had many customers that they do leave them outside and they are fine. (*use testimonial here*). Most likely this is due to the customized glaze and high quality clay that we use in our products.
2. Most of our products are designed to attract many types of birds as you can clearly see from the pictures here. That way, the customer doesn't have to worry about different care instructions or buy a lot of different types of seed. We have, in fact, made prototypes for hummingbird feeders, but those feeders seem to be more effective when they are made of glass.
3. When we set the prices, we look at all the costs that are incurred in the production of the piece. The ones that have more hardware, such as the copper pipe, have higher costs for us. By pricing each individually, we can give you the best deal possible.
4. Yes, you do and ours are going to add to your existing line. Not only do they supplement what you already carry, but they are a natural extension into other bird lines.
5. Well that's one of the nice things about our product. Since all of our stoneware products are dishwasher safe, you can just pop the bath off of the pipe and throw it in the dishwasher.
6. Some ceramics can be brittle. We use a type of clay that is less prone to breakage because it is less porous than other clays. Also, our products are fired in the kiln twice at 2500 degrees Fahrenheit to ensure extra hardness of the clay.
7. Each one of our products has been researched and developed using a number of prototypes. In fact, in the creation of our oriole feeder.... (*story will follow*)
8. I can assure you that our products contain no lead because we mix our own glaze right at our studio so that we know what chemicals are going into the products. We want to make sure that we are going to add to the wildlife and not destroy it.
9. You know what? That's perfectly alright that you don't like the design, but I can assure you that these products are going to do well in your store because the customers like them. Let me show you a letter that we just received about a woman who bought a birdfeeder from us, had a wonderful experience, and is now ordering five more, one for each of her daughters for Christmas (*show testimonial*).
10. Although some of our products are similar, I think they actually complement each other quite nicely. Our products seem to be a natural extension of what you are already carrying... (*expand on this topic, explain why*)
11. You're absolutely right. The colors are bright and that's one of the reasons that customers love them. They are so unique and vibrant compared to the other ceramic feeders out on the market.
12. You know, I am young. That means that I can work hard, long hours for you and I want you to know that's exactly what I'm going to do. I will go the extra mile to make you a satisfied customer.
13. What do you mean? Too expensive for you or for your customer? (*response by buyer*) Well let's just break it down piece...

13. What do you mean? Too expensive for you or for your customer? *(response by buyer)* Well let's just break it down piece...
14. What exactly is it that you need to think about? I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have or give you some additional information to help you in making your decision.
15. What do you mean by "this type of product"? *(probe to find out whether the buyer means stoneware, birdfeeders and birdbaths, etc.)*
16. I see how you feel. I've had other customers who have felt the same way and they have found that actually a \$500 first order doesn't give them enough inventory to keep the shelves stocked. They usually end up calling me a week later and ordering more.
17. What is it that you don't understand? *(Probe to find out if the question pertains to all the products in general, or one specific product.)*
18. We have found that by putting a little bit of Vaseline on the copper pipe, the squirrels have a harder time climbing up the pole and therefore, stop trying after while. Plus, the squirrels can't chew through the pole or feeder.
19. Well, lets do some calculations and see what we can come up with. If you were somehow able to come up with \$500 for a minimum order, lets look at how long that would take for you to earn back... *(cover payback and ROI)*
20. Yes they are. However, when we spoke earlier about your needs, you mentioned that you wanted to sell some higher quality products because your customers have been requesting them. You also said earlier that some of your lower priced products are not moving off the shelves.
21. Do you need more information? What can I do to help you decide?
22. If you have any questions or concerns, I would be more comfortable addressing them now. Then I can be sure that we are on the same page and we can work together to find a solution to your problem.
23. That is exactly why our products will work for you. We have been in the business for over 25 years and have established a strong customer base that will translate to increased traffic in your store. More customers mean that there is a greater possibility of increasing your turnover rate, which you mentioned as being one of your needs.
24. You do carry some very nice products and I think that our products will work together with them quite nicely. As you can see, our products tend to be on the higher end in terms of price and quality, so what we would be doing is actually just adding to what you already have.
25. That's just fine, I understand that things change. Let's just go over what your current needs are and then we'll go from there.
26. Ok, let me tell you how my product will meet your needs. You said earlier that... *(Don't show charts, just be straightforward and list the features and benefits and then ask for commitment)*
27. That's fine. Do you agree that the customer's opinion matters, since they are going to be the final consumer? Let me just show you what some of our customers have said. *(use testimonials)*
28. Let's just break down the budget issue piece by piece. How much do you think you could come up with? *(keep probing, find out the real, underlying issue)*

29. I have given this situation some thought and I have come up with some displays that I think will really work nicely for you and the space that you have to display your products. Would you like to look at what I have I have in mind?
30. Well, I wanted to start by showing you some pictures... oh yeah... they're in my portfolio. Do you mind handing it to me?
31. Ask, "Do you have anything questions about what I've covered or does this seem to fit what you're looking for?" *(Try asking for commitment if everything is going well, if not, ask where the buyer would like to go from here.)*
32. You know, I'm sensing an uneasiness about this situation. Is there anything that I can do to make you feel more comfortable?
33. *(Make sure to probe constantly and make sure that the buyer understands everything that is being discussed. Go over material slowly.)*
34. I'm very sorry to hear that? Would you like to reschedule the meeting for another time? I would be more than happy to come back at a better time.