GRIT GUIDE
BY GRIT BLUEPRINT

GRIT GUIDE
NO. 06

THREE TRIPS OR ONE GIVE THEM THE REASON

How to Recommend a Product and Give the Customer a Reason

Two or three choices that fit, one reason for each, the trade-off said out loud, and a question that lets the customer pick.

Featuring Michael Tull and Abeer Saeed

gritguide.com/how-to-recommend-a-product-and-give-a-reason/

7 steps 10 min read Checklist to print

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YOU'LL FINISH WITH

A short list of two or three options that fit, one reason for each tied to what the customer said, the trade-off named, the same facts checked for every option, and the customer's pick with what still needs confirming.

THE STEPS

01 START FROM THE PRIORITY THEY NAMED

02 BUILD A SHORT LIST OF TWO OR THREE

03 GIVE EACH OPTION ONE REASON TIED TO THAT PRIORITY

04 SAY THE TRADE-OFF BEFORE THE CUSTOMER FINDS IT

05 COMPARE EVERY OPTION ON THE SAME LINES

06 LET THEM SEE IT WHERE IT WILL LIVE

07 ASK WHICH IS CLOSER, THEN CONFIRM BEFORE YOU ORDER

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From the episode: Consultative Selling Tactics That Customers Actually Love with Merchandise Manager Abeer Saeed. Watch it at gritguide.com/grit-guide/videos/consultative-selling-tactics-that-customers-actually-love-with-merchandise-manager-abeer

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Michael Tull does not sell a prefinished door on its finish. He counts trips.

Tull runs Tull Sales as a manufacturer's rep, a salesperson who represents manufacturers in a territory. He has been in the door business since he was 17. On the Grit Blueprint Podcast he explained why a door finished at the factory is worth a look: "If you think about it, a door gets hung on the job and it requires a prime coat and two top coats. That's three trips to a job for one door" (10:09). The door he sells gets that work done before it ships: "We can do all of that in our factory in one pass" (10:19).

> **"If you think about it, a door gets hung on the job and it requires a prime coat and two top coats. That's three trips to a job for one door."**
>
> **Michael Tull** (10:09)

That is a recommendation with a reason in it. A contractor can repeat it to a homeowner. A homeowner can repeat it to a spouse. A phrase like "premium finish" gives neither of them anything to repeat.

This guide is for the moment after you know what the customer is trying to fix. You asked why, you listened, and now you have to suggest something. It is for counter, showroom and inside salespeople at dealers, and for distributor salespeople helping a dealer choose a line. If you have not asked the why questions yet, start with Ask Why Before You Walk a Customer to the Product and come back.

WORDS TO KNOW

Recommendation
One to three products you would stand behind for this job, each with the reason it fits.

Prefinished
Painted or stained at the factory before it ships, so it arrives ready to install.

Trade-off
What the customer gives up to get an option: more money, a longer wait, more upkeep or a choice made earlier than they wanted.

Spec sheet
The manufacturer's fact sheet for a product: sizes, materials, ratings and options. Product claims come from it, not from memory.

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BEFORE YOU START

- The customer's main priority, written in their own words
- The budget, the date they need it and who else is deciding
- Current spec sheets, prices and availability for the products you might suggest
- Samples you can send home, if the product has a color, finish or texture
- Your company's rules on special orders and returns, so you know what a wrong pick costs

01 START FROM THE PRIORITY THEY NAMED

Before you pick a product, read back what you heard: "So the main thing is [priority]. Did I get that right?" Write the answer down in the customer's words, not yours.

A useful recommendation connects a product to the customer's job, and it starts with the priority they named. If they named three things, ask which one wins when two of them pull in different directions. Price and looks often do.

Then write down the limits: the budget, the date the product has to be on site and the person who signs off. An option that misses any of those is off the list before you start.

02 BUILD A SHORT LIST OF TWO OR THREE

Pull the options that fit the priority and the limits. Two or three give a customer enough to compare without getting lost. Leave off products that miss the budget, the date or the job. If only one product truly fits, say so and say why.

This is where the catalog tempts you. A dealer can order far more products than any customer wants to look at, and showing all of them feels helpful. It hands the work of choosing back to the customer. Say it out loud instead: "From what you told me, I would look at these two." The customer hears that you listened before you sold.

03 GIVE EACH OPTION ONE REASON TIED TO THAT PRIORITY

For each option, finish this sentence: "This one fits because [reason]." The reason has to connect to what the customer said, and it has to be true for this exact product.

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Tull's three trips is the model. It names a cost the contractor already feels, return visits to the job, and shows how the product removes it. Compare that with "it's our best seller" or a string of specs. Abeer Saeed, a merchandise manager at Do it Best whose category covers cabinets, interior products and flooring, warns against reciting specs to people who do not speak that language. Turn each spec into what it means in the customer's house.

Check every claim against the current spec sheet or the manufacturer. A style alone does not prove durability, a rating or a lead time. If you do not know, say you will find out and say when.

04 SAY THE TRADE-OFF BEFORE THE CUSTOMER FINDS IT

Every option costs something: more money, a longer wait, more care. Name it in the same breath as the reason: "The trade-off is [difference]." A customer who hears the downside from you has more reason to believe the upside.

Be fair to the lower-priced option too. The higher-priced product is not the right fit for every job. Tull draws that line himself between door types: "Interior doors are more of a commodity and they're sold on price" (19:53). If the customer's priority is the lowest price that does the job, the lower-priced option may be your recommendation.

Recommend the upgrade only when the customer's priority calls for it. An upgrade that solves nothing for this customer is an empty upgrade, and they will be the one paying for it.

05 COMPARE EVERY OPTION ON THE SAME LINES

Put the options side by side and ask the same questions of each: the exact product or series, style and finish, how it is built and where it can be used, sizes, what is included, what is left out, availability with the date you checked, and the total price for the full scope. Use the table below.

Write an unknown as an unknown. Do not make one choice look cheaper by leaving part of its scope out, such as the hardware, the trim or the freight. When a customer finds the missing piece later, they stop trusting the whole page.

A higher price does not prove a better fit. Name the difference you have checked, then say whether it matters for this job.

THE RECOMMENDATION PAGE

Compare	Option A	Option B
Fits the priority the customer named	How	How
The reason, in one sentence	Write it	Write it
The trade-off	Name it	Name it
Exact product, size and finish	Confirm	Confirm
Included and left out	List	List
Availability and the date you checked	Verify	Verify
Total for the full scope	Price it	Price it

Adapted from the comparison tool in Grit Guide's Millwork Sales field guide. Every product claim comes from current manufacturer and supplier information.

06 LET THEM SEE IT WHERE IT WILL LIVE

Some choices only make sense in the room. Saeed's advice to showrooms: "So whatever product you have, give them an opportunity to see what it will look like in their homes" (14:56). That can be a physical sample, a small display that shows the product in use, or a rendering on a phone.

Send color and finish samples home. "Lighting in a retail space is very different than a home space," Saeed says (13:58). A finish that looks right under store lights can look wrong in a dark hallway. Write down which sample went home and when you will follow up.

Seeing it changes decisions. Saeed describes a Do it Best member store in Hartville, Ohio, that built a house inside its showroom. What she took from it: "I didn't realize how many more people will buy more things because they got to see it" (18:51).

07 ASK WHICH IS CLOSER, THEN CONFIRM BEFORE YOU ORDER

Skip "So, which one do you want?" Ask: "Which of these feels closer to the project? What would you need to see or know before choosing?"

If neither option lands, ask why before you add more. The answer may be the price, the look, the timing or a need you have not heard yet. A fourth and fifth option added before you know can make the choice harder.

When they pick, confirm the details that decide the order: the exact product, sizes, finish, what is included and the date. A preference is not an approved order. Write down what is still open and who will answer it.

FINISH LINE

You should now have: A short list of two or three options that fit, one reason for each tied to what the customer said, the trade-off named, the same facts checked for every option, and the customer's pick with what still needs confirming.

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GIVE A REASON THEY CAN REPEAT AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

Stefanie Couch teaches it in this order: get curious before you get convincing, tie the recommendation to what the customer told you, then be clear about fit and the next step.

She adds a point about homeowners. Most will never remember the name of a product line. They remember the problem they are spending money to get rid of, and what it was like to live with it. So narrow the choices to the ones that solve that problem, and give each one a reason the customer could say back to you. If they can repeat it at their own kitchen table, you recommended well.

TWO SCRIPTS

Use it when: you are ready to recommend.

SCRIPT

"You said **[priority]** matters most. I recommend **[option]** because **[checked reason]**. The trade-off is **[difference]**. Before we choose it, we need to confirm **[open item]**."

Use it when: neither option feels right to the customer.

SCRIPT

"That tells me something useful. Is it the **[price / look / timing]**, or is there something about the job I have not asked about yet? Once I know, I will come back with **[one or two]** options that fit better."

EXAMPLEMADE UP TO SHOW HOW IT WORKS

Built from points made in Michael Tull's episode. The remodeler is not a real customer.

A remodeler needs an exterior door for a job in North Georgia in January. His priority, in his words: he cannot get a painter out for one door. The salesperson pulls two options that fit the opening and the budget: an unfinished fiberglass door and the same door prefinished at the factory.

The reason for the prefinished door: the finish is done at the plant, so nobody makes three trips to prime and paint one door. The host of the episode, Stefanie Couch, added a second reason, the weather: "you're not painting a door in eight degrees" (10:28). The trade-off: it costs more, and the color has to be chosen before the order goes in. Before any of it goes on the quote, the salesperson checks the price, the color choices, the lead time and the manufacturer's finish warranty in writing. Then she asks which option is closer to what he needs.

Both of Tull's points are in The Real Reason Customers Buy Again, between 10:09 and 10:59 in the transcript.

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CHECKLIST: BEFORE YOU RECOMMEND

- [ ] I wrote the customer's main priority in their words
- [ ] I know the budget, the date and who signs off
- [ ] Every option on my list fits the priority and the limits
- [ ] Each option has one reason tied to that priority
- [ ] Every claim comes from a current spec sheet or the manufacturer
- [ ] I named the trade-off for each option
- [ ] I compared every option on the same lines and marked the unknowns
- [ ] Samples went home, and I wrote down which ones
- [ ] I asked which option is closer and wrote down what is still open

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- The customer can say back why the option they chose fits their job.
- Each option on the page has a reason, a trade-off and the same checked facts.
- Nothing is missing from one side of the comparison to make it look cheaper.
- The choice, the open items, an owner and a date are written down.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

When the talk turns to price, use How to Answer "Your Price Is Too High" Before You Touch the Number. If you are recommending doors, Interior vs. Exterior Doors: What Is Inside the Door You Are Selling? gives you reasons that hold for each type. Once the customer has chosen, How to Stop Quoting Blind keeps the quote honest about what is still open.

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

How many options should you show a customer?

Usually two or three that fit. Show only options that meet the customer's priority, budget and date. If only one fits, say so and explain why. If neither of two options lands, ask why before you add more.

How do you recommend a product without being pushy?

Tie the recommendation to something the customer told you, say the trade-off out loud and ask which option feels closer instead of asking for the sale. The customer stays in charge of the choice, and you stay in charge of the facts.

When should you recommend the lower-priced option?

When it meets the customer's priority. The higher-priced product is not the right fit for every job, and an upgrade that solves nothing for this customer is an empty one. Michael Tull of Tull Sales points out that interior doors are mostly bought on price, while exterior doors run the full range of quality.

Why send samples home with the customer?

Store lighting is different from the light in a house, so a color or finish can look different once it is in the room. Abeer Saeed of Do it Best suggests keeping extra samples for customers to take home and try in different light.

What should a product recommendation include?

The option, one reason it fits the customer's priority, the trade-off and what still has to be confirmed before you order. Every product claim should come from the current spec sheet or the manufacturer.

EPISODES IN THIS PIECE

Consultative Selling Tactics That Customers Actually Love with Merchandise Manager Abeer Saeed

With Abeer Saeed · The Grit Blueprint Podcast · Jun 2026

The Real Reason Customers Buy Again

With Michael Tull · The Grit Blueprint Podcast · Feb 2026

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SOURCES

1. The Real Reason Customers Buy Again (Grit Blueprint Podcast, Michael Tull with host Stefanie Couch) Grit Guide
2. Consultative Selling Tactics That Customers Actually Love (Grit Blueprint Podcast, Abeer Saeed with host Stefanie Couch) Grit Guide
3. Ask Why Before You Walk a Customer to the Product Grit Guide

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READ IT
ONLINE
This guide, the episode behind it and the rest of the Grit Guides are at **gritguide.com/how-to-recommend-a-product-and-give-a-reason/**

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