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PREFACE

Approach and Purpose

I formed DM Bass Publications in 1995 for the specific purpose of self-publishing *Selling The Profession*. The 3rd edition is now complete and I am more excited than ever with the content of the book. As author, publisher and marketer of this professional selling textbook I have had the rare opportunity to interact with a significant number of college and university sales professors, as well as men and women employed fulltime in the field of professional selling. In addition, I am genuinely delighted with the relationship I have established with Surado Solutions, Inc. in Riverside, California. They have given me the authority to provide their contact management software to all professors who adopt and use my book. In addition, I now have a Web site devoted exclusively to assisting you in the preparation of lecture materials, tests and other sales-related classroom activities.

Updating and revising this professional selling book has been, and continues to be, an extremely satisfying experience. To write down all your thoughts and experiences in a way that makes sense and represents a legitimate contribution to the sales profession has been an enormous challenge. The years I have spent teaching sales courses to college students and conducting seminars for sales professionals, combined with almost 30 years of personal experience in various phases of the business of selling have helped to formulate the ideas, concepts, and style of this text.

There are a number of specific reasons why I decided to invest so much time and energy in the writing of this book. As a college professor, I personally wanted a textbook that concentrated on the relationship style of selling. It is this consultative or relationship-building style that spells success for a salesperson operating in a highly competitive business environment and dealing with today's sophisticated buyers who demand correct answers to complex problems. At the same time, I wanted a book whose style and organization made it fun to read, easy to comprehend, and very practical as a training tool for anyone really interested in developing their skills as a professional salesperson. My goal was to find a way to break the process into its most basic components, in an attempt to simplify the complex buyer-seller interaction that takes place in an actual selling situation. The result is an eight-step sales cycle model that is explored in depth in over one-half of the book.

In addition, because attitude is so important for achieving success in selling, I felt compelled to incorporate verbal and nonverbal communication and social style technology as the foundation stones in a relationship model of selling. A knowledge of these concepts allows you to appreciate more readily the complex, dynamic behavioral relationships that take place in selling. It

also seemed essential to introduce the reader to the availability and usefulness of sales force automation and the numerous technology products available to the salesperson. Global competition has enlarged the playing field. As global competition brings new challenges, technology brings new tools that help sales professionals sell more effectively and efficiently.

Throughout the text, the reader is made aware of the "real world" of selling through review of the current sales literature, personal experience, and, most importantly, interviews with successful active sales professionals who put the theory contained in the book into everyday practice. As one top salesperson relayed to me, "Practice without theory is blind and theory without practice is sterile."

Finally, as a professor and as a person who dearly loves the sales environment and longs for improvement in the ethical business climate, I wanted a text that would: 1) show that selling can be an honest, respected profession; 2) convince the bright, creative students that selling is a profession they should consider—not just something you do until something better comes along; and 3) demonstrate that, if practiced as explained in this text, a sales career will be a source of financial, personal status, and self-esteem rewards.

ORGANIZATION/SPECIAL SECTIONS

The material in the text is organized into 16 chapters which are divided into five distinct parts:

PART I—Relationship Building and the Sales Cycle Framework

Part I discusses the consultative, problem-solving approach to professional selling. The various characteristics that successful salespeople possess are detailed. Relationship selling involves two-way communication, encourages prospect participation, employs empathy, is interactive and promotes a win-win environment. A principled style of selling has evolved that favors building close and trusting long-term relationships. Positioning your sales force as consultants or counselors creates a partnership with your customers. You are peers working to solve problems together. Establishing partnerships, not selling products, is the new function of sales.

A better understanding of the complete selling situation and the problems it generates may be gained by breaking the sale into its basic tasks. There are several steps to consummating a successful sale. An eight-step sales cycle is introduced in chapter two and explained in detail in chapters 7 to 14. It makes sense that if you understand what the steps are in the Sales Cycle Framework for Relationship Selling, and what is required to make each step a successful endeavor, then you will become a professional in selling much quicker than those who are simply stumbling through the process trying to figure it out. The chapters included in this section are:

- 1. A Career in Professional Selling
- 2. Consultative or Relationship Selling

PART II—Cultivating an Ethics Climate and Developing Communication Skills

Consultative, relationship selling is a challenging career field. Few professions, if any, give you more opportunities to be rejected on a daily basis than does the field of sales. You need strong ethical and moral character to sustain a sales career. Cheating, lying or short-changing the customer is a sure way to court failure for the future. Honest and caring service brings customers back and assures success for the salesperson.

Success in professional selling also depends upon your ability to have a productive exchange of information with prospects and customers. The more salespeople understand about prospects, the more readily they can discover what they need and want. An especially useful tool for gaining insight into the thinking of prospects is knowledge of the social styles model. A social style is the way a person sends and receives information. It is a method for finding the best way to approach a prospect and to set up a working relationship with that person. Part II has three chapters dealing with ethics and communication theory:

- 3. Ethical and Legal Issues in Selling
- 4. Consumer Behavior and the Communication Agenda
- 5. Finding Your Selling Style

PART III—Gaining Knowledge, Preparing, and Planning for the Presentation

The information in chapter 6 prepares the reader for success in a sales career by focusing on gaining product knowledge, developing a plan for self-motivation and goal setting strategies and introducing the use of sales force automation. The use of contact management programs is introduced in some detail in chapter 6. The electronic information age is here.

Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the procedures for locating and qualifying prospects and outline the information needed to prepare for an effective presentation. Chapter 7 is a very thorough look at the topic of prospecting. As the saying goes, "I'd rather be a master prospector than a wizard of speech and have no one to tell my story to." Chapter 8 discusses the process of gathering preapproach information and presents a six-step telephone track for making appointments for that all important personal interview. The three chapters in this section are:

- 6. Preparation For Success in Selling
- 7. Becoming a Master Prospector
- 8. Preapproach and Telephone Techniques

PART IV—The Face-to-Face Relationship Model of Selling

Chapters 9 to 13 are the very heart of professional, consultative selling. This is considered the "how to" portion of the book. I refer to this as the face-to-face cycle of the sale. You see, selling is a cyclical event. It is the valuable time spent in the actual sales interview; the time when a commitment is obtained and kept.

Chapter 9 focuses on the approach. What happens in the opening minutes is crucial to the overall success of the sales interview. Chapter 10 is devoted to the art of asking questions and listening effectively. A questioning sequence and listening guidelines are presented to carry through the entire sales interview. The SPIN Selling technique is explained and dramatized using a very practical example. Chapter 11 details the techniques to use in making the actual presentation. Units of conviction are the building blocks for creating and making a meaningful sales presentation. The five elements that comprise a complete unit of conviction are explained and illustrated. They are: features; transitional phrase; benefits; evidence; and the tie-down question.

The psychology behind overcoming resistance and closing the sale is presented in chapters 12 and 13. A plan to handle objections is introduced while a separate section in chapter 12 explains several ways of dealing with the difficult price objection. Chapter 13 stresses that closing the sale is the natural conclusion to a successful sales interview. A special section presents specific ways that help a salesperson deal with the rejection so common in selling. The chapters in Part IV include:

- 9. Approaching the Prospect
- 10. Identifying Needs by Questioning and Listening
- 11. Making the Presentation
- 12. Negotiating Sales Resistance
- 13. Closing the Sale

PART V—Management Aspects: Personal and Organizational

The service you give the customer after the sale has been completed can be as important, or even more important than the sale itself. Keeping current customers happy and regaining lost clients is the focus of chapter 14. Professional, consultative selling requires that you possess an ample amount of personal organization and self-management skills and habits.

Chapter 15 shows you how to get better control of your time and your activities. The chapter really is all about personal organization and self-management. You cannot manage time, but you can manage yourself and your personal activities. Administrative ability on the part of the salesperson is fundamental to success. Statistics indicate that only about 20 percent of a salesperson's time during a typical day is spent in face-to-face interviews with prospects. Finally, chapter 16 details the job responsibilities of the salesperson, and provides a useful introduction for more advanced sales management courses.

The chapters in this section are:

- 14. Customer Service and Follow-up After the Sale
- 15. Personal, Time and Territory Management
- 16. Sales Force Management

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

I have used a six-part structure as a guide for readers to follow as they study and learn the material in the various chapters.

- 1. Learning Objectives. These have been written to acquaint you with the important concepts to be gleaned from each chapter. They appear on the first page of the chapter and serve as guidelines to follow when searching for the most pertinent material.
- 2. Profiles Of Successful Salespeople. In nine of the chapters, a sales professional gives his or her thoughts and advice pertaining to specific concepts discussed in the chapter.
- 3. Main Body Of Each Chapter. They are organized in outline form to make it readily available for study and review. Each chapter is complemented by examples of actual "sales situations" that take the theory and put it into practice. The material in all 16 chapters is well documented with exhibits, tables, and figures, most taken from actual sales experience.
- 4. Developing Partnerships Using Technology. Technology boxes in chapters 6 to 15 illustrate how sales force automation tools will impact the "road warriors" of the twenty-first century. They will demonstrate how to increase sales efficiency in three functional areas: 1) Personal Productivity; 2) Improved Communications; and 3) Transactional Processing.
- 5. A Summary Section. This section ties together all the main points of the chapter to reinforce learning. Reading the various summaries gives the student a feel for the content of the chapter and provides a tremendous resource to use when attempting to pull together concepts from several chapters.
- 6. Questions For Discussion/Exercises/Case Studies. Each chapter ends with a series of questions to challenge the student's understanding of the material, along with practical exercises or activities designed to get them doing things outside the classroom. The case studies require the students to apply the critical skills discussed in the chapter and give them practice through simulation, role-playing, or experiential learning situations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David J. Lill is a Professor of Marketing in the School of Business, Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee. He earned his Ph.D. degree in Marketing from the University of Alabama. Dr. Lill is also an independent business consultant specializing in sales training, advertising strategy and communications skills development.

Dr. Lill is a dedicated teacher and has won awards for excellence in teaching. He currently spends some time outside the classroom conducting seminars and training courses on sales and advertising topics. His relationship selling model has been successfully used by companies in the insurance, telecommunications, publishing, banking, real estate, hospitality and automotive industries.

Dr. Lill has published over 85 articles on sales and marketing-related topics in various academic, trade and professional publications. Journals he has published in include: Journal of Advertising, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Pharmaceutical Marketing & Management, Sales & Marketing Management, Selling Power, Business Topics and The American Salesman.

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Since one of my primary goals was to produce a text with "real world" concepts and applications, I could not have been successful without the assistance of all those in sales who took time to share their thoughts with me. The insightful comments made by the sales professionals highlighted throughout the book add an important dimension to student learning. The success they have achieved in all areas of their lives through hard work and dedication, while upholding high standards of business ethics, should serve as a model for our young, aspiring business people to emulate.

I want to especially recognize five individuals who have been a personal inspiration to me—Deryl Bass, Tanis Cornell, Tom Hoek, Robert Lambert and Emil Wanke—five consummate professionals, who each in their own way have had a profound effect on the way I think and the actions I take.

I want to thank Donald Silberstein, Director of Business Development for the Bureau of Business Practice, Inc., for his efforts in tracking down the 150 cases that he made available to me. Twenty-four are used as end-of-chapter cases in this book. Each case is based on an "actual" sales situation and provides the student with an excellent learning opportunity.

My personal thanks and appreciation to the following professors, business associates and colleagues. Their insightful suggestions, organizational ideas, and encouragement added significantly to the content of this textbook: Merlin Bauer, MidState Tech College; Tim Becker, Point Loma Nazarene College: Gary Benson, Chadron State; Dick Bickell, R.A. Siegel Company; L. Dean Bittick, East Central College; F. R. Bosch, Snow College; Steve Brown, Southern Methodist University; Frank Bingham, Bryant College; James Blair, WRMX-FM Radio (Nashville); Kenneth Blanchard, founder of Blanchard Training & Development, Inc.; Bob Bricker, Pikes Peak Community College; David Braun, L.A. Pierce College: Cindy Claycomb, Wichita State University: Dave Colby, Mid-State Technical College; Lester Convers, North Georgia College and State University; Joe DePriest, Three Rivers Community College; Bruce Dickinson, Southeast Technical Institute; Claude Dotson, Northwest College; Donna Duffy, Johnson County Community College; Charles Edwards, Mt. San Antonio College; Don Ellers, founder of SALESPRO International: Timothy Elliott, San Jacinto College (Houston); Richard English, San Diego State University; Ken Erby, Chesterfield-Marlboro Tech; Sandra Fields, University of Delaware; Olene Fuller, San Jacinto College (Pasadena); Wil Goodheer, president of International University (Vienna, Austria); Sandy Haft. Nassau Community College; Debra Haley, Fort Hays State University; Tom Hoek, president of Insurance Systems of Tennessee; Norm Humble, Kirkwood Community College; George Johnson, Marshalltown Community College; Gary Karns, Seattle Pacific University; Gary Kritz, Coastal Carolina University; Desiree Cooper Larsen, Weber State University; Luis Martinez, Manager Five Star Program, Chrysler Corporation; Morris L. Mayer, University of Alabama; Cheryl McCarthy, Executive vice president, Surado Solutions; Barbara McDonald, University of Illinois; David Miller, Panhandle State University; Dan Moore, vice president of marketing, The Southwestern Company: Nancy Patterson, Petit Jean Technical College; Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, author of The Power of Positive Thinking; Phillip M. Pfeffer, former president of Random House Inc.; Robin Peterson, New Mexico State University: Lyn Richardson, Ball State University; John Robbins, Winthrop University; Andy Saucedo, Dona Ana Community College of NMSU; Allen Schemmel, WSM-AM/FM Radio (Nashville); Mary Lee Short, Santa Fe Community College; Kirk Smith, Boise State University; Sandra Taylor, Athens Area Technical Institute; Ray Thomas, Edith Cowan University, Perth. Australia; Ken Traynor, Clarion University and Walt Wyatt, Cincinnati State University.

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