

Let The Client Make The Decisions



Hi Folks and welcome to your Rule of the Month for February 2010.

I recently walked into a large whitegoods retailer to buy a new fridge for our staffroom. I made one statement to the salesperson: "I need to buy a fridge with a built-in water cooler." No more, no less. He showed me the "only model that had that feature" in the store.

He showed me how easy it was to manually refill the water reservoir. I said that this seemed clumsy and asked to see some other models. He told me that this was the only model with water. I mentioned some other models I saw on a Web site, and he said that Web sites often show obsolete models.

Disappointed, I turned to leave and almost ran into another model—with a water cooler built-in! I asked about this model. "No good," I was told. "That model needs a water mains connection, and you don't want the expense of a plumber." I was a little annoyed at this. "When did I say I didn't want that?"

Now we had established I was happy with a fridge that required plumbing, suddenly he showed me a new range of fridges—surprisingly many of which I had seen on the Web site that only had supposedly "obsolete" models.

As we looked at them, I commented that the water feature used up a large amount of room inside the fridge, and we had a large number of employees. "Do you have anything larger?" I naively enquired. Again, the answer was no.

Learning from my previous experience, I looked around. Incredibly, I found a side-by-side fridge with a water cooler. The salesperson again told me I didn't want that one as it was too wide and I wouldn't have room for it.

By this time, I was a bit sick of the effort I had to go through to hand my money over. "Do you know how big our staffroom is?" I asked. I had already mentioned I needed a bigger fridge for the number of staff we had, so we probably had a large staffroom. He hadn't asked any questions in relation to what I really needed. He was making purchasing decisions on my behalf without the required information. You need to offer choices and give your opinion and advice, but don't try and make the final decision for a client.

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