Mid-Town Office Products

Ron Chambers arrives at work early on Friday morning. His anxiety has been growing throughout his final week of training with Mid-Town office products. Today Ron is going to work with his sales manager, Christine Wright, on negotiating customer concerns. He wants to make sure he has plenty of time to prepare and rehearse for the types of objection he is likely to encounter while calling on clients in his new territory (downtown Los Angeles). He will start working this territory next Monday. While Ron waits for Christine to arrive, he sits down and reviews his list of the concerns he is likely to hear from his potential customers.

 Mid-Town is a regional distributor of office supply products ranging from pens and paper to small office machines like shredders and fax machines. The product line boasts over 11,000 catalog items. Mid-Town has been in existence for 12 years and operates a warehouse in Cucamonga, on the eastern outskirts of Los Angeles. Mid-Town has grown into a company with a reputation for providing customers with excellent value. It competes with other office supply firms by offering next-day delivery of all orders along with a price that, while not as low as some mail-order firms, is quite competitive from a total value perspective. In addition to volume discounts, the company maintains a database to help customers track how they use their office supplies. A final feature is dedicated Web site so customers can place orders over the Internet by 4:00 p.m. are delivered the next day.

Mid-Town’s extensive product line, reasonable pricing with volume discounts, next-day delivery, usage history, and Internet ordering have allowed the company to enjoy much success serving small businesses and companies in the eastern Los Angeles suburbs. This success has led the company to expand beyond its traditional customer base of suburban Los Angeles into the heart of the downtown area. Such an expansion is risky for Mid-Town because of the very different customer base and location. However, Mid-Town has decided it can afford to place one representative in downtown Los Angeles for up to two years to try and build the business. Knowing that the success of this venture hinges on his ability to win new business with the larger downtown prospects makes Ron even more anxious about his new assignment.

Ron accepted this position after a successful eight-year career selling copy machines to downtown businesses for a local distributor of a well-known brand. A competitor recently purchased his previous employer. Ron knows that selling office products for Mid-Town will be quite different from selling office machines, and a key part of that difference will be customer concerns. That’s why Ron is eager to hone his skills so he can respond effectively to each objection. Ron also knows that even though he’ll be calling on some of the same accounts that used to buy his copy machines, the office supplies buyer has a lower job level and less responsibility than the copy machine buyer. As Ron Refines the list of objections he expects to get from these buyers, Christine walks in and begins discussing he can respond to them.