PRACTICAL SALESMANSHIP

DEMONSTRATION METHOD

NATIONAL SALESMENS
TRAINING ASSOCIATION
CHICAGO, U. S. A.

PRACTICAL SALESMANSHIP

Demonstration Method

Closing The Deal

Volume XI

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SECTION I

CLOSING ON ONE-CALL PROPOSITION

WE HAVE reached the end of the selling process. You should think of your ability as a salesman in terms of the sales you make. It is the test of your salesmanship. Your one objective is to close the deal. If you fail to do so you may look upon the whole procedure as a failure, which it is, as far as gaining the objective is concerned.

We will assume that you are engaged in selling a one-call proposition. If you do not close the sale on your first call there is little chance of doing business on subsequent calls. The price of the item you are selling may not be enough to justify a return call; or a new prospect may be sold more easily than one who has considered your proposition and put you off. Many products in the specialty line are of the one-call nature.

Your work is judged by the deals you close. In the last analysis this spells success or failure. Thus salesmanship resolves itself into the easiest, quickest, and best possible way of closing the deal.

Did you ever stop to consider the loss of money because of the tens of thousands of sales that have not been made, and the resultant cost of doing business? Inefficient salesmanship has slowed down the wheels of industry and laid production under a heavy expense.

Closing the deal has been burdened with theories. All sorts of ideas have been advanced along this line. There are principles that regulate action in this important matter that are so plain and sensible that to be appreciated they need only to be stated and understood. This system of instruction aims to set forth the laws of selling in accordance with the facts of human nature. How the mind acts under given conditions has been the burden of our inquiry in dealing with salesmanship from its various angles.

Many salesmen come to this vital moment with fear and trembling. One reason for this is that they realize there is something defective about their method of closing; another is the dread of losing another sale.

Business will not be improved, and the cost of conducting it will not be lowered until the salesman increases his sales. Some firms have become discouraged in the effort to distribute their goods through salesmen and have adopted selling by mail, believing they can get better returns at less cost.

SELLING THE RIGHT LINE

One reason why many sales are not made is because the salesman is not adapted to the line. He took up what came to his hand without considering whether it was the thing for which he was best fitted and which suited his interests and aptitudes.

Houses make the same mistake. In their anxiety to push their products they make little or no discrimination and send men into the field only to burn up the territory. They fail to realize that the salesman cannot close deals if he has little or no adaptation to the line. Added to that is the fact that he is frequently sent out with the most meagre training and is expected to turn in a large amount of business.

There is a line for which you are better fitted than for any other. Your best success will be achieved in doing the thing for which you are best adapted. You will be able to do that with the least amount of effort and the greatest efficiency. There will be the least waste and expenditure of useless effort. You operate under natural conditions, since there will be proper correspondence between yourself and your work.

You can do your best work in the line you like best. You will find yourself forever slipping in trying to do the thing you dislike and that does not appeal to you. You come to it with displeasure and distrust. There can be no enthusiasm handling the thing for which you feel a distaste.

Listen to the voices of your nature in choosing your line. If you discover that what you are selling does not interest you, that it does not fit you as the glove fits the hand, that you are wearing a sock instead of a glove, then get out of it and find your right place. You are wasting time and effort and spoiling good territory.

You will find in this condition the explanation of many lost sales. You are not closing deals because you are not selling *your* line. What you are closing may be a large percentage, considering the fact that you are working out of your proper sphere, but is very low compared with what it would be if you were selling the line for which you are best fitted.

You may be selling the right line and not closing many deals because you are not selling the line in the right way. In that case do not blame the line. The explanation is simple—you are not working efficiently. Salesmen frequently leave the line because their sales are low, thinking the line is to blame. They have even less success in taking up another line, and for the same reason.

Find your line and learn how to sell it, and the returns will be commensurate with your efforts. Do not lose sight of the fact that closing the deal is the measure of your ability and success and is directly related to the line in which you are capable of doing your best work in a manner most agreeable to yourself.

RELATION OF SELLING TO CLOSING

A sales manager said to one of his men, "Frank, I cannot understand why your record is so much lower than that of Tom. You are both selling the same proposition to the same general class of prospects. I know it is not because of less native ability, personality, and other good qualities on your part. I know it is not because you do any less work. I know you do not lie down on the job. When it comes to that you are a harder worker than Tom. What is the trouble?"

Too Much Selling

Over-selling was Frank's trouble. He was one of those salesmen who say, "I can make a splendid presentation, but I close only a small percentage of deals. I am a success at the one and a good deal of a failure in doing the other." He will even resent it if you tell him he is mistaken about his good presentation. He knows he cannot defend what he calls his failure, because there is the record to show for it, but he will defend his presentation of the proposition.

The fact remains, however, that the selling does not result in closing. Is the selling good when the closing is poor? What is the relation between the two? If your presentation is poor, you cannot expect to be a successful closer. Turn it around: if your closing is poor, can the presentation be good?

Now just what is meant by this "good presentation"? Let us assume that it did state the facts of the proposition, and stated them well. The salesman knew his product and how to explain it. It gripped his interest and enthusiasm. These things being true, this salesman will insist that under right conditions his closings will correspond with his efficient presentation.

Blaming the Conditions

He insists that his statement of the proposition is highly efficient and that other things are responsible for his failure to close.

He lays the blame upon the territory or the proposition. The product costs too much or is not salable. It is an excellent thing, but the people do not want it.

Again, the fault is with the people. He tells us they are ignorant and incapable of appreciating a good thing. They are "tight-wads" and cannot be pried loose from a dollar with a crowbar. They have no sense of values.

He comes to his friend, the successful salesman, and says, "Your pasture is much better than mine. They have given me a rotten deal. Let us trade pastures for a few days, so I can convince the house that the trouble is not with me."

His friend consents.

What are his findings under these new conditions? This new pasture is no better; the sales results are the same.

What about his friend?

He finds the other pasture just as good. The only difference between the two fields is the "fence" that separates them which was built by the house to keep each man in his own territory. But the soil is the same, the grass is as green, and the successful man got as much business out of his friend's field as he got out of his own.

What is wrong—the territory, the proposition, or the salesman?

All the territory cannot be bad just because this salesman's record is always low. He sends in "weakly" reports. What, then, about that "fine presentation"?

The Real Trouble

What is the difference between these two men?

For one thing, we note that the successful man has a skillful way of selecting his material and handling his talking points. His facts are related in a manner that grips the attention of the prospect. He does not say much, but what he does say is built into a strong structure. He hits the nail on the head.

We listen to the other man.

Instead of *selecting* his materials and thereby working to a specific point so as to focus the attention of the prospect, he *exhausts* his material. He reasons that only as the prospect knows all there is to be known of the proposition will he be willing to purchase it. He assumes that the prospect buys the whole proposition, if he buys at all. The other man goes on the assumption that very few prospects buy more than one or two points of the proposition, so the thing to do is to discover what there is in the proposition that he is willing to buy.

What, then, is the difference between these two men?

The one man is actually selling; the other man is delivering a lecture. Comparatively few people care for lectures, especially when the salesman is the lecturer. They are inclined to feel sorry that he is spending so much valuable time for which he will get nothing in return. When the lecture is over and the collection is taken up the prospect feels justified in taking a quarter instead of contributing.

The first man hit the nail on the head and drove it home; the other man hammered away until he split the board.

It is this lecture that he calls a "fine presentation," and he can't understand why it does not close the deal. This is what we mean by "too much selling." He does not understand the relation of selling to closing.

It is on this rock that hosts of sales are wrecked. It is this that runs up the cost of business, that wastes good territory, that discourages houses handling excellent propositions, and leads some of them to see if they cannot have better success selling their goods by mail.

It resolves itself into this: If you are a poor closer, you do not know the science of selling. You do not understand the relation of selling to closing. If you have been complimenting yourself on your fine presentation, but are short on sales, stop and consider. There is something seriously wrong, and the trouble is not with the proposition or the territory.

The Closing a Climax

One of the very common mistakes made by salesmen is the notion that the selling and the closing are distinct and separate processes. That is the way you muddle things when you say, "I am good on presentation but weak on closing." It is really one structure and you are building to a given point.

When an architect designs a building he does not carry it to the roof and then put the cupola apart from the building on the ground. The cupola completes the building. In that same sense you do not sell and then close apart from the selling. It is one structure.

There are salesmen who regard the closing in the light of a "trick." They consider they are weak in working the trick, while they are efficient up to that point. As long as that notion prevails you will not close many deals. As long as you keep these processes separated you will never carry the building to the finished point and set the cupola where it belongs. To separate these things is just as untrue to the science of selling as to expect the flower to appear apart from the root and stem that gave it life. The sale is the consummation, the climax of all that preceded.

WHEN TO STOP SELLING

What is the difference, ordinarily, between the way the salesman looks at the closing of the deal and the presentation of the proposition? The presentation gives him practically no concern, if he knows the selling points. But he is inclined to magnify the difficulties of closing.

Do not think too much about the close. It will generate doubt and misgivings, and when the time comes to close it will unnerve you, scatter your wits, and lead you to do the wrong thing. When people get stage fright they are not likely to cover themselves with honor.

Approach the close as you come to the selling, with a state of mind free from disturbing thoughts.

We now come to the important problem: when to stop selling.

When the Prospect is Ready to Buy

Whenever the moment comes that the prospect is ready to buy, you are through selling. That is the time to stop selling and start closing. The mistake made by the salesman lecturer is that he never stops selling until he tells everything that is to be told about the proposition. He never stops to consider whether or not the prospect is ready to buy. All that seems to concern him is that he is not ready to stop selling.

The Prospect's Encouragement

Stop selling at the slightest encouragement. If you are not on the lookout for the opportunity to close, you will not be aware of it when it comes and you will let it slip through your fingers. The wise salesman has his eye on every attitude and expression of the prospect during the selling process. Little things do not escape his notice. They are straws showing the current of his thought.

You may not have completed a selling talk. The prospect has run ahead of you after a few points of the proposition have been given. He is quick to see the value of your product and the manner in which he can use it. It may be he is in the market for just such a thing and is ready to buy. This interest is expressed almost at once.

How often the salesman misjudges this situation. He may note the interest of the prospect, and instead of stopping then and there to close him, he keeps right on selling on the assumption that if the prospect is interested at this early stage he will be much more interested after he has seen more of the proposition.

A salesman who is in the habit of talking too much would probably think there must be something wrong if the prospect was ready to buy after the first few minutes of the presentation. He cannot adjust himself to such attitudes. He has been accustomed to talking people to death, and lands some of them when they have been talked into a state of exhaustion and are too weak to refuse. To him a quick close would be a half-formed or deformed sale.

It makes no difference whether or not you have completed a selling talk, follow the prospect's encouragement and close him when he is ready to buy.

Indications by the Customer

This encouragement may consist of various things. It may not be more than an expressive nodding of the head. It signifies a certain finality of attitude on his part. It seems to say: "I see what this is; it is all right and I will be glad to have it."

It is the psychological moment; use it. It is the tide to be taken at the turn. How many sales you have lost by not taking advantage of that moment!

The prospect may indicate his interest by such a simple thing as picking up samples. But he picks them up in a certain way. It is not a listless or idle toying with them. The way he does it expresses the interest of ownership.

You are selling a mechanical device and are demonstrating the work it does in actual use. The prospect says, "Let me do that." He gets the feel of it, but you did not have to urge him to run it. He has given you encouragement to close him at once.

Another indication of interest is that of asking questions. Not idle questions but those that express a favorable attitude of mind. You are selling a bill of goods to a retailer and he asks, "How long a dating do you give?" or, "What discount do you allow for cash?"

Your product may be put up in two forms with two prices. Your prospect is one of those men who depend a good deal upon the judgment of the salesman. He asks, "Don't you think this cheaper kind would answer all the purposes?" Or he may say, "Would the higher-priced one give enough more satisfaction to justify spending the additional amount?"

Close him. People not ready to buy do not ask questions of that order. They rarely ask any questions, if they are not really interested. They are waiting for you to reach a period to give them a chance to bring the interview to an end. They refrain from asking questions through fear you will take advantage of them and try to close the deal.

Another indication is that of an interested expression. The buyer may not say a word, but his expression is eloquent. His face radiates interest and enthusiasm. Learn to read the buyer's face. You will soon see the difference between doubt and conviction, apathy and sympathy, indifference and interest.

The interested buyer may be, and usually is, unconscious of what his face registers, but it says to the skillful salesman, "Now is the time to close." You may be afraid to follow these indications for fear the interest is not sufficiently ripe. What if it is not? No harm will be done. The attempt to close is all "to the good." It helps to break down resistance. He will let you know how much has yet to be done to close him and will indicate, in many instances, what course to follow.

Again, note the logical time for closing: the particular thing about your proposition that interested him. He will linger over that feature, talk about it, or ask some form of a question. He might remark on the fine form of letter of the typewriter you are selling. He says, "I sometimes get typewritten letters in which the type is too small and indistinct." Sell him on the type when you come to close.

Show him how that will appear in every letter he has occasion to write, and the good impression it will make on those who receive them. Tell him there are times when one wants a letter to look especially well and to attract favorable attention. Thus you add to his interest in the type itself a point of special significance, and do not merely call his attention to the type, as he has done.

By these various means you know when the prospect is ready to buy. The opportunity may come at any point of the selling process. Do not fail to use it. In selling, as in many other things, opportunity may come but once.

At the Close of Selling Talks

Your prospect may not indicate any special interest, or give any of the above-mentioned signs. Let us say that you are in the first selling talk in which you are creating interest by explanation of the proposition. If, during this time, he gave no encouragement to close, no nodding of the head, handling of samples, asking of questions, or expression of the face, you would proceed to the end of that talk.

When you have completed that selling talk, and none of these things have happened, you will attempt to close him. He may be ready to buy, even though he has not indicated it.

It is a common error for the salesman to assume that because no such interest has been expressed it does not exist and that the thing to do is to keep on selling until the prospect expresses some interest, or until there is nothing more to do but to close.

This is an unpardonable sin in salesmanship. You may have committed it many times without realizing how many sales you have lost because of it. One thing that may cause you to wait unduly for some of these signs to appear is your fear of closing. You are putting off the evil day hoping he will close himself or give you a plain indication that he is ready.

Never fail to attempt to close at the completion of the sales talk. If the prospect makes no response, admitting he is not ready to buy, you must find out what is to be your next move. If he needs to be convinced, you will proceed to the next talk.

He may declare he has no doubts as to the claims of the proposition. There is nothing to prove, so do not waste time on demonstrating. When values and claims are admitted there is no further need to demonstrate. Use Suggestion to make him realize how the proposition can serve his interests.

The way to discover the prospect's attitude is to attempt to close him. That is a sufficient reason for making the attempt.

He may be ready to buy. If so, stop selling and start closing. If he is in that frame of mind, and you let the opportunity pass over by continuing the selling, you are in great danger of talking him out of the mood for buying and all you can do when you come to close will not restore that favorable attitude.

If he is not sold during the first or second talk, or at the close of the second talk, you should attempt to close him again. If all he needed was to be convinced of the merits of your product, and you have made a strong case, then there is no reason why you should not close the deal as soon as you have done so.

It may be that he needed to be convinced, but it required more than that to sell him. In that case it will be necessary to proceed with the third talk. But you will know how much talk is necessary only as you attempt to close him.

Prolonging the Closing

Dragging out the closing of the sale is as harmful as not making the attempt to close.

At the Close of the First Talk

If he is ready to buy at the close of the first talk you will sell him. "How many of these can you use, Mr. Brown?" He will tell you or rely upon your judgment.

We are assuming, however, that he is not ready to buy. How you will proceed will depend upon what he says. "I am not certain about the salability of this product," he says. That indicates exactly what is demanded of you—the line of demonstration you are to follow. You are not through selling.

Instead of acting on that lead, suppose that you continue closing him. "There is no question about the salability of this product. Just let me put you down for a dozen. That is a light order and you are taking no risk. Believe me, you will be writing the house for more before I am this way again."

You are prolonging the closing. He is far from being satisfied that he should buy, and you are doing nothing to meet the needs of the case. Those empty assurances are not a demonstration to satisfy his doubt. He becomes cautious and suspicious, because he does not want a white elephant on his hands in the form of unsalable stock.

You are now violating the rules of the game. The purpose of attempting to close him was to take his order or to discover what to do if he was not ready to buy. He is not ready to buy and you are not ready to quit closing. You are dead wrong and will lose that sale by continuing in your efforts to close instead of resuming your selling. You have missed the point completely by attempting to force him to close at this point.

At the Close of the Second Talk

If demonstration is all your prospect required, and you have handled the second talk in a skillful manner, you will close him because he is then ready to buy.

We are assuming, however, that he is not ready to buy, which you discover to be the case when you start to close him. He believes in your goods but you have not created a buying desire.

"Your proposition is all right but I do not think I can use it," or something to that effect. As in the former situation, he has indicated clearly how you should proceed. You are not through selling. The finest opportunity in salesmanship is still before you.

Let us say that instead of taking up your third talk you make the mistake of prolonging the close. "If the proposition is all right, as you say, Mr. Brown, that is one of the best reasons why you should want it. You are assured it is all it claims to be, and you will be more than satisfied on that score when you receive it. I want to save you from making the mistake of turning it down."

You have lost ground by the damaging effect of prolonging this closing. That is done every day. Salesmen fall into this sort of talk repeatedly. It is suggested by the refusal of the prospect to purchase, and they fall into the trap.

The moment he expresses his belief that he cannot use it, the closing opportunity for the present ceases. Lay the closing aside; it can do nothing more for you. If you prolong it your sale will go dead. Don't try to run on that flat tire. It is not necessary. There is plenty of air; pump it up. If you have a puncture, remedy it. Your third talk has everything you need. In other words, you are not through selling.

When to stop selling has to do with the first two selling talks. You will finally stop selling when you have completed the third talk. We will come to the further closing of the deal in the next section.

THE DO OR DIE ATTITUDE IN CLOSING

"I will close or die in the attempt" is the feeling of many salesmen as they approach the closing point. There is a vast difference between this feeling and that positive frame of mind before coming to the prospect in which you *know* you are going to get the order. This latter is the mental attitude that gets orders, but it has nothing in common with the do or die attitude in closing which is responsible for losing many sales.

Registering Your Intention

If, like many salesmen, you look upon the close of the sale as a battle of opposing forces, you brace yourself for a contest. Figuratively speaking you start rolling up your sleeves. You are looking for trouble, so you prepare yourself to meet and overcome it. You usually find what you are looking for.

It is the moment of victory or defeat. You get ready for a tussle with the prospect, and call up all the reserves of appeal, persuasion, and argument.

How often have you seen these maneuvers for the final attack to carry off the deal? How diffcult it is for this type of salesman to see that instead of coming to a signed order by such tactics he will soon be coming to grief.

Do you imagine you can be influenced by this "do or die" attitude and not make your intention evident to the buyer? You are placing yourself under a great strain, and you show it. Getting ready for a fight you are tensing your muscles. You imagine you are at it and unconsciously you are going through the motions. You show that you are under a tension.

If you had nothing to do but center your mind on yourself you might be able to keep these things under control. But your mind is not really on yourself, but on what you are trying to do, and you are under the power of that ruling purpose. It may not occur to you that all of these movements are so registered that the prospect is fully aware of them and prepares to meet them.

In taking this attitude you are not overcoming your fear but are expressing it. One of the greatest weaknesses of the salesman is to let the prospect know what he is trying to do, to let him see the "inside works" of his salesmanship.

Anxiety Becoming Insistent

You have committed yourself to the impulse of anxiety, which is a real concern, almost a worry. Anxiety urges and then demands. Under this mental impulse you lay aside or violate the principles that govern a sale. You take on an insistent tone. "You can't afford to turn down this proposition, Mr. Brown." It may be strictly true, but telling him so is not the way to get the conviction firmly rooted in his mind. It should come to him from the fine character of your work, which is the only way it becomes a really worth-while and effective conviction.

When your anxiety urges the fact it is not convincing. Anxiety stands out before the prospect as the reason for your apparent interest in his welfare and, thus explained, the interest in him no longer appears to be sincere. Instead of being solicitous for him you are solicitous for yourself, through fear that you will not make the sale.

The salesman should have a genuine anxiety that the prospect secure the values of his proposition. Knowing the service these will render him, he should have a sincere interest in the great benefits that will thus accrue to him. Under the influence of this kind of an interest he will make his appeals in such a way that the prospect will realize that the anxiety is on his account and will be greatly influenced by the fact that another should be so concerned for his welfare.

That, however, is a very different kind of anxiety. The insistence that springs from the do or die attitude has a personal anxiety written all over it. It says to the prospect, "Mr. Jones, if you pass up this proposition it may be safely assumed that you will never have another opportunity of securing it." Jones tells you he will, no doubt, be able to get it when he wants it. You tell him the house expects to raise the price so that getting it now will save him money. When that does not appeal to him, you make a last stand by saying, "I will tell you what I will do, Mr. Jones. I want you to have this proposition, and I will allow you one-half of my commission. That concession ought to interest you."

Thus it is that anxiety insists and then concedes and may take on the begging attitude. In many instances, when all of these fail, it goes to pieces, gets angry and even insolent.

How This Affects the Prospect

If the salesman would take half an hour to think over soberly and frankly how this sort of thing would affect him, if he were being sold, it would cure him of his fault.

It Stimulates Opposition

When the prospect sees you bracing yourself to close him, and notes the manner in which you register your intention, he puts himself on guard. It stirs up an antagonistic attitude. The closed fist has the effect of doubling the fist of the other fellow. He will respond in kind.

When the salesman makes it very evident that he is determined to get that order, the prospect is forewarned of what is coming. To make his own purpose so apparent has the effect of killing any interest the prospect may have had in the proposition.

This salesman seems to be utterly ignorant of the simple psychology of such methods. Instead of assuming that the man will buy he prepares himself to make him buy. And then the jig is up. His every move advertises the assumption that he expects the prospect to oppose him, and that is the very best way of placing a club in the hands of the other fellow.

Note the difference between this method and that of the efficient salesman. You never see him squaring himself for a tussle. There is no break between the sales talk and the closing. There is nothing that says as plainly as if it were spoken, "Now I am coming after you." He does not place the prospect on guard by suggesting a battle royal. There is no thought of opposition because there is not the slightest intimation that the salesman now intends to "get him."

It Irritates the Prospect

The prospect does not like to be placed on either the defensive or the offensive. Your attitude is a challenge, and every instinct of his nature rebels and urges him to accept it. When you undertake to compel he begins to resist.

Your insistence irritates him. It tells him to give up the fight and to "come across." The more you insist the more he is disgusted. The more you make plain to him that it is your anxiety for the order that is doing the urging, the more he is nettled.

You are simply stirring up a hornet's nest and will get stung.

It May Cause Him Not to Buy

He may have been somewhat interested in your proposition until you took on that compelling attitude. You have taken his mind off the proposition and have attracted his attention to yourself. What he discovers in you carries no inducement to buy but, on the contrary, a challenge to fight.

When you cease to be a salesman he ceases to be a customer. Your explanation and demonstration really interested him. Everything was moving in the right direction until you began to close. At this point you become afraid of yourself. You are not afraid to sell him, but you are afraid to close him. It is this feeling that leads you to take on that determined bearing and that changes the whole attitude of the prospect.

If you had thought no more about the closing than you did the selling, your manner would have been easy and natural. You would have kept the mind of the prospect on the proposition instead of shifting it to yourself. From what he now discovers in your manner makes him unfavorable to buying.

He May Give a Smaller Order

His inclination is not to buy at all, although your product may appeal to him. You have taken the enthusiasm out of buying by your mistaken method of closing. He is willing to compromise and purchases about one-half of what his order otherwise would have been.

There may be another element entering into the case. Your way of closing disturbs his confidence. Your change of manner, anxiety, and insistence create a suspicion that everything may not be all right. He becomes cautious, and caution advises "safety first."

He will try you out on a small order. All of these things —the stimulation of opposition, irritation, and suspicion— combine to diminish his interest in your goods, and so you leave with a small order grudgingly given.

This section has brought to your attention three things of the first importance, i. e., the relation of selling to closing, the time to close, and the attitude towards closing. In these instructions we have reduced salesmanship to a science. Science is systematized knowledge. Doing a thing systematically is doing it intelligently and accurately.

When you work accurately, you escape blundering methods, guesswork, and similar faults. There is a right and a wrong way of doing anything. The right way is the easiest way in the end and brings results. Bungling methods are ineffective and lose sales. When the railroad man ignored his rules and failed to let down the gates at the crossing in time there was a damaging accident. Keep up the gates of your selling process beyond a certain point, and you are heading for danger in closing the deal.

The laws of selling safeguard you against errors and losses. Ignore them and you will run wild, so that anything but the right thing is liable to happen. The man who is a law unto himself in these matters will, sooner or later. make shipwreck of his work.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

The accuracy with which we do our work depends upon how well we understand ourselves. If we are good students of ourselves, if we are well acquainted with the workings of our mental functions, we will know how to make them serve our needs.

I. Selling the right line.

1. What, in many instances, is the reason for mediocre success in selling?
2. In what way can you determine the line you should sell?

II. Relation of selling to closing.

1. Why may the presentation which the salesman considers efficient, be quite defective?
2. When it fails to close the deal what does he think is the trouble?
3. What is the connection between the selling and the closing?

III. When to stop selling.

1. In what ways does the prospect indicate that he is ready to buy?
2. When should the salesman attempt to close, when the prospect makes no indication that he is ready to buy?
3. Why is it a serious mistake to prolong the closing if the prospect is not ready to buy?

IV. The do-or-die attitude.

1. How do some salesmen wholly misjudge the closing process?
2. What is it that he expresses to the prospect?
3. What effect is this likely to have upon the prospect?

PRACTICAL TALKS SERIES

INITIATIVE

PRACTICAL TALKS SERIES

INITIATIVE

WORKING overtime to do something original. The average person is too lazy or too unimaginative to get out of a rut.

A few cultivate this quality; with the majority of people it is dormant.

Necessity is the mother of invention. Then what a blessing it would be if the rank and file were driven to extremities.

What you called "misfortune" was often a good in disguise. It made a man of you. You had to invent a new way to keep from starving. It got you into a creative mood.

When you put "new wine into old bottles" (in Bible times they were made out of skins) something is going to bust. The old antiquated skins would be no loss, but there was no need of wasting the wine.

A method may not be poor because it is old, and a new one may not be good, but if the old one is so musty that it is moldy it is time it is buried.

The salesman, especially a new man at the business, is not always to blame. His sales manager fell heir to his great-grandfather's ideas and methods and they have become a priceless heir-loom. Antiquarians would make a rich haul by looting a lot of business houses.

It may be natural to look with suspicion upon a new untried thing, but surely its chances are as good as those of a corpse.

You have often wondered why your presentation of a proposition sold one prospect and had no effect upon another who was equally much in the market for the goods. And you wondered still more when another salesman came along and sold that person that very proposition and had no difficulty in doing so.

The reason why you sold No. 1 and did not sell No. 2 is because No. 2 is not No. 1 but a very different individual. You made the same presentation to both but it happened to fit only No. 1.

If people were exactly alike you would be a dandy salesman because you follow the same beaten path religiously.

The imagination is the creative faculty. The reason why your work has turned gray with age is because your imagination has been dead from disuse.

If your trail got covered up and completely lost to view you would be "the babe in the woods." It would be the best thing that ever happened to you; you would have to blaze your own trail and do some thinking on your own account.

"Imagination rules the world," said Napoleon. It does. It paints your pictures, creates your sculpture and architecture, writes your poetry and fiction, stimulates science and builds empires.

It rules your world. It gives you a new outlook; it starts you dreaming; it gets you dissatisfied with the stale order of your way of doing things; it makes you dare to do things without being told how; it shows you how to adapt your sales talk to varying conditions; it enables you to use the law of suggestion, to paint pictures that stimulate the prospect to buy.

There are two classes of people, the imitative and creative. The first lose their individuality and kill initiative; the second save themselves from a progressive decay.

SELF-QUIZ

1. Do I realize the importance of being able to bring a sale to a close?
2. In selecting a proposition to sell, do I choose one that interests me?
3. Do I avoid talking too much in presenting the goods or service I am selling?
4. Do I blame myself when my territory fails to produce?
5. Do I know when to stop selling and when to start to close?
6. Do I close when the prospect shows any signs of encouragement?
7. Do I realize the danger of prolonging my close?
8. Do I show my determination to bring the sale to a close and thus cause resistance on the part of the customer?
9. Do I change my attitude toward my customer as soon as he shows an inclination to show resistance?
10. Do I follow a well-thought-out method in selling so as not to bungle my sale?

SECTION II

CLOSING ON ONE-CALL PROPOSITION

(Continued)

CLOSING ON ONE CALL PROPOSITION

ENCOURAGING AND AIDING DECISIONS

By Creating Enthusiasm. Overcoming inertia. Planting ideas. Thinking them his own. Making it Hard for him to Refuse Attractions of the proposition. Personal interests. Closing on Minor Points. Asking the customer to buy A common error. Assuming that he will buy Throughout the selling process In closing the deal.	Anticipating prospect's action. Watching for the negative attitude. Using the order blank. The Sale That Closes Itself. Factors That Determine Closing. Getting on the customer's side of the fence. Complimenting the prospect's discrimination. Putting points up to him for analysis.

CLOSING THE DEAL

ADVERSE DECISIONS	WHERE SALE IS LOST OR WON
Fearing These Decisions. The effect of fear Used by the prospect. Need of Nerve in Selling. Nerve is not bulldozing. Nerve is not impoliteness. Nerve is not undue insistence. Nerve is not imposition. When not to be turned down. Making the Sale and Getting a Customer A Link in an Endless Chain.	The Selling Process A Unit. Lost or won all the way along. Selling and closing organically related. Failing to Close on the One Call Treating the call as if it were the only one. The deferred order. Bagging the game.

SECTION II

CLOSING ON ONE-CALL PROPOSITION
(Continued)

"AS A man thinketh so is he."

That statement applies to the salesman and his work. A man is influenced and energized by his thoughts when he thinks hard enough and persistently. If he thinks failure, he will be a failure. If he thinks success, he wins it. As long as he thinks he cannot do a certain thing, he will not put forth any effort to convince himself to the contrary. As long as he thinks and believes he is capable of doing a thing, he will start something and do his best to finish it.

Your achievements are determined by your thinking and not by favorable or adverse circumstances. Here is a man who is surrounded by helpful conditions. They offer him every inducement to strike out and win, but he does nothing. His negative thoughts stand in the way of achievement. Another man is beset by all kinds of handicaps, but he is greater than his circumstances; he is the captain of his soul, and his thinking surmounts his obstacles.

Thinking in terms of closed orders will bring them. The right kind of thinking will work out the right kind of closing. But you think of them as closed. That is your great objective.

ENCOURAGING AND AIDING DECISION

When you start to argue a man into deciding you have embarked upon a course that will land you on the rocks. The stronger the arguments, and the more they prove you are right and the prospect wrong, the less chance you will have to sell him. The implication is that you are mentally stronger than he. He will not admit it, and he does not want you to prove it. If you were the customer you would feel the same way. An argument won is invariably a sale lost. You are not a debater but a salesman.

You cannot get decisions by forcing them. You cannot proceed on the basis of an agreement that if you beat a man in an argument he is to buy your goods, and having won the argument, as you declare, appeal to his sense of fair play. Arguments do not arise that way, and if they did, an umpire would have to be appointed to decide who was the winner for neither of you would admit defeat.

There are salesmen who seem to think that the customer must admit a well-proved point, and in all fairness accept defeat and give the salesman an order.

When you begin fighting for a decision you will find yourself beating the air. They don't come that way. The only way to get them is to encourage them and win them, and the salesman must know how to do it.

By Creating Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is contagious. You may express an opinion the customer will not accept, but he will warm up under the influence of a genuine enthusiasm. If you are lacking in this quality, your interview with a cold customer will be a frigid affair.

Overcoming Inertia

There is no fun in talking to a corpse. You would far rather deal with something alive in a state of active opposition to you than try to bring the dead to life. Inertia is one of the hardest things to overcome. But it is not hopeless; it can be overcome.

You may have carried the prospect through the first two selling talks without getting a "rise" out of him. His interest was untouched. You then began making suggestions. You came close to his needs, and your proposition took on a new form and significance.

Your drug supplies were stimulating no interest whatever with Jones, who could not see why he should patronize another house, until you remarked that his competitor, Brown, had disposed of two shipments within a brief period and had given another and a much larger order.

Brown was making money on your product. You appealed to Jones' sense of gain. Brown might attract some of Jones' trade whose demand for the product the former could not meet. You appealed to his sense of self-protection. His inertia fell away on the instant, and enthusiasm was awakened.

It is one thing to know the facts of the proposition; it is quite another to give them a personal application to the prospect. He may be as cold as a dead fish to your presentation until you start his blood circulating by giving the proposition a vital place in his personal interests.

You were not making any headway in selling that establishment your typewriter by going over the merits of the machine. They had all the machines they needed. But you had some initiative. You knew typewriters and could tell by the sound when they were in a bad condition. You had "listened in" at this place and learned what you wanted to know. By using a little shrewdness you secured samples of work of these machines. You now lay these before your prospect and say to him, "This is the work you are getting out of the machines you are now using, Mr. Smith. Here is the work which our machine does. You can easily see the difference. A house, you know, is liable to be judged by its letters.''

It was that last fact that gripped him, and he got it by actual comparison. You smoked him out. That firm had become indifferent to the poor typewriters, but you, an outsider, touched his pride and broke down his inertia. He is no longer indifferent and is ready to talk business.

The reason why you could not kindle any enthusiasm while setting forth the facts of your oil-gas burner was because you had not yet given the prospect a vision of an even temperature and a clean basement, with no more filling up the basement with coal, no more ashes to be taken out and sifted on cold winter mornings, no more fires going out or being banked up at night, and no more waste of fuel by having to keep the fire going when the weather moderated. You touched him at several points, and he thawed out as the vision grew.

You suggested the idea of no more backaches to that prospect who had no interest in buying your electric washer. No more dreary drudgery on wash day. You put a bright picture into her life, so the inertia passed off like a dissolving view. You brought decision by encouraging enthusiasm.

Planting Ideas

The skillful salesman knows that the buyer does not like to have conclusions forced on him and that he is influenced by his own ideas rather than by the opinions of others. If you are to help him to decide by creating enthusiasm you must get to him ideas in such a way that he will regard them as his own. He will respect and support these ideas, but he would not be likely to do so if he thought they were yours.

The clever salesman, by shrewd suggestions, can plant ideas in the mind of the prospect so that he thinks they originated with himself. Regarding them as his own, the prospect will be influenced by them. They make claims upon him and require him to act in line with them. He will not be indifferent to his own ideas.

In selling your life insurance and knowing that if your prospect took a policy it would be a straight life, you artfully state that a man can provide for his family while alive. It is so clearly his idea, if he thought about it at all, that he never thinks of getting it by suggestion. It has all the force of originating with himself. That keeps one policy before him, the kind he could be influenced to secure. You have already, by your form of statement, suggested that providing for them while he is alive does not take care of them after he is dead, and for that emergency provision must be made. His mind dwells upon that idea of "provision."

You follow this up with another suggestion: "Every time we hear or read of a person being suddenly taken off, run down and killed instantly, who went away well in the morning, we think of that misfortune occurring to us, and our first thought is the family. We have often said, that poor fellow little thought when he left his home he would never return to it alive."

You are suggesting it, but it is his thought. It is so easy to think such a thing, and it has so often occurred to him that he fails to notice that you are uttering it, and he is recalling the fact that it has been a familiar thought with him.

It links him up with life insurance and the necessity of making adequate provision for his family. You could have said the same things in a way that would have emphasized the fact that you were making a special point to impress him with the idea. What you did do was to make the suggestion in such a way that the idea would occur to him as his own, so that it is now *his* idea which holds him to the claims of life insurance.

You are simply helping him to decide by getting him enthused over your proposition. You are not giving him the impression that you are doing something he does not want you to do. You are not forcing upon him your conclusions, and he believes he is acting out his own original ideas which have been skillfully planted in his mind by your suggestions.

The case of selling a young man the course of instruction in Better Business sets forth the difference between urging an idea and planting it by suggestion. He is now working in a basement for a comparatively small wage.

"Unless you fit yourself for something better, George, you are very likely to be here for another ten years to come. If you want to see a future before you you must have an ambition. You are too easily satisfied. The greatest need of your life is to become dissatisfied with your present station and outlook."

All of which may be strictly true to fact, but they are your ideas with which you are trying to impress George. The import of your statement, as he gets it, is that he needs some one to stir him up, to break up the present order of his life and shake him out of his lethargy.

Perhaps he does need that very thing, but it is your idea which you are crowding into him. Your implication is that having no such thought of his own he ought to be glad you are getting it to him. But he is not glad. He may, to himself, admit what you say, but he resents everything you have said.

You approach him as a skillful salesman, and in the course of your statement you say, "Your ambitions for something better, and a real future, have always made you dissatisfied with your present station. You have been looking forward to the time when you would step into something bigger and better. When did it first occur to you, George, that this was only a temporary thing, and that you would have to plan for your real life's work?"

Even though he never had these ideas, you now have planted them in his mind as his own. It now seems to him that they are his. There is a certain familiarity about them, and yet they are new, and they bring a new force into his life that starts him into action. They are the sort of thoughts he would like to have about himself and his work You have aroused an enthusiasm, whereas the former statement would have created an unfriendly feeling, a resentment. He is in full sympathy with what he now regards as his own ideas.

Making It Hard for Him to Refuse

Instead of helping the customer to decide you have at times made it hard for him to buy. Whenever you lose a sale ask yourself the following questions:

1. Was my presentation too dead and colorless?
2. Did I tire him with too many "cold facts" and was there too little of the story and picture element in my talk?

3. Did I create the suspicion that I was more interested in making the sale for my own ends than I was in the benefit the proposition would be to him?
4. Did I irritate him by making it appear that I was determined to sell him?
5. In brief, did I make it hard for him to buy?

What was it that made your prospect say, "I don't want to turn this down; it is a great temptation," or statements to that effect? You made that little house a real necessity to the prospect. You got the idea of "home" growing in his mind. He saw himself before his own fireside. You got him to *feel* the real satisfaction of calling this place his own and not a rented affair. What satisfaction he would have in cultivating his own garden and making little improvements about the place! His children would now have a real home, and in after years they would look back upon this as the home of their childhood instead of recalling their migratory experience in moving from house to house.

You made it hard for him to refuse because you made it so easy for him to buy. Your proposition is set forth in such an attractive manner that it is a real deprivation not to have it; only an insurmountable obstacle will stand in the way of his buying. The same proposition could be presented in a way that would give it no such attractiveness. It would lack those suggestions that appeal to the imagination of the prospect; that make it so vital to his interests; that open up a new channel for ambition and aspiration; that paint the future in vivid colors; that may make a desirable change for him in the whole scheme of things.

We are now speaking of presentation with a view to closing the deal. This is your great objective. There is no closing apart from selling. The one is the climax of the other. You make it hard for the prospect to refuse because of the attractions of the proposition placed in settings of personal interests.

"This beautiful piano will change your whole home life, Mr. Brown. It brings into it a new atmosphere. It adorns and completes a home. It supplies a refining influence. Nothing else can take the place of music. It is a universal language and meets a need of our nature that nothing else can meet. The piano will create a love for music in the lives of your children, and will develop their musical and artistic appreciations and finer sensibilities."

You are appealing to the aesthetic nature which is fundamental in our being. It has its own needs and longings as truly as does the physical nature. It craves food and nourishment as much as does the body. You are creating a soul hunger. If you want to sell an appetizing food product that "makes the mouth water" get your prospect good and hungry. The same is true of soul hunger.

When you make it hard for the prospect to refuse he will make a sacrifice rather than be deprived of your proposition. He realizes the loss in the light of the gain it would be to him. When he reaches that point all that is needed to bring decision and action is a well-put suggestion with clinching power to close.

It is this fitting statement of which you so often feel the need. You do not know what to say and therefore, say nothing. You wait for the prospect to decide, but this waiting may kill the sale. The bird was in your hand, and you let it get away for want of the right word.

In that critical moment you get off such a commonplace as, "You will be doing the right thing Mr. Smith." That is not what is bothering Smith; he knows the thing is right. Or you say, "You will never regret it," another useless commonplace.

One of the best things to do at such times is to start filling in the order blank. "If we did not fix up this deal, Mr. Smith, you know you would regret it from the moment I left you, so I am saving you some regrets." Thus you are encouraging and aiding decision by creating enthusiasm, overcoming inertia, planting ideas, and making it hard for him to refuse.

Closing on Minor Points

If your customer knows what he wants, there is nothing for you to do but to close him in the simplest way. It may be necessary for you to help him to decide just what he wants if a choice between things is to be made, or the quantity. Closing under those conditions is simple. It is when the salesman reaches a stopping point, and the customer does not take the initiative, that skill in closing is required on the part of the salesman. It is at that point that mistakes are made.

Asking the Customer to Buy

An awkward situation is raised by asking the prospect to buy. This is one of the common errors in selling. This is often done when things come suddenly to a stop. Something must be done. The prospect says nothing, and it is up to the salesman to close the deal.

To many salesmen it seems perfectly natural and right to ask the prospect if he does not want to purchase the product; they believe that this is the proper way to ascertain how he feels about it. Hence the salesman may say, "You see what an excellent proposition this is, Mr. Jones, and you want to place an order, do you not?" or ask some similar question.

Let us assume he is interested in the proposition and by the right closing could be easily sold. Such a question is likely to change his attitude completely. You are requiring him to adjust himself to an affirmative reply. If he is having difficulty in determining the matter you have shown him the way out of his difficulty. Left to decide the matter in this fashion, he will follow the line of least resistance, and instead of struggling with his indecision, he finds it much easier to say "no" than "yes."

It is, under these conditions, much easier for the prospect to adjust his mind to a negative than to an affirmative reply. It is easier to cut the Gordian knot than to attempt to untie it. With his mind wavering between buying and not buying, your question calls for a decision. If, for any reason, he leans a little more to not buying than to buying, that becomes the stronger motive, so he will follow this inclination.

You have provided the way of escape from this dilemma. He will invariably say "No, I am not prepared to buy today," or something to that effect. You solved his problem and killed the sale.

At different times he may have given little intimations of his interest of which you made no use. They were closing points, but you allowed them to slip through your fingers.

After he has answered your question in the negative and reached a definite conclusion with himself, thereby escaping from the tangle of his uncertain state of mind, the next thing you do is to proceed to change his mind. You have lost ground and now you make an attempt to recover it. You are the one who is now tangled up by having brought him to an adverse decision.

In this situation you are liable to do almost anything. You are at a great disadvantage. You feel that you must overcome that negative attitude which you precipitated. Your question called for an answer and got it. No one is to blame but yourself. You may say, "He may have answered in the affirmative." It very frequently happens that when the prospect has decided to buy he changes his mind on the instant when such a question is asked.

What are you going to do now? You may say, "I am sure you are making a mistake, Mr. Jones." If he is inclined to be abrupt and wants to protect his decision by not discussing the matter further, he may give you a short answer by saying, "You asked me a question and I answered it. The incident is closed."

The door is closed, and you will not be able to open it. You yourself closed it.

To change his decision you may call attention to some point of the proposition. He may or may not have been interested in that point; that is sheer guesswork, and his decision blocks any attempt you may make.

Keep in mind four essential facts in this connection:

1. If your prospect is undecided, a question asking for a decision will solve his problem by letting him take a negative position.
2. If he has practically decided to buy, your question holds out to him the alternative of not buying, and he is very likely to follow that suggestion.
3. You have lost ground and everything is dead against recovering it.
4. The prospect, at this point, is not disposed to change his decision, since that would place him in the position of not knowing his own mind when he said "No."

Assuming That He Will Buy

1. *Throughout the Selling Process.*

The assumption that the prospect will buy should be kept before him during the entire sales talk. This does not mean that you should so emphasize the idea as to make it too noticeable. That would have the effect of making evident just what you are doing, and then you are showing the "inside works" of your salesmanship. Don't kill your salesmanship by doing in the wrong way the very thing that salesmanship requires.

While presenting the proposition you may say occasionally something like this: "It may be but a short time after you have received this typewriter, Mr. Brown, that you will have occasion to do some tabulated work. Let me show you how simple it is to set the tabulators. This saves an immense amount of time, especially if you are running three or four columns."

By assuming that he will own and use the machine, you have put into his mind the idea of buying.

At another point you will say, "From time to time, say about once every two weeks, take a cloth dampened with wood alcohol and go over the platen. It will keep it in good condition."

You have again assumed that the sale is made. In making such suggestions be careful not to confuse him by complications. Don't put into his mind the fear that the thing is too intricate for him to handle or that it will be troublesome. Do not worry him with too many details.

"Another thing you will soon discover, after you have been using this machine for a short time, and that is the time saved. You will make far more speed than you ever did with a pen—to say nothing of the fine appearance of the work.''

In all of these instances you are keeping before his mind the thought of buying. In all of these assumptions the sale has been made. What a different effect it would have upon him, if you were to say, "In the event you do not purchase this machine,'' or, "If you do not purchase this machine it may be that in the course of a few days you will wish you had a typewriter for some special work you want to put in this form.''

The latter may be true, but you have distinctly stated that he will not buy; that suggestion planted in his mind carries a negative influence, although by it you sought to exert a favorable influence. You can get clearly fixed in his mind the advantage of having the machine when such an emergency arises by making the positive suggestion: "You will be surprised at the convenience of having this machine whenever you have work to be put into typewritten form, and you will always be prepared for it.''

These illustrations will suggest how buying assumptions can be made in presenting any proposition. Use your originality and see how the product you are handling yields to such forms of statements as you proceed through the selling process.

2. *In Closing the Deal.*

It is hard to believe that a salesman who is skillful in making these assumptions while selling, in closing would do the inconsistent thing of asking the prospect if he did not want to buy.

It would be simply ridiculous to assume all along that he was to purchase your proposition and then act contrary to that assumption by asking such a question. And yet just such foolish errors are sometimes made.

The assumption as to buying should become most active at the time of closing the deal, when you aim to get a decision on a minor point. At that time you are through selling. There is nothing more to be said about the proposition. All you want is action. If you have carried the selling process through the various selling talks, your selling is entirely finished, unless some points should arise that require a little fuller explanation or proof.

Have clearly in mind what is meant by a "minor point." In the first place, it means not raising any questions that require the buyer to say whether he will or not buy. You have already noted the effect of such a question. You would not even suggest it by putting it in the form of such a positive statement as this: "I am sure you realize the value of this product, Mr. Smith, and know it would be a loss not to have it."

That is not much better than the question under criticism. That is not a minor point. You are not to call attention, even in a positive way, to the fact that you are "sure" of this or that, or that you know he intends to buy. Positive as that may be, by implication you are suggesting an alternative course on his part. You leave the door open, and he will take advantage of it. He will act on the implied point of your statement, no matter how "sure" you are, since the question of buying is raised, and he is just as likely to take a negative position as he was before you put it in the form of a question.

Keep up the assumption that he will buy, and let your closing be based upon it. There should be no break between the last thing you said in your selling procedure and the statement of the minor point. You express his intent to buy as a foregone conclusion. It takes some such form as this: "As a convenience to many people we have the monthly payment method. Mr. Jones said he would prefer to make it quarterly. Would that suit you better than the monthly payment, Mr. Brown? For cash there is a discount of five per cent, but whatever is your convenience suits us." Wait just a moment if he does not reply, and then add, "Suppose we indicate monthly payments, and if after a payment or two you may prefer to make it quarterly; or if you would rather make the payments a little larger, you can do just as you wish." You are closing on the minor point of payment.

It may be you know your prospect would not think of making any other than a cash payment, and he would not want you to suggest monthly payments. In that case you would say, "There is five per cent discount for cash which makes the proposition to you" stating the amount, and suiting the action to the word by the use of the order blank.

You may close in a similar manner on the minor point of time of delivery; or it may be quantity, quality, or style of package if the product is put up in different forms. But the important point is that you are assuming that the sale is made, and you are saying nothing about buying. That is settled in your mind, you want it settled in his mind, and you are not going to disturb that state of mind by talking about it.

3. *The Importance of the Transition.*

In passing from the selling to the closing there should be no break, no hesitancy that tells the buyer just what you are going to do. There is a great difference in salesmen in this regard. Some are artists, and some are bunglers.

At this point your self-confidence may drop a peg. You hesitate and your assurance weakens. You are not successful in maintaining your composure and easy poise. In other words, you bungle the transition. You had the ball in your hand, and you "muffed" it and let it drop.

As a skillful salesman you will not drop the ball. You are not in a hurry. You will keep things properly balanced. You do not let it appear that you are doing anything special. You speak in an off-hand manner. You do not attract the attention of the prospect to the fact that you are closing by saying, "Now let us get down to cases, Mr. Smith." You get down to cases without saying so.

You do not take on a confidential or patronizing tone, which is in itself a dead give-away. It rarely fails to disgust the prospect and may make him suspicious. You keep up a manly business attitude. No favor is being conferred by the buyer. You are doing him a favor by the service that you bring to him. You do not say so, but are influenced by the fact, and it keeps you from acting in a weak and unbusiness-like manner. You appreciate the order and say so.

There is a certain readiness of speech and ease of manner that must be cultivated in handling this transition. There must be no stiffness. Your closing must be done in perfect ease with self-adjustment to the needs of the moment.

4. *The Prospect's Response.*

The prospect's tendency is to follow your assumption. You have been training him to do so throughout the selling talks. He has fallen in with your buying suggestions. When you assume that the sale is made by closing him on a minor point, he follows the line of least resistance and acts in line with your assumption.

When you put something on the order blank, such as delivery, form of payment, or similar facts, it may suddenly occur to him that he has not said expressly he would buy. He has not in so many words committed himself. His mind acts quickly, and he says to himself, "I really want it; it is a good thing; it will render me a service," and so he lets you proceed with the closing. Having gone that far he no longer looks for a way of escape, but looks for reasons to justify his buying. He has fallen in with your assumption. You have clinched it on a minor point. Had you given him a chance to refuse by asking some fool question about buying instead of keeping right on "sawing wood" by filling in the order blank, nine chances out of ten you would have lost the sale.

Get this psychological fact of the prospect's tendency to follow your assumption as his line of least resistance clearly fixed in mind. There are no exceptions to this rule in your selling procedure. There are some instances in which the prospect may hold you up and debate the matter of buying so as to clear up some doubts or questions, but the tendency is, when your selling has been right, to follow your assumption.

Anticipating Prospect's Action

A good salesman thinks ahead of his prospect, anticipates his decision, and saves him the necessity of saying, "I will take it." No matter how much he may be interested in the proposition, or how readily he will buy when you reach the closing point, it is an effort on the buyer's part to say "You may take my order."

The great majority of prospects who consider a proposition expect to say "No." It is an unusual proposition that so interests the buyer that it compels him to anticipate you, sometimes very early in the selling, and say, "I see what this is, you may put me down."

It is a mistake to hold up the closing too long. The prospect wants the proposition but he does not want to sell himself. He doesn't want to advance the fact that he is sold and himself close the deal by saying, "I will take it."

In one way or another he will indicate his interest, as has been set forth under the caption "When to Stop Selling." Always be on the lookout for these indications and never hold up the closing. Be keen to interpret these signs so the prospect will not be under the necessity of interrupting you to let you know that he is ready to buy.

You had less satisfaction in making a sale when you failed to anticipate this action on the part of the prospect. It means that you were not "on the job" watching the progress of the prospect's interest, and that you had to be told when to stop selling. There is always the additional danger of the prospect changing his mind.

Watching for the Negative Attitude

Let us say that you are moving up to the point of closing the sale. The prospect notes your purpose and may start to forestall it. He may raise some objection or say something that stops the closing. He may say nothing, but his expression is negative.

To continue the closing would be futile and you would lose ground. You must switch at once to a point of advantage. It may mean a stronger suggestion to intensify desire. The negative attitude may take the form of indifference. You are not through selling.

In closing, the question of price may have come up and his expression indicates that it does not suit him. You are not selling the price but the proposition, and if the latter is properly sold it will sell the price.

Be ready for these signals and know how to switch off. Do not make it apparent or give the impression that you noticed the negative attitude and are trying to offset it. This situation calls for resourcefulness and poise. There is a way of getting on the blind side of the prospect so that he does not see the point or meaning of the new move.

Some salesmen, in confronting these conditions, have the misfortune of running into danger instead of trying to escape it. If it is a question of price they will camp out on that issue and discuss it. The skillful salesman knows that such a topic must be avoided, and by shrewd tactics gets the prospect's mind on a topic that will stimulate the opposite mood. In doing so he may bring in some point of value and place it against the matter of price so that the price grows small by comparison.

Using the Order Blank

The use of the order blank has a great deal to do with closing the deal.

In the first place, do not make the mistake of taking out the order blank when you start to close the deal on a minor point. That of itself emphasizes just what you are doing. The order blank, at such a time, is the signal to the prospect to get ready to say "No."

Take out the order blank during the selling, but take it out for a purpose. Have some point on the order blank to refer to that has to do with the proposition and call attention to it. This gives you a logical reason for producing it.

Having done so let it lie in sight. The prospect becomes accustomed to seeing it without having a nightmare. When you have occasion to use it you are not creating the sensation you feel when a man draws a gun on you. It becomes a familiar object to him, as it has played a part in presenting the proposition.

You are selling on a minor point and when it is mentioned—delivery, payment plan, or the like—the order blank is in your hand. Note that point. This brings up two important things in closing the deal. One is, that you do the first writing on the order blank. If your contract has no provision for that in the form in which it is printed, either have your house change the form, or make a written notation or statement on some portion of the blank.

The other important fact is, that when the prospect permits you to make that entry it is a concession to the sale. You have saved him the necessity of saying that he would buy. You have managed the minor point in closing so skillfully that you have sold him almost before he knows it.

There is one thing more to do with the order blank: it requires the buyer's signature. You have filled in the details, but it is not an order until it is signed. More than one order has not been signed after the salesman had entered all the particulars of the sale.

The main reason, in many cases, was because of the manner in which he was asked to sign it. For instance, "Now, Mr. Brown, if you will sign your name here on the dotted line." That sounds to Brown so much like signing his death warrant or a formal legal document that it causes him to pause. He thinks of the care that should be taken in signing documents and contracts. He is a cautious fellow, so before he signs he reads it. There may be some clause that does not just strike him. The wording of the contract is a little out of the ordinary. There may be some requirement or condition, simple enough in itself, which makes him hesitate.

It is this hesitancy, this pause, that causes the mischief. On second thought he decides that he will pass up the proposition for the present. What was largely responsible for it was the manner in which he was asked to sign the contract. If after filling in the few items, you had turned over the blank, and in an off-hand way had said, "All right, Mr. Brown, if you will let us have your O. K.," he would have signed his name without hesitation or second thought.

Thus you will keep in mind the various points that bear directly upon the closing in connection with the handling of minor points. There are still several matters of importance that require attention.

The Sale That Closes Itself

You, no doubt, have had sales that closed themselves, but they may have been rare and exceptional. Get this fact clearly fixed, that, in the majority of cases, sales properly handled to the point of closing will close themselves.

If this is true, it will enable you to judge the skillfulness of your selling, as to whether this is a common or an exceptional experience with you.

We laid down the condition: *sales properly handled to the point of closing.* It is true that the majority of such sales close themselves. We have already analyzed such a sale when the prospect was brought to the point of closing, and by the skillful use of the minor point, without any break between the selling and the closing, the salesman had him falling in line with his assumption that the sale was made.

So much depends upon your mental attitude. It is the man who *knows* he is going to get the order who gets it.

He knows it not as a meaningless thing, or as boastfulness on his part. He knows it because he knows his salesmanship, and knows how the prospect responds to right appeals. It is an intelligent knowing, plus a positive mental attitude that backs it up. He knows the reasons why the prospect should give an order.

If you represent the opposite type of salesman the first thing you know you will be looking for reasons why the prospect should not give you an order. These can take such a firm hold on your mind that instead of contending with the prospect in making the sale you will be contending with yourself.

With these reasons why he should not buy uppermost in your mind, you will find it utterly impossible to sell. It becomes necessary for you to banish these negatives, to sweep your mind clear of all that rubbish, and get down to the business of selling your man on positive convictions.

When these have taken possession of you, you have met a most essential condition of handling the sale properly to the closing point, and when that happens the majority of the sales will close themselves. This is scientific salesmanship, and you can attain to it. We are talking to YOU when we say, *You can attain to it.* It is for you. Go after it and compel success.

The story is told of the salesman who never tried to get the patronage of a dealer because he knew he was a price-cutter. This fact got such a grip upon him that he laid it down as a sufficient reason why he could not sell him. His sales manager learned about this man and took his salesman to the place of business. The former had no trouble in selling him, and there was no price-cutting in the deal. For many months this salesman had lost business because he "thought backwards."

Factors That Determine Closing

Some other factors are important, especially in those situations in which negative attitudes on the part of the prospect appear.

Getting on the Customer's Side of the Fence

There is a point in your proposition in which your prospect is interested. You can intensify his interest by dwelling on that point, whereas you will only increase his lack of interest by talking up some point about which he cares little. That particular point of interest gives you a point of contact whereby you can get close to him. Anticipate and forestall possible objections to other points by emphasizing the points in which he is interested.

Complimenting the Prospect's Discrimination

He may take an opposing position. You are selling him stock, and he tells you what he thinks of stock propositions. What he thinks is not helping your sale. Listen to all he has to say. Let him have his inning. Give him interested and courteous attention.

This is your opportunity. "Mr. Brown, it is a satisfaction to meet a man of your discrimination who has an intelligent understanding of these things. We meet so many people who know nothing about things of this order. They cannot be appealed to with a really good thing, either because they know nothing about such things, or because they are ruled by an irrational prejudice. It is a pleasure to talk with a man of your intelligence, and it is on that account that you will appreciate the merits of our proposition."

See to it that the point which you are about to bring up will be easy for him to appreciate. When you put him on this pedestal he is not going to endanger his position in your estimation. You have given him a reputation that he must live up to, and he will give your statements the same courteous attention that you gave his. He may go so far as to compliment your proposition. You should know how to do the rest.

Putting Points Up to Him for Analysis

Let him do some of the work. A man is interested in and influenced by his own judgment of a thing. He will often go further than you do and offer something on his own account. That is your opportunity. You may sell him on that very point. He will not go back on his own judgment which has the effect of being an endorsement of your proposition. Make the most of this sales principle.

"You are an expert in this line, Mr. Jones; I want you to analyze these qualities." Point out some that will give him a lead. He will add more and comment upon them favorably rather than be caught in a mistake when you regard him as an "expert."

The Influence of Other Buyers

That a certain person or certain persons bought your product sometimes means more to a prospect than your own personal recommendations. These buyers may be an authority to him; he has confidence in their judgment; and since they have examined and purchased it the proposition must be all right.

This factor often takes another form. The reason why you sold that social leader was because you sold her rival in the social world. For a similar reason you sold your goods to the merchant—his competitor gave you an order.

In the one instance your sales to others established in the mind of the prospect the idea of values; in the other case it was a matter of competition. Thus, among others, keep in mind the four factors above named that enable you to close the deal.

HANDLING ADVERSE DECISIONS

If the only sales you make are those that come easily and that do not require skillful handling of difficult situations, in brief, sales that almost anyone could make, you have not advanced far in salesmanship.

To state it in the opposite way: If the sales that are beset with obstacles, those in which the prospect says, "I am not interested" or, "I will think it over," or, "Call and see me at a later date,"—sales in which indifference and apathy have to be turned into interest and enthusiasm —are the sales you invariably lose, you have not yet learned how to sell.

In this lesson we give special attention to the handling of adverse decisions.

Fearing These Decisions

Some salesmen have a "sinking spell" when the prospect says, "Your proposition does not appeal to me." A fear creeps over them and their heart begins to drop down to their boots. Their enthusiasm oozes out, apprehension grips them, and they start to put up their samples or pocket their prospectus.

In other words, they are afraid of adverse decisions. As soon as such decisions are uttered these weak-kneed salesmen consider them final. They can scarcely imagine a prospect being sold who takes that attitude. To them it is time to quit and hunt up another. This attitude grows on them until it becomes a disease; they can't stand up under it.

Fearing these adverse decisions they yield to them. The tendency of fear is always to seek a means of escape, to get away from the danger. Fear induces surrender. It unnerves you and makes you powerless.

The prospect often takes advantage of the timid salesman. It is a very difficult thing to hide fear from him. It has a way of expressing itself so that the prospect has no trouble in detecting it.

You will easily recall two types of salesmen who have interviewed you: one sold you and the other did not. The moment one of them stated his proposition you said, "I am not in the market, not interested, and you would only be wasting your time and mine." You saw the expression of dismay that came over his face which said, "The bottom has fallen out of the bucket." He took your words as final and a dismissal, and he bade you good day.

In all likelihood his approach was wrong; it gave you an advantage. The other man handling the same sort of proposition got a good start. His work was so efficient that you began to have the fear he would sell you. You were the one who was afraid, not he. You finally told him you could not consider his proposition, but he did not seem to hear you. He kept on sawing wood. He evidently did not take you seriously. After a while your resistance broke down, and you bought his product and were glad to do so.

It is a good thing to call to mind the various types of salesmen who have attempted to sell you. Why was it the one man succeeded and the other did not? It was not because of the proposition, but because of the salesmanship. The man who sold you his proposition could have sold you any of the others.

Instead of fearing these negative attitudes, regard them as a challenge to your salesmanship. It is a splendid opportunity for a battle of wits, with always the chance that you will win. The bigger the prospect and the more pronounced his opposition, the greater is the challenge, and the greater the victory when won. It increases confidence in yourself tenfold. The prospect of that kind of a fight does not upset a real man. Beating a hasty retreat takes away a man's sense of self-respect.

Here is a good prescription for this malady:

1. Expect adverse decisions. Do not be surprised when they arise. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.
2. Be thoroughly sold on your proposition, and realize that you are rendering the prospect a service.
3. Get the upper hand of yourself. There is nothing to be afraid of.
4. If the prospect says he is not interested, instead of letting your jaw drop, tell yourself, "It is up to me to interest him."
5. Apply the injunction of Lady Macbeth to Macbeth: "Screw your courage to the sticking-point."

Need of Nerve in Selling

Some salesmen are afflicted with an over-supply of sensitiveness. To disregard the "feelings" of the prospect is to them a sort of presumption, if not a discourtesy. Let the prospect plead inability to buy, and a salesman of that type begins sympathizing with him.

There is no presumption in using the nerve we are talking about. It is not discourtesy to refuse to be influenced by the adverse position of the prospect. Your sympathy would be a much finer type if you pointed the way out of his difficulty and got him to buy what you know would be a positive service to him.

Nerve is Not Bulldozing

Nerve is not running over people rough-shod. It is not a crude, clumsy battering down of the defenses of the prospect. It is not making sport of his scruples or objections.

That is not nerve. In many instances such conduct is nothing short of sheer indecency and coarseness. It only increases the antagonism of the prospect. Browbeating the customer will not get favorable results.

Nerve is Not Impoliteness

It frequently happens that the prospect is not overstocked with politeness. That does not justify the salesman in taking on the same manner. The man who has a fine quality of nerve, which is an essential element of a strong character, not only does not have to be impolite, but is an example of the reverse. It is the man who loses his nerve who becomes impolite. It is the man who lacks the right kind of nerve, self-possession, and self-control, who goes to pieces and forgets to be decent. Do not confuse nerve with these things.

Nerve is Not Undue Insistence

There is a right balance to be struck in selling. The intelligent, expert salesman knows when to press his proposition and when to quit. There are situations in which the best salesman cannot close. There are circumstances and conditions that cannot be altered. There are times when the prospect cannot buy.

In these situations the wise salesman does not take the ground that he knows more of the prospect's business than the prospect does himself. To be guilty of that presumption is "nerve" in the wrong use of the term.

There is a form of persistence that becomes perversity and is unreasonable. It is usually just as much of a fault as is lack of nerve. It is wholly out of order and succeeds only in exasperating the prospect. It reaches the point where the prospect has to say, "I have given you more time than I can afford; we will have to bring this interview to a close."

Nerve is Not Imposition

A man was ailing greatly and came to a physician. The doctor made a diagnosis of his case and wrote out a prescription. Instead of paying the doctor his fee he asked him to lend him the money to pay for the prescription. The doctor said, "Let me have that prescription; it is all wrong. It is a nerve prescription, but you have a lot of nerve."

The salesman must be on guard not to take advantage of courtesy and generosity on the part of the prospect. This may be done in various ways and is really an imposition. Because the customer is enthusiastic and buys is no reason why you should expect him to do you extreme favors.

It sometimes occurs in asking for leads. The prospect may have scruples along that line. He has given other salesmen leads with the express understanding that they should not use his name. In direct violation of his wishes and their promise the salesmen introduced themselves to the new prospects as being directly referred to them by a friend. The fact came to the latter's attention, so he decided that salesmen could not be trusted in this respect and refused to give any more leads.

You tell him you are not that kind of a salesman and that he should take your word for it. He took the other fellow's word for it. Your insistence becomes an imposition. You may go so far as to say to him that one who was so thoroughly sold on the proposition should be glad to commend it to others. You are taking advantage of his good will. It is asking the doctor to lend you the money to pay for his prescription.

When to Refuse to Be Turned Down

You need the right kind of nerve in closing. This nerve is an antidote for nervousness. It is this nervousness with which the salesman is too often afflicted when he comes to close. When in that state of mind, which he invariably makes apparent, it is easy for the prospect to turn him down. One reason why he is nervous is because he expects to be turned down, and he usually gets what he expects or is looking for.

Many of the "reasons" for not buying are only excuses and expedients to get rid of you. You have not found the point of contact by which to arouse the interest of the prospect. It lies somewhere in your proposition. Stay by your prospect and find the point of contact.

The average salesman is too easily turned down. Your proposition may be the very thing the prospect needs, but you must transform his need into a want. It may be because he has confidence in you as a salesman that he attempts to turn you down. He is afraid you will sell him and he does not want to buy.

In such a case it is a compliment to your salesmanship; you might be tempted to give up with the feeling that your salesmanship is inefficient.

You need the right kind of nerve to overcome sensitiveness—the nerve that says "all things come to him who works and waits"; the nerve that says, "faint heart ne'er won fair lady"; the nerve that says, "repulse is not defeat"; the nerve that says, "I will find the thing that will smoke him out."

Making the Sale and Getting a Customer

In supplying the trade a sale is more than one sale. It is the beginning of sales and of permanent patronage. Everything depends on that one first sale. It means the getting of a customer. The conditions are ripe for turning the buyer's attention to your house. You please him, and you satisfy him as to the quality of your goods and the service you render.

The contrary is equally true—losing a sale may be losing a customer. You lose much more than that one sale. It terminates all future business relations. The conditions may be favorable, and your goods may be all right. You fail to touch it off right at some point. You may have disgusted him by "knocking" your competitors. He was one of those men who take the ground that when a man goes out of his way to knock competing goods the competitor's line must be very good, otherwise the knocker would not be so afraid of it.

The wise salesman in selling a new customer realizes that in making that sale he is making many more; that the sale in itself amounts to little, but as determining future business, it is of supreme importance. In every such instance your first sale is getting or losing a customer.

A Link in an Endless Chain

You may be handling a single sale specialty, an investment, a training course, an automobile accessory, or fireless cooker. The likelihood of future sales to the same customer is remote.

A sale under those conditions may not be the beginning of continuous patronage, except in the matter of service rendered or parts supplied, but that sale well made is just as important to the salesman as in the former case.

Specialty sales are frequently built on man-to-man recommendation—a satisfied customer telling his friend and suggesting to you that you call and see him.

In the one case it is the beginning of permanent business relations, in the other it is forging a link in an endless chain of satisfied customers.

AT WHAT POINT THE SALE IS LOST OR WON

The accompanying chart gives an analysis of making the sale. Note the question "At What Point the Sale is Lost or Won" occupies the central position in the chart, and how it runs through the whole procedure.

If this were put as a question to salesmen it would be answered in various ways. One man would say, "I lose or win the sale in the presentation"; another would say, "I lose my sales in closing the deal." The tendency on the part of many salesmen is to divorce the closing from what preceded.

The Selling Process is a Unit

The selling process is a whole and not several things detached and separated. It has various selling talks, but they are logically related. They all contribute to the one end in view.

The expert salesman understands this unity. There is no separate act of closing the deal as is conceived by many salesmen. That is, it does not stand apart from the whole procedure. Everything flows into it, and it depends upon the entire selling process.

In the majority of instances the sale was lost or won all the way along. The sale was not properly built. It created too little interest, left too much in doubt, did not create desire, and, hence, there was nothing to close.

The sale may have been lost in the approach. It did not arouse curiosity, or it may have aroused it and then exhausted it. It did not get the right start and that prejudiced what followed.

It may have been lost at the close of the first talk. Instead of closing, as you might have done, you kept on selling.

It may have been lost at the close of the second talk. for the same reason; too much selling and too little closing.

On the other hand, it may have been won at any of these points. The approach put the prospect in the right frame of mind for your explanation of the proposition. At the end of that talk he was ready to buy and you closed him. Or, you may have sold him by the demonstration of your goods, which, again, was based upon the facts set forth by explanation.

In any case, closing was organically related to what preceded. From what has been said, it will be seen that you may have interested the prospect and could have sold him, but you fell down in saying the wrong things in the closing and opened up for him a way of escape.

You Failed to Close on That One Call

It was a one-call proposition. You allowed the prospect to switch you off by asking you to call again.

The manager of a life insurance company had one of his salesmen sell him a policy. The salesman made a splendid presentation. It was effective in every particular and well calculated to close a prospect. The manager, who was the prospect for the time being, said, "I am very much interested and am going to give serious attention to what you have said. Won't you call at my office on Tuesday morning at 10:30?"

The salesman was very much elated. When he came to the office the manager said, "I now see why you are losing so many sales. Your method of selling is excellent, but at the point where you should close the deal you allow yourself to be switched off to another call. Second calls bring such a small percentage of sales that it is seldom wise to make them. You do not plan to close the deal on that one call and you expect to be asked to call again. By the time you return the interest has passed away, and your prospect is in a different mood. He tells you he has thought the matter over and has decided to let it ride for the present. Nothing you can do will get him back to his former interest; at least it will not occur in five per cent of such instances, if it will run that high."

Get the order on the first call. The deferred order is the competitor's opportunity. You plant the seed and cultivate it, and he reaps the harvest.

A salesman selling a popcorn machine failed to close the deal and was told to come back in a few days. When he returned he saw another salesman just taking the customer's order. When the latter came out the disappointed salesman said, "I guess there is no use waiting; he practically promised me that order." The other replied, "Tough luck, my friend, but always bag your game when you shoot it."

At what point is the sale lost or won? At the first opportunity for closing, in scores of instances. You could have won it on the first call, but you lost it on the second. On one-call propositions, back-calls are invariably a waste of time and effort. Some houses make it a rule, not to be violated under any circumstances, to make but ONE call on a prospect. The few instances in which the back call will get the order can never balance the losses due to the salesman not getting the order on the first call, and allowing himself to be induced to call again.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Proficiency lies in doing our work in the easiest, quickest and best possible way. Thus we save unnecessary effort, time and mistakes. Your work in the end may be well done, but it may be you have not learned how to economize labor and time.

I. Encouraging and aiding decision.

1. In what two ways can you stimulate enthusiasm?
2. When does the salesman make it hard for the prospect to refuse?
3. State some of the minor points on which propositions can be closed?
4. What must be assumed by the salesman throughout the sales talk?
5. There are four important factors in closing. Can you give them?

II. Handling adverse decisions.

1. How are some salesmen affected by these decisions?
2. What are the four things that nerve is not?
3. What should the right kind of nerve do for the salesman?

III. At what point the sale is lost or won.

1. Is there usually some such point?
2. Is the sale more likely to be lost or won throughout the selling procedure?

PRACTICAL TALKS SERIES

INDUCING CHOICE

PRACTICAL TALKS SERIES

INDUCING CHOICE

A hog is one of the hardest things to drive to market—
An Irishman was leading a drove of them to town—
It was not according to precedent—
Neither was Pat—
He had a string of beans between him and the hogs.

IT IS a matter of inducing. You cannot compel people to choose. When compelled it becomes a necessity which kills the essential element of choice.

Some salesmen come at the prospect with a club. It might work in the case of a few imbeciles, but you can't scare many people into buying.

Did you ever go at a prospect in such a way that he got the impression you were going to draw a gun on him? If so, don't be surprised to see him duck or make a move for his hip pocket.

Satisfying a temporary need or pleasure led a prospect to pass up your proposition that appealed to a higher and more permanent self-interest. You could not sell your stronger and better reasons and appeals.

Inducing choice is a process of overcoming the strongest alternative. If there is no other alternative there is always that of not buying.

Are you good at handling a balanced situation? You know what it is; it has often called out all the finesse of your salesmanship.

A balanced situation is when the reasons and impulses for not accepting your proposition are about as strong as are your appeals to do so. The two are about evenly balanced.

It is a good deal like walking a tight rope. Just throw yourself a little out of balance and down you go.

You cannot induce that one to choose, or place him in a position to decide, until you throw this situation out of balance.

This is a critical moment, and it is right here that you fail in many business deals. It is the fellow who knows how to tilt the scales at this point, that outweighs the resistance with strong reasons and impelling motives for buying, who shows his master business ability.

It takes only the right appeal to put the scales out of balance. You may remember the time when you dropped into your side of the scales an appeal to gain when you should have made it a domestic appeal. It brought you no positive advantage.

If you do such a foolish thing as to play the king when you should know your opponent holds the ace you have deliberately lost the trick. If you watched his plays more carefully you would have known his hand.

A motive is a spring of action. There can be no choice unless the motive is sufficiently strong to induce it by eliminating the other motives to the contrary.

That is simple enough. The problem lies in discovering that motive. You found that motive when you put across a deal, and fell down when you used the same motive on another. In the case of the latter it was not a spring of action.

The prospect will do what you want him to, if you make him want to do it. Your reasons are clear; you want the order. What reasons could he have for buying?

People are like flies; you cannot catch them with vinegar. If you are to succeed in inducing them to choose you must hold out to them the agreeable and advantageous.

SELF-QUIZ

1. Do I avoid arguing with my customer?
2. Do I enthuse over my product and carry the same enthusiasm to my customer?
3. Do I suggest ideas to him in order to make it easier for him to make a favorable decision?
4. Do I analyze my sales talk so as to determine my weaknesses as well as my strong points?
5. Do I have a few clinching, forceful statements concerning my product which I can use to bring the prospect to a decision?
6. Do I plan my sale so as not to give my prospect an opportunity to say "No" and thus end the interview?
7. Do I constantly assume that my prospect will buy, thus making it difficult for him to refuse?
8. Do I follow up my assumption that he will buy by writing on the order blank and making it easy for him to follow my example?
9. Do I impress upon my customer the value of my proposition so he will not have to be sold on the price?
10. Do I carry a cheerful, positive manner even though the prospect gives an unfavorable decision?

SECTION III

CLOSING ON TWO OR THREE-CALL PROPOSITION

CLOSING ON TWO OR THREE CALL PROPOSITION

CONTRASTED WITH THE FORMER

Selling the Prospect the Idea.
- The idea essential to the sale.

Time for Consideration.
- The prospect unsettled.

THE FIRST CALL

The Salesman's Personality.
- How it affects the prospect.

Treated as the Only Call.
- A matter of explanation.
- Watching for closing opening.

Allowing for Future Call.
- The likelihood of another call.

Use of Literature.
- Appropriate to the first call.

FOLLOWING CALLS

Use of the Card System.
- A record of each call.

Prompt Follow-Up.
- Time diminishes interest
- Buying competitor's proposition.

The New Approach.
- The way to lose ground.
- Presenting a new point.

New Selling Points.
- Introducing new material. Linking the new with the old.

CLOSING THE DEAL

The Climax of All That Preceded.
Closing on a Minor Point.
Assuming he Will Buy. Usual Principles of Closing.

SECTION III

CLOSING ON TWO OR THREE-CALL PROPOSITION

THERE are propositions that ordinarily do not close on the first call. This is a vastly different situation and calls for a careful consideration of certain elements in handling the prospects and in presenting the proposition.

You will sell your check-protector on one call or not at all. This is true of practically all one-call propositions. But it is not true, as a rule, in selling a house and lot, appraisal service, and other things of that class. This line of selling requires special attention.

CONTRASTED WITH THE FORMER

As already noted, there should not, as a rule, be a second call on a one-call proposition. If not sold at the first call there is very little hope of selling the prospect on another call. A two or three-call proposition is, in the nature of the case, different in this regard. The first call does not usually close the deal.

Selling the Prospect the Idea

The proposition may be of such a nature that the first call can do little more than set forth the general idea of it. It would not be wise to use more of the prospect's time. If he were required to buy on that call the sale would, in most instances, be lost.

The proposition may involve a considerable amount of money. The greater the investment, the greater the care the prospect will exercise in considering it.

It may have so many angles to it that in the first call you cannot do more than to state your case. Some of the angles may not be considered at all, or may not be more than merely intimated.

The prospect must be sold the idea. It may be something to which he had given little or no attention. When you come to the prospect with a vacuum cleaner you are presenting a simple and well-known machine. It is now commonly used and is beyond the stage of introduction. The points of merit are quite well understood. The idea is simple and commends itself at once. It is made to sell itself by demonstration; the prospect sees it do the work. The amount of money involved in purchasing it is comparatively small. The prospect is ordinarily sold on the idea before it is presented and has a general notion of the value of the article.

The same is not true of the type of proposition now under consideration. You must get the prospect sold on the idea before you can sell him the thing. He may know very little about it and has given it slight attention, if any. It may be an automobile. He never considered that he needed one and has never been interested along that line. The investment of that much money would not trouble him.

You must sell him the idea and place him in a favorable attitude of mind. He has got along without it, not needing it in his business, and has never looked at it from those angles in which it is capable of rendering him a personal service.

If you were to attempt to sell a piano to a person who never even thought of buying one, and to whom a piano would be a foreign idea, the first thing that must be done is to sell the idea. It may require two or more calls to make that sale.

Time for Consideration

On the one-call proposition asking for time to think about it is usually a convenient way of getting rid of the salesman. But in the case under consideration, even though you sell the prospect the idea, you cannot sell him the proposition until he has had time to go into it more fully.

In many instances your first call does not even succeed in getting the prospect sold on the idea. You leave him in a very unsettled state of mind. You have put it before him and started him thinking. Between this call and the next he will have to think it over and come to a favorable attitude.

You can see how different this is from the one-call proposition. In the one instance, time for reflection means to forget about it, in the other, it is a necessity for an understanding of the proposition and an appreciation of its value.

In this class of propositions you cannot sell the prospect more than one thing at a time. To get the idea across is a big gain. There may be so many facts to consider and the investment may be so large, that to reach any sober conclusion as to buying will require another call or two more.

We are not now so much concerned with the selling process as such, and the ideas presented are only to make possible the right setting for closing purposes.

The Salesman's Personality

The personality of the salesman is a vital factor in selling any kind of a proposition, but particularly when so much is involved as to the number of calls and the amount of time to be spent with the prospect.

By personality is meant those qualities of the salesman that render him agreeable to the prospect. One can easily imagine how in selling a one-call proposition, which may occupy but a few minutes' time, an unpleasant personality may not entirely kill the sale if the proposition makes a strong appeal, while the same thing would not be true if the prospect had to deal with him several times. It may seriously stand in the way of a second call.

Treated as the Only Call

The salesman can make a great mistake in thinking of his initial call wholly in the light of other calls to be made, and, consequently, drop down in his selling efficiency. Handle it as if it were the only call. Allow no slack, thinking it can be gathered up in other interviews. Influenced by that idea you will fail to use the proper pressure and will not drive home your points.

This call takes the form largely of explanation. Make it in the same way as though you were selling a one-call proposition. Explanation is designed to create interest which may, during this talk, be carried to the point of desire.

Never lose sight of the important principle of salesmanship: Whenever the prospect is ready to buy stop selling and close him.

You do not know the possible attitude of the prospect to your proposition. He may be in the market for that very thing. He may be already sold on the idea, so that much of your task has been performed. You may have some other salesman to thank for that.

You may be selling him an automobile that ordinarily would require two or three calls. He is thinking of purchasing one and your call is very timely. You catch him in the buying mood. It is simply a question of which car to buy. Here is a golden opportunity for your salesmanship.

Assuming that these are the circumstances as you come to the prospect, and that you are making the mistake of not treating this as if it were the only call, you can readily see that you will not present the facts with a view to closing the deal. You may sidetrack yourself, and spend your time trying to sell him the idea, the thing upon which he is already sold.

You are violating the primary principles of selling. After giving the prospect a talk that interests him in a general way on the proposition you may say to him, "This is our proposition, Mr. Brown," or, "You can see from what I have said what a value this would be to you. I will not take up more of your time now, but I want you to think it over, and I will be in to see you in a few days."

In many instances that prospect could be sold on that one call, since his interest in your proposition had reached the closing stage, because of his having thought about the matter before you saw him. You made the mistake of not treating this as if it were the only call. This call should be managed as if it were the only one, even though you were well aware of the fact that other calls may need to be made.

This keeps you in the right selling trim and increases the enthusiasm of the prospect. You have thus laid the groundwork for what is to follow; otherwise you come to the second call under the disadvantage of not having sufficiently keyed up the interest of the prospect.

Allowing for Future Calls

If possible, get your point of contact during this first call. Do the same as you would do with a one-call proposition, i. e., assume that your prospect will buy. Put buying suggestions into his mind. This is especially important in handling this kind of a proposition, since some time will elapse before you will see him again. The impression that he now gets must carry him over the intervening time.

You are keeping this opportunity in mind in allowing for future calls. You are laying the foundation for your second interview. You are not trying to cover all the points of your proposition in this first talk; there are other things to be brought forward in the next which will increase his interest by making new appeals.

Finding his special interest—the point of contact—not only enables you to make the right application of your sales talk, but opens the way for you to close the deal on this first call. It is not likely that you will close then, a fact that you understand and have taken into account, but you are treating this call as if it were the only one. Put over that part of your talk which you are using in this first call, not as a preliminary affair, but as if it were your only chance to get a decision.

On the other hand, have your sales talk organized with reference to further interviews. Have a carefully planned line of action.

Use of Literature

Before the second call is made get literature on your proposition in the hands of your prospect. Select it carefully so as to intensify the impression already made. You know what has been presented thus far, and your literature should have a close relation to the points you left in his mind.

See to it that there is an outstanding fact that will catch and hold his attention. It is a silent salesman supplementing your salesmanship. It may be that your man needs an attractive picture of riding through the country. For just such a purpose he is contemplating buying a car. You found that this was a point of contact for your prospect who is confined to an office.

All of which has but one objective, the closing of the deal. Your success will depend upon the way you plan and carry on your selling procedure. If each step in the sale is not properly conducted there will be little hope of closing him.

FOLLOWING CALLS

Follow-up calls sustain the same relation to each other as do the sales talks of a one-call proposition. Your first talk does not exhaust your material and is concerned with one thing. Have the same clearness of purpose in making two or three calls, if you expect to build up in the mind of the prospect a strong appreciation of your proposition.

Use of the Card System

Do not depend upon your memory to keep the facts pertaining to each prospect clearly in mind. You are calling on too many, and you will get them confused.

Date the call made, indicate the date of the next call, and file the card accordingly. Make a record of the important points of the interview, what you did, the prospect's attitude, and his special interest in your proposition.

By this means you know how far that sale has proceeded, and can plan definitely your next talk. The card system is the most effective method by which you can handle a two or three-call proposition; it will keep you from making useless mistakes which may be very expensive.

Prompt Follow-Up

Do not allow too much time to intervene between the first and second calls. A week is better than two weeks. With the increase of time there will be a diminishing interest. The shorter the time, the better the interest is sustained and the easier it is increased.

There should be a prompt follow-up in the succeeding calls, for another special reason. On your first call you sold the prospect the idea, so another salesman is liable to come along and sell him the article or service. The work of your first call was simply missionary work in the interests of the competitor. He came to the soil you planted and cultivated, and reaped the harvest.

That happens every day. Your first call interested a prospect in an appraisal of his establishment. This is a two, three, or four-call proposition. You may have stirred him up in regard to his income tax. On the returns he sent in his tax was too high. You hold out to him the hope of a rebate. Or the interest developed may have been along the line of present values, replacement values, and insurance.

"Suppose, Mr. Brown, this section of your plant suffered loss by fire. It would be necessary for you to know everything it contains and the replacement values to be put upon the items. Our appraisal does not lump values, but itemizes them. It is arranged in sections, and our figures stand with any insurance company."

He has never had an appraisal, and you have sold him the idea. He realizes the value of having his properties appraised at their exact value for the reasons that you have pointed out.

It makes no difference how well he may have been sold on the idea, the longer you wait before making that second call the less likely you are to find that interest alive when you return.

You told him you would see him again in about two weeks. A week after this call the salesman of another appraisal company comes along. He is a good salesman and represents an older company and shows him a list of prominent patrons. He points out one fact you would have stated next time, i. e., that the cost of the appraisal is an item of expense that is included in making up the tax returns. This first call of this salesman has the effect of the second call you would make.

Your prospect does not want to complicate things too much in having two salesmen on the job, and being pleased with the manner in which this competitor has gone more thoroughly into the matter, he simplifies the transaction by giving him the contract. Do not let the other man beat you to it.

The New Approach

In making the second call the approach is of vital importance. You may lose the sale at that point by giving the prospect the opportunity of voicing an adverse decision.

You expect him to be in the frame of mind in which you left him on the previous call. He may prove to be some distance from that mental state. You are in somewhat the same situation as is the salesman of the one-call proposition who has finished his selling talk and who hesitates before coming to the closing.

There is a break, and he is liable to do what we have already set forth: he asks the prospect a question that opens up a way of escape. In like manner, there is a break because this is your second call.

When you meet the prospect for this second interview you say, "Well, Mr. Brown, you have probably been thinking over the matter of an appraisal, and I am sure the more you have thought of it the more you realize what a necessity it is."

You have started off on the wrong foot and have gone lamely into the second talk. There is practically no difference between this and the question so often asked at the point of closing: "This is our proposition, Mr. Jones, and you want me to put you down, do you not?"

The way was opened for a negative decision, and that is what you have done at the opening of the second call. You are not ready to close the deal, but you have given Brown the chance to say, "Yes, I have been thinking over the matter and we have decided to let it ride for the present. We may be in the market for just such a thing in about six months, but we are not in a position to consider it now."

You lost ground, and lost your sale, at the point of approach. You practically unsold him on the idea. This is the danger point in all such propositions requiring more than one call.

In the follow-up be sure to bring to your prospect a new point and thus prevent a break, in the same manner that you pass from the selling to the closing without indicating the fact you are now about to close. Your prospect was interested in the appraisal from the point of view of income tax. You open up your second talk with a new thing. "Have you taken care of the 80% clause of your insurance policy, Mr. Brown?"

He may have decided not to go further with your proposition, and had you given him any chance of doing so by asking the question first mentioned, he would have turned it down. You have now steered him away from that rock and have put a new idea into his mind.

He says, "They have looked after that matter of insurance." You ask him on what basis they figured the 80%. You have a strangle hold on him for this second interview. He is ready to let you talk.

If you had given him the opportunity of expressing an adverse decision, it is a serious question whether you could have recovered ground by raising even as important a point as this. It is not simply the fact that he had decided to turn you down, but that you *allowed him to state it.* It is that situation that plays the mischief.

The expert way in which you handled your approach on that second call prevented a break. This approach stands in the same relation to what has already taken place that the closing of the deal does to what preceded it. In other words, there is no break; and it is the break that breaks the sale.

New Selling Points

Go over your record of the first call before making the next one to see what you did, what points you made, and how you left the prospect. If you want this second call to be lacking in force and new interest all you have to do is to harp on the things you have already told him. You allowed for this second call when you made your first presentation and did not use up all your ammunition.

You may introduce the new material by making a simple statement: "I don't think I mentioned in our first interview that in the event of fire we take care of the whole matter for you with the insurance company. Even if your appraisal records were destroyed we have a duplicate copy."

"Speaking of the record, let me show you the work we did for the firm of Smith & Company. You will note these plats which give every section of that plant, and any portion of it can be identified and estimated if but that portion suffered loss by fire or otherwise."

Link up this new matter with what you set forth in the first call. This gives your former statement a new setting and new force. It ceases to be mere repetition and takes on an added interest. He appreciates the facts more fully in this new setting than he did before.

The important thing is to have new selling points for each call, as well as a new approach. The literature you sent him between the calls may furnish you a good starting point. He may not have read it, or may not have grasped its full import. Put new life into it, and the next piece of printed matter you send him he may examine more carefully.

CLOSING THE DEAL

When you reach the closing point your line of action is the same as when closing on a one-call proposition. It is the climax of all that preceded. You should not do it in any different way. The principles are the same in both cases. The fact that it took two or three interviews to sell him makes no difference. It may be the third call in which you have brought the selling to an end.

You close on a minor point, as in the other instance. Your prospect may become interested, on account of some favoring circumstance, at an early stage in the selling process. When he is ready to buy, stop selling and start closing. Do not expect to go any further, or have in mind another interview, any more than you would go into demonstration on a one-call proposition if your prospect was ready to buy at the close of explanation.

You have assumed at various points that he would buy. Keep up the assumption at the closing point when you close him on terms of payment, or time, or whatever the minor point may be. The principles laid down in this section apply specifically to certain classes of propositions.

What has been carefully set before you in the closing of the deal is a vital factor in salesmanship. It should enable you to see whether you have been expert or otherwise in this part of your work. It may be you thought too much about the close; that it frightened you and disqualified you to act in a skillful manner.

It may be you did not close soon enough and talked the prospect out of the notion of buying. It may surprise you to find how you have lost sales by asking questions that appeared to you perfectly right and proper. Again, your sales have been lost, perhaps, because you never understood the use of minor points.

You now have the matter well in hand, and it is up to you to make full application of the principles. The examples given will enable you to follow easily the right method of procedure. In the last analysis the character and success of your salesmanship will be determined by the deals you close.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Some people learn very quickly; others require more time and do more plodding. It may not take you long to grasp a point, but you may not retain it as well as you get it. Be sure that your memory is not a sieve.

I. Closing on the two kinds of propositions contrasted.

1. What should the salesman sell the prospect on the first call?
2. How may the sale be lost between the first and second call?
3. While allowing for future calls, how should he treat each call? How can he help along the selling between calls?

II. Following calls.

1. In what way is the card system indispensable in selling a two or three-call proposition?
2. How long time should elapse between the first and second or second and third calls?
3. What special importance attaches to the new approach in making the second and third calls?
4. What kind of an approach on the second call might kill the sale?
5. What principle must be observed in making those new approaches?
6. Should each call bring forward new selling points?

PRACTICAL TALKS SERIES

IMPELLING ACTION

PRACTICAL TALKS SERIES

IMPELLING ACTION

If Shakespeare were to apply one line of all of his writings to an immense amount of present day selling,
It would be—
"Love's Labor Lost."

WHEN does the prospect start to act? When the salesman really starts to sell.

There is a lot of talking that is not selling, and a lot of so-called selling that is not salesmanship.

When do you expect the prospect to act? What you expect has a lot to do with it. Some salesmen expect nothing. They probably go on the assumption that they are saving themselves a disappointment.

You can slip a cog at the beginning that will interfere with the gearing throughout the sale. The deal could not be properly closed because the sale was not properly opened.

The trouble is that many prospects are ready to buy long before the salesman is ready to quit talking. You know what happens when the salesman is "through" and now thinks it is time to close.

Did you ever keep a prospect waiting for you to come up for air? You got so deep into your proposition that he kept saying to himself, "He surely can't breathe down there much longer."

At what point is the sale lost or won? At all points. You are losing or closing the deal all the way along. Did you think there was just one point in the selling process where you induced the prospect to act? No wonder you get so few of them to do so.

When does the flower start to bloom? When the seed is properly planted under right conditions.

The keystone unites and holds both sections of the arch. You couldn't form the arch without allowing for the keystone.

If you are surprised when you make the sale you never assumed at any point you would make it. You unconsciously intimated to the prospect that you had no expectation of making the sale.

Was the closing of the deal, in any instance, of such a shock to you that you looked at the prospect to see if he were joking?

Have you come to the close with so much fear and trembling that instead of impelling action, the prospect thought he would have to get the smelling salts?

Wake up, man, get a move on! Do some acting yourself. The thing is contagious. We don't race horses at a funeral. Act like a live man. No man of spirit wants to follow a hearse.

Never ask a prospect if he wants to act. That is what you do when you ask him if he doesn't want to buy. When you gave him such a fine chance to say "No" why were you so surprised when he took advantage of it?

You got action all right, but in the wrong direction. You then tried to get him to change his mind when it was the thing you did that led him to make up his mind. Fine business, isn't it?

If you want a man to act in a given way, give him the right reasons or inducements for doing so.

When you have talked the prospect to death you have buried the sale. It is only a waste of time spending another twenty minutes trying to revive your corpse.

When desire is hot proceed to close on the Law of Assumption. Without asking him to buy, gain his approval on some minor point; assume he has decided to place the order and fix the details. "Yes" is sometimes easier to imply than to say.

SELF-QUIZ

1. Do I analyze my goods or service in order to determine the amount of time I should spend with my prospects?
2. On a one-call proposition, do I organize my sales talk and closing methods so as to obtain a decision on first interview?
3. Do I carry my selling talk as far as possible on each interview on a proposition requiring repeated calls?
4. Do I realize that a sale unduly rushed to a decision on the first call may be lost?
5. Do I place my prospect in a favorable frame of mind for further development of my proposition?
6. Do I realize the value of a pleasing personality and make my interviews so agreeable that there will be plenty of opportunity for return calls?
7. Do I make my sale a one-call proposition when possible?
8. Do I send my prospect information and literature concerning my goods or service so as to acquaint him with all details before making my second call?

9. Do I have a well-organized plan for following up my prospects on the dates arranged for by previous calls?
10. Do I go over my previous sales talk and look for new selling points for my next call so as to have a new interest for my customer?

SECTION IV

CLOSING A GROUP SALE

CLOSING A GROUP SALE

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

- Psychology of Selling the Individual.
  - Dealing with a single mind.
  - Attention not scattered and confused.
  - Can direct his mental tendencies.

GROUP OF UNRELATED UNITS

- How Brought Together.
  - Accidentally.
  - By pre-arrangement.
  - Not related by common interests.
- Selling the Group.
  - The selling process-creating interest, conviction, desire.
  - Must control the situation.
  - Talking to different types.
    - Maintaining a proper balance.
- Selling Individuals of the Group.
  - Selling the group through certain members.
  - Discovering the leaders.
  - Playing one against another.
- Selling All or Some.
  - How all may be sold.
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- Psychology of the Group.
  - "Mob Psychology." Tactics of the mob leader.
  - Getting the group to think as one man.
  - Need of analysis, adjustment, manipulation.

GROUP OF RELATED UNITS

- Getting Access to Individuals.
  - A Service To Employees.
    - Selling the firm on the proposition.
    - Employees a part of the business.
  - A Service to the Business.
    - Larger returns to the house.
    - Fitting employees for better positions.
- A Corporate Interest.
  - Selling Individuals.
    - Prior to the meeting.
    - As individuals are sold.
  - Selling Them Collectively.
    - Directing the procedure. Handling aggressive members.
  - Selling the Silent Members.
    - Those who do not engage in the discussion.
    - Winning their interest and support.

SECTION IV

CLOSING A GROUP SALE

WE HAVE, in the main, been dealing with individual prospects. The majority of things sold are sold to individuals and not to people collectively. That is true of one-call propositions and many that require two or more calls.

It may be necessary to make two or three calls in selling an automobile or a home but ordinarily it is one person who is sold.

There are those situations in which the proposition must be presented to a group of men. They are equally interested, because equally involved; they have equal rights and responsibilities in the matter. No one person can decide the matter. In a case of this sort you have no choice—you must sell all, or at least the majority of those interested.

There are other situations in which the proposition may be accepted or rejected by each individual in the group as measured by his own personal interests irrespective of the other members, but where the attitude of the other members will have a strong influence on the individual's own decision.

Still other situations call not only for group decisions but for group action and co-operation. If a man were presenting a proposition that appealed equally to all members of a community, or their representatives, the favorable decision of the majority would turn the sale, even against the vigorous protests of the minority.

If the salesman is selling a product for individual service or consumption, any individual member of the group could say Yes or No, and in that respect his decision would be final. However, if the majority of the members, or even a few of the leaders, took a negative attitude towards the proposition, it is not likely that many of the individuals would have the courage to back up their own personal judgment and buy the proposition in the face of possible ridicule or adverse opinion of the majority.

In any case the psychology of the group must be carefully considered. You never know at what moment you may be called upon to present your proposition or defend your decision before a crowd. There is scarcely a week in any man's life when he does not have the opportunity, if he wishes, to get up before a group of his fellows and exercise his persuasive powers towards a group decision. And therein lies the test of his leadership.

If it is the usual thing in your line to talk to a group, through experience and training you will become an expert in "handling the ropes," and to sell several will be as easy as selling individuals.

If this is the exception, or at least not the usual thing, you are more liable to fall down. It may be a very important deal you are trying to close; group selling makes upon you demands of a peculiar nature, different from those in selling the individual prospect.

At first you may avoid selling a group, on general principles, as the process in handling an individual is much simpler than that of trying to sell several people at the same time. When you have acquired the fine art of handling a group successfully, there is no limit to the opportunities for advancement that will come to you.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

It is necessary that we have clearly in mind the difference between selling the individual and selling the group. We must see in what respects they differ and what they have in common.

Psychology of Selling the Individual

In selling the individual the process is simplified because you are dealing with one mind. There is but one person to study. He may have his peculiarities and complexities, but they are those of a single individual. They can be harmonized and kept in control.

Your entire attention is centered on him. It is not scattered and confused. You are adjusting yourself to a single nature, and to the interests of an individual more or less consistent.

Again, you can direct the thought and mental tendencies of the individual. They move in a given line. He is influenced by certain appeals, and your whole selling process can be directed to a point. You can adapt yourself to his moods and play up to his personal susceptibilities.

When you come to close the deal you know definitely his interests. Certain things about the proposition did not interest him. You are selling him on what he sees in it that he wants to buy.

Thus, there are no conflicting elements foreign to himself. You are handling a single problem that lies within the range of one life and its interests.

Psychology of the Group

The study of the action of the group mind and the means of influencing it are sometimes spoken of as "mob psychology." In the group the individual is placed under totally different conditions and can be led to act in a way that he would never act by himself.

You have seen the mob leader work up the feelings of a crowd. He excites their passions to get them to act in unison. Carried away by certain appeals they act as one man. In order to accomplish this the speaker arouses their feelings along one line that will meet with a uniform response. Many different things are not introduced since that provides a danger of creating too many different opinions which would be fatal to united action.

You have seen cooler heads in a mob advising against a rash or ill-advised proceeding. They counseled sobriety, calmness, and sober measures. How well they succeeded depended largely upon the character of the mob, its intelligence, passions, prejudices, and the manner in which the leader got it lined up with his views.

It is quite another problem to deal with a smaller group with vastly different interests. Its members may have one or two things in common, but there is a likelihood of disagreement, and the individuality of the members is more likely to assert itself.

In this situation you are not directing the processes of a single mind. To get the individuals to think as one man in favor of what you have to present is the end in view, but to be able to do so is another matter. You are analyzing a group and not simply an individual. You are trying to get a number of minds to follow the same channel, and to become equally well sold on the one thing.

We must clearly realize the difference, what each situation involves and requires, and the way in which mental forces act and react in the one case as they do not in the other.

You may be expert in handling one prospect and find yourself quite at sea in dealing with several. It is a question of analysis, adjustment and manipulation.

GROUP OF UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS

The mob is usually a group of unrelated individuals. They may be unacquainted with each other and have nothing in common but the particular thing that now interests them. There is nothing very organic about it. At all other points the individuals are unrelated and have nothing to do with each other.

How Brought Together

They may not have been brought together as a group. They came together accidentally without plan or purpose, as far as you and your proposition are concerned.

You are selling a prospect and two or three people drop in during the interview, and may in a general way become interested. It frequently happens that the salesman calling on one prospect finds one or more others present. He would rather have only the one whom he really came to sell, but he cannot avoid having more present who join the circle.

On the other hand, it may be arranged to interview a group. You may be selling a course of instruction to a young man. He says, "Several friends of mine may be interested in this thing. If they are sold your proposition it may be an advantage to form a study circle. In that way we would get more out of the course. I will see them, and we will come together tonight at my home."

These individuals are in no way connected by a common interest that would affect their attitude towards your proposition. Some may and some may not buy. It is an individual affair. They may all buy and not form a study circle, but each do his own work in his own way. The circle idea does not necessarily affect individual sales, and yet the formation of a study group may be a strong factor in inducing others to take up the work. Most men like to follow the leadership of others, and all are influenced more or less by the social appeal.

In any case, here they are and you have a psychological condition that does not exist when you are selling them separately.

Selling the Group

As far as the selling procedure is concerned, you must sell the group as if there was but one person present. You will follow the regular lines of the sale. This will not be disturbed in the least by the mere fact of the number of prospects.

Their curiosity has already been aroused, and you must satisfy it by explanation. They must know the facts before they can decide anything regarding them. If it were left to them they would say, "Give us the facts of the proposition." That is a matter of explanation and is fundamental to everything that follows.

It may be an unusual circle in that they are all ambitious along that line, have thought about it, and have been waiting for just such an opportunity. You may close them to a man at the close of your explanation.

That would be exceptional, however. A number of people are not likely to have such uniformity of interests. Some one is going to differ or argue the point. In any case, you apply the principles of your salesmanship in creating interest, conviction and desire.

Any member of this group may do what would be done by an individual prospect. He may mention the matter of price before you are ready for it. You will handle that as you would under ordinary conditions.

The salesman, not accustomed to group selling, is liable to be side-tracked and to have the unity of his sales talk broken up. He must hold the floor and control the situation. He must command attention, so they will be willing to listen.

It is possible to make the same mistakes in selling several people as in selling one person, such as giving too much explanation, or too much demonstration. You can exhaust curiosity, interest, or desire of a group as well as that of an individual.

In dealing with a number you must take into account the fact that you are talking to different types. One of them likes full details; others are not interested in that way. You must maintain some sort of proper balance.

Selling Individuals of the Group

Selling the individual members of a group requires careful procedure, for it is largely the secret of group selling.

You are not selling individuals to the exclusion of the group, but, in many instances, you will sell the group through some members of it. Keep in mind the fact that we are still handling unrelated individuals.

It frequently happens in such a situation that one of the members has a ruling influence over the others. He may be an authority to them. What he does in accepting or rejecting your proposition will very likely influence the others to do likewise. If he becomes thoroughly sold on it the others will be favorably inclined.

You will quickly discover his leadership. The others defer to him. You will not make the mistake, however, of giving him your exclusive attention or allowing him to do all the talking. You will draw out the others and induce them to form independent views of your proposition and strive to develop in them a personal interest.

Never give the impression that you are assuming that if the leader buys they will all buy. They may be influenced by him, but they do not want you to think so or to assume it. They must be made to believe they are acting independently on the merits of the proposition.

There may be in such a group several who think for themselves and, to a large extent, for some of the others. The sale develops special interests. One man sees a value in a certain feature of the proposition, and another man is equally impressed by a different merit.

These indications you will call into service. In making appeals you will defer to the persons calling up these points. It gives those points a fixed value, not because of your opinion, but because of their interest to members of the group. You are emphasizing their reasons for buying. These are influencing the rest of the group far more than if these values were stated by you alone. It is your business to state values, but these men have accepted them.

You can play one man against another. One may take an adverse position which you can offset by what one of their number has conceded. "You see, Mr. Smith, it is as Mr. Brown said a moment ago," etc.

In this manner you are selling certain individuals in order to sell the group. The larger the number you thus sell, the more difficult you are making it for the others not to buy.

Selling All or Some

By getting these leaders thoroughly sold on your proposition you may sell every member of the group.

On the other hand, if a conflicting opinion arises on the part of one or two who have considerable influence over some of the others, and you fail to break down this resistance and sell them, the likelihood is that you will lose a part of the group.

There are usually certain ones in the group who think and act independently. If these are sold on the proposition, it invariably will result in selling some of the others. In the end you may land as many sales as if you had interviewed the individuals separately.

Much depends upon the nature of the proposition and whether each member of the group is really a prospect. The fact that they have been brought together and know in a general way the nature of the proposition, is very much to the good. It is now up to you to handle the psychology of the situation as has been outlined.

Expertness in this respect, together with an efficient presentation of the facts, backed up by ample proof, and the use of effective appeals can often sell the whole group.

GROUP OF RELATED UNITS

A group of related units differs essentially from the one just considered. The members represent a community of interest and must be sold as a whole.

This group may consist of the heads of departments of a firm. It may be a board of school directors. It may be a library board. The personnel of the group will depend on the nature of the proposition.

Getting Access to Individuals

Let us assume that your audience is composed of employees of a firm. You may see them as individuals at their business posts. You may also see them collectively as a whole, or in smaller groups.

In order to secure these advantages it is usually necessary to get the consent of the heads of the firm. The executives must be sold on the proposition. To this end they come together, and you make your presentation. This is where an important part of your real selling is done, not necessarily in selling your proposition to these head men, but in getting them sold on it so as to give you access to their employees.

You may satisfy all of them with the exception of two or three. That opposition, although that of a minority, will probably kill the deal, unless you can swing it into line. The individuals must act as a unit, as they are closely related units.

You may be seeking the right to sell their men an investment proposition. It will be an advantage to you to get these men into little groups at the noon hour, or after working hours. For this purpose you must have the consent of the firm.

A Service to the Employees

You must sell the firm on the merits of your proposition as thoroughly as though they were your prospects. If they cannot be sold on it, they will not warm up to it, and will show little or no enthusiasm. When that happens you will not gain your end.

You will impress this firm with the fact that their employees are their foremost interest. They are an essential part of the institution. If they can be induced to make a safe investment, it will be solving a financial problem. When money is coming to them from other sources than their labor, they will be less troubled about money matters, will be more contented, and will do better work.

These are all advantages to the firm. You are making a double appeal: the firm's interest in the welfare of their men and their personal advantage; the advantage to the firm in having a more contented body of workmen, who spend their money in the right way, with an eye to their future, and who are in a position to add to their comforts. All of which will contribute to their usefulness and to their ability to render a more satisfactory service.

Again, your proposition may be an investment in property. You want to interest these men in buying a home. They are paying high rents and from time to time are required to move. This is undesirable, has an unsettling effect, wastes time, and involves loss of money.

The man who owns his home settles down and becomes more of a fixture. He will stay longer by his job. He has that home to pay for and will render the best service in order to hold his position. When composed of such men, a firm's working force will be more permanent and more vitally related to the business.

Let us assume that in presenting your investment proposition you create a personal interest on the part of two or three heads of the firm. You sell them your investment. This not only increases the likelihood that you will secure the privilege you are seeking, but it will enable you to play a far stronger card in dealing with the men. Your proposition has the best kind of commendation. Heads of the firm, men accustomed to investigating such things, have put upon it the stamp of their approval by investing their own money.

Your primary object was to get this group of related units sold on the value of your proposition to their men so as to secure the privilege of selling them. Giving you this right enables you to say to these men, "Your employers are so well sold on the merits of what we are offering you that they have given us the right to present it to you here at the plant where we can see you more conveniently."

A Service to the Business

The benefits to the firm have already been suggested. You will sell the officers or executives your idea in the measure in which they see an advantage accruing to the firm.

If they can see larger returns to the house in the way of better service in any form you are appealing to their self-interest.

Let us assume that you are selling a course in Salesmanship and Business Science. Their first thought might be that this would have no connection with their larger interests.

You point out to these men that their employes are selling their service, not only in getting a position, but in holding it; that this course of instruction will give them a far more intelligent idea of service, of increasing their ability, and of all that enters into man-building. This will bring corresponding returns to the house.

You may make a still greater appeal by pointing out that there are potential salesmen in their plant. They would make the best kind of salesmen because of their thorough knowledge of the goods. This course of instruction will enable them to "find" themselves and to develop their personal and business ability.

Again, there are those among them who would be competent as executives. The office needs them, and the firm can recruit their office force from their own men thoroughly acquainted with the business.

You can make these appeals so strong that the house will be convinced that it will pay them to invest in this course of instruction, at least to the extent of one-half the price of the course. You will gain your end in getting access to these men with the backing of the firm to aid you.

A Corporate Interest

We are now coming to a group of related units more directly personally interested as a body. You are selling them your proposition. It may consist of any one of many things. They buy it as a body and thus act in a corporate capacity.

The method of handling the group under these conditions is practically the same as it is in selling anything. The group may be a private concern to which you are selling an adding machine. You may be selling it an appraisal, new machinery equipment, or the materials for a building.

It may be a proposition of public interest, and the group will consist of a board of managers or the officers of a town, city, or community.

Selling the Individuals

In selling such a body you will endeavor to sell at least some of the individuals before meeting the group. Your success in selling the group will depend largely upon selling the individuals on the merits of your proposition before they come together to act as a body.

You will get a line on each man, and on his peculiarities, interests, and similar matters. You will thus know how to approach him. You will play up to his hobby, ingratiate yourself into his favor and confidence, and thus pave the way for a successful interview.

You will sell him on the proposition as if he were the prospect buying it for himself. We will assume that he is in a position where his opinion would be of vital import in considering the proposition. For example, he may be the bookkeeper, and you are selling an adding machine. Much would depend upon his attitude. If this preliminary work were not done with him before meeting the group, he might take an adverse position that would kill the sale.

Having interested one of the influential members of the group, you will make use of that fact in dealing with other members. You will tell them how Mr. Brown regards your proposition. This will not only influence their opinion, but they will know where Brown stands when the group comes together. They will have more freedom in taking a definite position when the proposition is considered collectively, without having to "feel around" to get at Brown's position. They will know that they are talking to the point of his interest.

Each person thus favorably sold on your proposition ahead of time means the elimination of that much possible resistance. There may be one influential member who was not thus sold, but when he realizes that the others are sold, or at least the large majority of them, his attitude may be modified to the extent that he may suppress his opposition.

It will be readily seen that the secret of group selling lies very largely in successfully selling the individuals. When they individually commit themselves they are not likely to desert you when they come together.

On the other hand, if they were not given the facts until they came together as a group, there is no telling what half-baked opinions they might express. Objections overcome in dealing with them individually may not be so easily handled in selling the group. It is the difference between coming to the meeting with an intelligent attitude and knowing nothing about the proposition.

Selling Them Collectively

You must understand the psychology of selling a group of people. You may not have succeeded in selling all of them as individuals. You may have sold only a few of them. This will increase the difficulties of the sale.

Again, in selling them individually, they may have left you in the dark by not committing themselves. They said to you, "I see the nature of your proposition, and we will take it up when we come together."

You are selling a concern a line of trucks. There may not be one member of the group that has a practical idea of a truck. They know little or nothing of the mechanism of the thing and what a truck is supposed to accomplish. In that situation the best card you can play is to have present a truck man who has examined your car, is familiar with its performance, and can speak with authority. He may do more in making the sale than anything you could do. It is your business to try to sell the concern, but this man is interested in his firm making a judicious buy.

You may be selling a town council drainage supplies or certain construction materials. As in the preceding case, they may know little about these things. You should have an expert on the subject and sell him on the merits of your line.

As in the other case, this civic body will listen attentively to this expert's statement and defer to his judgment. You will direct the selling procedure, for you are the salesman.

In selling the truck you would say, "Mr. Jones, I wish you would point out to these gentlemen what you discovered about this engine that is superior and why it will render an unusual service." The same method may be followed in regard to other special and easily understood features.

In selling a group you will soon discover that you have individual attitudes with which to deal. You will be on the lookout for the one who will be a "friend at court," as well as for the one who will offer opposition. You will play the friend against the opponent, but in a manner that will not create strife.

A salesman was selling a construction concern a quantity of brick. A special talking point was the fact that each brick was perforated by two holes an inch in diameter. "You see gentlemen what an advantage it is to have this make of brick. The mortar enters the holes below and above on each flat side of the brick. As you know, one-half of each brick overlaps and thus the holes in the brick give it firm anchorage."

The question of price was involved, and that "stuck" with one member of the concern. It resolved itself into a question of advantage and superiority against price.

Another member of the group was impressed by the anchorage feature just mentioned, which was new to him. He said, "It seems to me that this is not only a selling point for that kind of brick, but it is also a selling point in selling the property. I can see the sales advantage of describing to the prospective buyer how every brick in this building is of a type to secure perfect anchorage."

The salesman then had an ally, so he followed up this support by saying, "Mr. Smith has stated a vital fact. The brick will cost you a little more, but you have a talking point that will help sell the building at a higher price because of its superior construction."

Another member of the group added his bit by saying, "A sale often turns on just such a thing. To be able to point out some particular excellence is much more effective than to sell on generalities. I can see how it would be a strong point to say, every brick in this building is securely anchored in the overlapping by each brick having a hole at each end. and the same care was exercised in the construction of the building throughout."

"That is just it, Mr. Jones," said the salesman. "You are making one point raise other points to selling power." The matter of advantage prevailed over the question of price, and the brick was sold.

Selling the Silent Members

It is usually the case that the group contains two or more persons who do not take an active part in the discussion. The salesman makes a mistake in not giving them due attention and in failing to draw them out.

The construction concern had such a man present. Turning to him the salesman said, "You can see, Mr. White, the importance of the point made by Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones. You may have the responsibility of selling that building. You would not only state what has already been said, but you would make use of the very matter of price that has been raised. You would say that cost was not considered in putting up a first-class structure. You are selling a quality product."

Such a procedure wins the silent man's interest, because he was personally taken into account. It gave him an equal place in the group, and would be calculated to line him up with the salesman and bring from him a concession.

The tactful salesman will have no difficulty in handling Brown, who raised the question of price. "So you see, Mr. Brown, how the matter of price takes care of itself in the quality of the structure. It is redeemed several times over by talking quality in making the sale."

What we have set forth outlines the method of procedure in handling the group. It describes the leading problems, the angles from which the salesman must work, the things to be expected, and the pitfalls to avoid.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

When you have an important thing to do you want to be at your best. When are you at your best? If you devote a little time in the morning to these studies before you meet a prospect the lesson may contain a point that will make that day's work a splendid success.

I. The individual and the group.
  1. What is the psychology of selling the individual? What two things are provided for in dealing with one person?
  2. What are two psychological peculiarities in selling the group?

II. Group of unrelated individuals.
  1. In what sense are they unrelated? How did they come together?
  2. In selling this group, do you sell it as a whole or as individuals?

III. Group of related units.

1. In what sense may they be related?
2. What must be done to get to employees to interest them?
3. What is meant by a corporate interest? How must the individuals be sold in order to sell them collectively?
4. What is meant by selling the silent members?

SELF-QUIZ

1. Do I realize that in addition to preparing for individual selling, I must fortify myself for group selling?
2. Do I make note of the obstacles that are bound to arise in selling a group of individuals?
3. Do I know that there are occasions when no one individual may make a decision on my proposition?
4. Do I acquaint myself with the psychology of selling a group of individuals?
5. Do I sometimes sell the individuals of a group before bringing them together?
6. Do I balance my sales talk for group selling in order to carry the interest of all the individuals?
7. Do I try to secure the personal interest of the executives of a firm with regard to their employes and thus gain their co-operation in presenting my proposition?
8. Do I break down all the resistance possible before bringing a group together for their final decision?

9. Do I first sell the leader of a group who really understands my proposition, so that he may instill confidence in the remainder of the group?
10. Do I, whenever possible, make use of any favorable comment made by individuals of the group?