

DIARY OF A COOL SALESMAN

I had come to the realization many years ago that there was a big difference between what the world considers to be a good salesman and what I have found to be so.

It all started when I had taken on a part time sales job involving door-to-door **cold** calls to subsidize my income. “What’s a door-to door-**cold** call?” You ask. Well, I suppose it could mean having to go door-to-door when the outside temperature falls below zero...or what happens to a nervous salesman who receives a negative response from an irritable home abider.



For instance, if a homeowner responds with, “what the @&%?< do you want?” then it could easily trigger an adrenalin syndrome of sorts to occur within the salesman’s body...you know...the fight or flight syndrome...where the body immediately breaks out into a **cold** sweat then ya go and catch yourself a chill. Naw...it’s really neither of the above. A ‘**cold** call’ is when a salesman is forced into the role of freshly knocking on a stranger’s door in order to solicit a service or to attempt to sell a product. Whatever it really means, the fact remains, that whether or not a home-owner actually **warms** up to your intrusion...er...I mean...presence...depends a whole

lot on the salesman’s approach...how **cool** he can remain throughout the whole ordeal. How’s that for an ‘economical point of view’ weather report?

I experimented a bit with the actual ‘cold call’ door knocking technique...and you can bet the approach makes a difference. I quickly eliminated the brief case in hand approach due to the obvious immediate turn-off response I received...probably due to its association with several religious organization solicitation approaches. I also quickly learned that the first words that left my mouth when that door initially opened usually made it or broke it. Of course, my appearance...facial expression included, would add or subtract to the total as well. Mind you, there will always be exceptions to all of the above. Like one homeowner who opened his door then immediately said, “I don’t want any!” before he even looked at me or before anything even came out of my mouth at all. I simply smiled and replied, “That’s okay sir, I was just giving away free diamonds!” And to that he emphatically replied, “Don’t care...don’t want any!” then he slammed the door shut...so I just kept the diamonds and left. So, you see,

it's not necessarily **what** it is that you have for sale but rather **how** you present it.

I eventually resorted to what I call 'the clipboard approach.' It all seemed to change just because I had a clipboard in my hand. We can call it 'The Clipboard theory.' I don't reckon it'll ever end up as popular as Einstein and Newton and all of those guys and their theories...but it is a theory nevertheless. Somehow, psychologically speaking, my entrée at their door dramatically changed just because I had a clipboard in my hand...go figure. Perhaps my intrusion was construed as that of an important government agent of sorts...a mandatory survey or a neighborhood alert...I'm not sure but the homeowner was obviously much more receptive to my presence. Of course, the first words spoken' along with the salesman's 'demeanor' rules still applied as to whether or not you actually got inside their door. By the way, there were never any free diamonds. I just said that to test one of my theories. Perhaps there's a market for theories though...hmmm. But suffice to say, I hate cold call sales.

Now, what happens when ya get through that door is where the real issue of morality is truly under investigation. According to mainline, economic, capitalistic, sales-protocol training, **a successful salesman is one who can smoothly manipulate a prospective buyer into agreeing to purchase his product/service...to 'close the deal' so it's called.** That's when the buyer actually signs a contract and commits to the deal. **An effective and successful salesman's strategy is to 'create a priority for his project in the potential buyer's thinking process,' meaning the salesman makes his product/service appear to be an absolute necessity for the homeowner to have...and to have right NOW!** He does this by a step-by-step process...first he would **present** the specific product/service...secondly, he would **qualify** the product/service, emphasizing or justifying its value...thirdly, he would **prioritize** the product/service to be needed as being '**essential**' to the prospective buyer. And he has been trained to not give up this strategic process until he hears an emphatic 'NO'...and sometimes more than once. Sounds simple doesn't it? I mean...the fact that a simple 'NO, I do not want it!' could put an end to the whole ordeal and send the wolf...er...I mean persistent salesman to flight. If it were that simple, then why would you think that it is such a difficult thing for someone to actually do or say.

Well, that calls for yet another theory. A very high percentage of we human beings have a basic 'fear of rejection' protection mechanism built into our DNA, where we will avoid saying 'NO' to another just because of

its negative connotation...I mean the word 'no' means that somebody's going to be upset...rejected. And because most of us are nice people at heart, we'd rather avoid controversy. Have you ever heard yourself in the heat of a sale's encounter? "Well, I don't think that I really need that today, thank you," or perhaps, "well, it sounds good but I really don't think that I can afford it right now" or..."I'd like to think about it for a while"...anything and everything but a flat out "NOPE...don't want the dang thing," like the guy who refused the free diamonds said. The successful salesman of course is trained to continue to address any and all possible objections to purchasing his product and so often forces the potential buyer into 'rejection corner' where the victim actually commits to buying rather than to offend the intruder...nice homeowner...baaad salesman!

And this is what our Capitalistic infrastructure calls a good salesman...hmm. Personally, I like to sleep good at night, assured that I haven't deceived myself and violated my own conscience or deceived or violated somebody else's freedom of choice for **my own** gain. It all changed for me one day when I was about to close a deal with an elderly couple. I happened to be going door to door selling acrylic windows...equipped with my clipboard in hand, of course. This was indeed a unique product that would magnetically affix to one's existing windows of any size and would increase the insulation value of the glass five-fold. Sounds like a product that everyone could use right? Well sort of...meaning...everybody could use it for sure...but '**when**' one actually chooses to buy such a product should be closely scrutinized. It was kinda like a 'Ma and Pa Kettle' scenario. I was welcomed into the couple's dilapidated old shack. There were pots and pans strategically placed here and there to catch dripping water from a leaking roof. Now, Ma and Pa, of course, were most intrigued with my product but I suddenly decided to abort the whole process and stopped Pa from signing on that dotted line. "Why would I do that?" you're probably asking yourself. I did it because it was obvious to me that they didn't have much money at their disposal and I strongly felt that it was not within **their** best interest to be spending a whole lot of cash on **my** energy saving acrylic windows at that particular time. I suggested that they repair their roof first then give me a call when they were ready to save some money by purchasing my acrylic window fixtures. I handed them my card and left their humble abode without a sales victory. Of course, I never did hear from them again. And that is another theory...a law similar to gravity, stating that if you don't close the deal right then and there, statistics have revealed that you probably won't get a second chance. Worst than that is the possibility

that some other weasel...er...I mean...un-cool salesman...who didn't give a hoot about other's needs...could come right on in after me, close a deal and take even more money from that same homeowner hours later...and on a much inferior product at that...baaad salesman! And so the conundrum stands. You're damned if you do close and damned if you don't...hence why such an emphasis on closing a deal once you make a presentation.

Now I can hear that lawyer department of your brain sayin, "so who am I to judge whether a customer can or cannot afford to buy a product/service or whether a product/service is going to be of benefit or not to someone?" I suppose there is a little bit of 'lawyerese' in all of us. Well, I did ask myself that very question and so came to the conclusion that it would be most fair to simply present a potential customer with all of the information (knowledge) regarding a product or service of which I happen to be representing at the time...then I'd step aside and allow the customer to make up their own mind. Having done that, then, and only then, could I call myself a '**first class cool salesman**'.

Moral of the story: When you **choose to sell**...you **take something away** from a customer. When you **choose to serve**...you **give something** to your customer...and get paid well for doing so.