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# **SELLING BY OBJECTIVES**

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# **SELLING BY OBJECTIVES**

## Preface

The field of professional sales can be the most challenging, rewarding, and interesting of all careers. Selling is more than a job; it is a people-business in which an understanding of human behavior is indispensable. The professional salesperson does more than develop an expertise in an industry to which he sells products or services; he also develops a far more profound expertise: the ability to communicate well with all kinds of people.

The successful salesperson possesses all the virtues necessary to be at the top of any profession: communication skills; the sensitivity and flexibility that enable one to create chemistry with people; and the ability to efficiently and effectively manage one's professional and personal lives.

If we could boil down the difference between salespeople who thrive and those who struggle to survive, it would be:

TRUE PROFESSIONALS THINK AND ACT  
AS THE OWNERS OF THEIR SALES CAREERS.

Salespeople who merely survive act as representatives of their companies. They do as much as their job description demands and no more. There is a tremendous difference between the two. Both work for a company; the true professional, however, also thinks and acts as if he *is* the company. He thinks like the owner of a business, not like an employee. In fact, he is his own business and his best employee. He manages himself as efficiently as he would a subordinate, and with higher expectations.

A professional, regardless of his field of endeavor, is defined not by the business he is in, but by the way he conducts business. Professionalism belongs on every level of business, from the chairman of the board to the busboy in a local restaurant. The job itself is not important; it's how you do it that counts.

There is only one way to take pride in what you do; do the best job you possibly can. To do that, the professional salesperson does the following:

Takes pride in and full responsibility for his business.

Develops a long- and short-range plan for business growth.

Aligns his goals with those of his company or finds a company whose goals are compatible with his.

Makes a life-long commitment to self-improvement, which means acquiring, one by one, the skills needed for a high level of success.

Makes customer satisfaction his highest priority.

This text was written with one goal in mind: to meet the needs of the student who wishes to learn about and possibly adopt a philosophy and practice of sales that creates the highest level of professionalism.

The approach we advocate, Non-Manipulative Selling, has become the preferred sales philosophy of many Fortune 500 companies. It has done so because it is a customer-oriented philosophy that creates long-term good will and sound business relationships.

Non-Manipulative Selling views each customer contact as a custom-tailored, problem-solving process, not a one-size-fits-all approach on which persuasion is the primary motive. A non-manipulative salesperson, therefore, is not a pusher of products; he is a consultant and liaison between his company and his customers. A non-manipulative salesperson always has his customers' best interests in mind.

Non-Manipulative Selling is not only a philosophy of selling; it is also a philosophy of business. The principles and practices have all the hallmarks of good business: integrity, logical and practical application, customer service orientation, win-win values, and efficient/effective management techniques.

Whether you are guiding a company of one or one hundred, NMS is a true course you can navigate to success.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their deepest admiration and gratitude to Lynette Cablk, the instructional technologist and writer who assembled many of our previous books and articles. She refined and combined them to make the book you are now holding. Her integrity, productivity, sensitivity, and sincerity are truly amazing.

Richness and value were added to the text by the contributions of our fellow professional speaker, Rick Barrera.

Much of the material in this book originally appeared in our books, *Non-Manipulative Selling* (Courseware, 1979; Reston, 1981; Simon & Schuster, 1987) and *The Business of Selling* (Reston, 1985); and in our cassette album *Relationship Strategies* (Nightingale Conant, 1985). Thanks again to all who contributed to the creation and production of those works.

Assistance in the preparation of the manuscript was provided by Serena Vackert and Paula Cathcart, both of whom we thank profusely.

The Non-Manipulative Selling approach evolved and grew over years of refinement in hundreds of seminars and thousands of hours of consultation. We sincerely thank all the people who live and thrive in the world of sales and who put a great deal of thought and effort into selling better to live better.

Contents

Preface ix

Acknowledgments xi

Part I OVERVIEW

ONE

The Philosophy of Non-Manipulative Selling 3

THE FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR IMAGE	ADEQUATE TRAINING
APPROPRIATE TRAINING	NON-MANIPULATIVE SELLING
THE NMS SALES PROCESS	INFORMATION-GATHERING
ENHANCEMENT SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL NON-MANIPULATIVE SELLING	
SUMMARY	

Part II RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

TWO

Tension Management 19

CATEGORIES OF TENSION	TENSION MANAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS
SUMMARY	



THREE

**Relationship Strategies 30**

BEHAVIORAL STYLES      BEHAVIORAL STYLE IDENTIFICATION  
BEHAVIORAL FLEXIBILITY      IN CONCLUSION . . .  
SUMMARY

FOUR

**The Image of Excellence 57**

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENCE      SUMMARY

**Part III PERSONAL SALES MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

FIVE

**Territory Management 81**

PART ONE: TERRITORY ANALYSIS  
THE MARKETING PLAN      THE SALES PLAN MODEL      SALES PLANNING  
PART TWO: KNOWING WHAT YOUR TIME IS WORTH  
ACCOUNT ANALYSIS  
PART THREE: TERRITORY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES  
TERRITORY OPPORTUNITIES AND PROBLEMS      CONTROL  
SUMMARY

SIX

**Prospecting 118**

REPLENISHING THE SOURCE OF CUSTOMERS      QUALIFYING PROSPECTS  
SYSTEMS OF SUCCESS      SUMMARY

SEVEN

**Promotional Strategies 139**

YOUR PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY      SUMMARY

EIGHT

**Preparation for the Sales Call 151**

SALES CALL PLANNING GUIDE      SUMMARY

## Part IV NON-MANIPULATIVE SELLING SKILLS

### NINE

#### **Meeting the Prospect 163**

CONTACTING A CUSTOMER SUMMARY

### TEN

#### **Studying Needs 184**

ESTABLISHING TRUST ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION AND GOALS  
BE ORGANIZED SETTING PROBLEM-SOLVING PRIORITIES SUMMARY

### ELEVEN

#### **Proposing Solutions 195**

TRUST, AGAIN THE PROCESS OF PROPOSING SOLUTIONS  
THE PRESENTATION SUMMARY

### TWELVE

#### **Confirming the Purchase 213**

CONFIRMING VS. CLOSING MANAGING OBJECTIONS  
CONFIRMING THE SALE SUMMARY

### THIRTEEN

#### **Assuring Customer Satisfaction: The Follow-Through Process 231**

SERVICING YOUR ACCOUNTS MAINTAINING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
EXPANDING YOUR SERVICES SUMMARY

## Part V COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### FOURTEEN

#### **The Fine Art of Questioning 243**

QUESTIONING STRATEGIES TYPES OF QUESTIONS  
STRATEGIC USES OF QUESTIONS SUMMARY

FIFTEEN

**The Power of Listening 253**

LEVELS OF LISTENING      GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING  
IRRITATING LISTENING HABITS      SUMMARY

SIXTEEN

**Feedback 265**

TYPES OF FEEDBACK      EFFECTIVE USES OF FEEDBACK      SUMMARY

SEVENTEEN

**Body Language 273**

INTERPRETING BODY LANGUAGE GESTURES      TRAIT OR STATE?  
YOUR USE OF BODY LANGUAGE      SUMMARY

EIGHTEEN

**Proxemics 288**

PROXEMIC ZONES (PHYSICAL PERSONAL SPACE)  
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROXEMICS      PROXEMIC TERRITORIALITY  
PROXEMIC CATEGORIES      SUMMARY

NINETEEN

**The Effective Use of Voice 295**

INFORMATION FROM VOICE QUALITIES      VOICE QUALITIES AND EMOTIONS  
SUMMARY

**Part VI SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

TWENTY

**Your Sales Career and Your Life 305**

BALANCE      THE IMPORTANCE OF GOALS      FOUNDATION DEVELOPMENT  
ASSUMPTIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON BEHAVIOR      POSITIVE THINKING  
SELF-CONFIDENCE      MODEL FOR ACHIEVEMENT  
THE FILTER OF ONE'S SELF-CONCEPT  
THE PROCESSES OF BRAINSTORMING, GOAL-SETTING, VISUALIZING, AND ROLE  
MODELING      ROLE PLAYING      THE THOUGHT DIET CARD  
SUMMARY

TWENTY-ONE

**Time Management      324**

EFFICIENCY VS. EFFECTIVENESS      THE TIME LOG      SETTING PRIORITIES  
MENACES OF TIME      RELAXATION AND STRESS REDUCTION  
CHANGING BAD HABITS      SUMMARY

**Index      341**

## Part I

# OVERVIEW



## CHAPTER ONE

# The Philosophy of Non-Manipulative Selling

### CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- 1 Provide an overview of the Non-Manipulative Selling philosophy.
- 2 Familiarize you with the guiding principles of NMS.
- 3 Introduce the six steps of NMS and briefly compare them to other sales techniques.
- 4 Introduce the self-management skills that complement and promote a successful career in sales.

When people hear the word “salesperson,” different images come to mind. Some people think of the rude door-to-door salesman who immediately slips his foot in the door and fast-talks his way through the sale. Other people think of a courteous and helpful clerk in a department store who bends over backwards to make you happy.

These images reflect the experiences we all have had and the prejudices we all hold toward “being sold.” They also reflect the changes that are taking place in the way people conduct themselves as salespeople. Professionalism, ethical standards, and ongoing relationships with customers are more important than being the top seller on the sales team. This should not imply that being professional and ethical is incompatible with top performance. On the contrary, high achievers are not only good at sales, but also have the highest standards of professional and personal integrity.

Sales is a common denominator of every business. No matter what business you are in, you must sell your product or service to customers. Even people whose careers appear to be furthest from sales have something to sell: themselves. Writers, dancers, artists, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals all must be paid by someone. That someone is a customer who must be sold one way or another.

Salespeople are an indispensable asset to the world economy. If you

don't believe this, look at the financial statement or annual report of any corporation. The most important line of that report is not the bottom line (profits), but the top line (amount of sales). Obviously, without sales and salespeople, there are no profits and, therefore, no company.

The field of selling can be very exciting. It is an input = output career. In other words, you can have virtually any outcome you want if you put in enough effort. It is a career in which you can have your cake and eat it too. You can shape your career to enable you to do the things everyone wants to do:

- Help other people solve problems
- Be your own boss
- Make a lot of money
- Have a flexible work schedule
- Travel and meet new people

Granted not every sales position offers all of these benefits, but many do. As you gain experience as a professional salesperson, you can change jobs and industries until you find the position that suits your needs and lifestyle. A good salesperson has one of the most flexible and adaptable careers possible.

## THE FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR IMAGE

There is no denying that salespeople have gotten some negative press; but then every profession has its skeletons in the closet. If you talk to people about doctors, lawyers, or car mechanics, you will find some people love them, others hate them. The bottom line is that it is unfair to generalize about an entire group based on one bad experience. Certainly everyone in a particular business is not dishonest or exploitive. There are too many good business people in the world to let a few rotten eggs spoil your appreciation of the rest.

The reason the word "salesperson" carries some negative connotations is that inexperienced salespeople often create a lot of tension and distrust. No one likes to be sold in a way that is high-pressured, yet some salespeople use manipulative selling techniques because they are more interested in earning commissions than in earning the good will and loyalty of satisfied customers.

The salesperson is not always to blame. Many companies, especially small ones, hire salespeople and do not give them any training. They are allowed to begin selling with whatever resources they have and must scramble to bring in orders. By not training their salespeople, a company commits one of the gravest sins in the business. Unprofessional salespeople not only damage the company's reputation, they also ruin their own. It takes a great deal of effort to fix the bad feelings caused by offensive sales techniques. That effort, if it had been applied in a positive way before the sale, would be opening doors rather than slamming them shut. Salespeople who are not trained are forced to behave in the manner



of the salesperson they have in their minds. All too often that model is the foot-in-the-door type or some variation thereof.

It is essential for a salesperson to be trained. That training should come from the employer. If it does not, however, there are many books, audio tapes, and video programs that a conscientious professional can use to improve himself or herself.

It is important to understand that training needs to be both adequate and appropriate to make it effective. Training should also be tied to an overall philosophy of doing business, as Non-Manipulative Selling is.

## ADEQUATE TRAINING

It is not uncommon for a company to spend a lot of training dollars on only one aspect of sales competence: product knowledge. Being familiar with one's product is indispensable, but knowing it inside-out is going too far. The only time you have to know every nut and bolt is when you are selling a very technical product to people who think primarily in technical terms. This is a different type of selling than most beginning salespeople get into. It is very industry-specific and often requires an engineering or some other advanced degree. In that type of sales, the emphasis is on technical knowledge, not sales ability.

Most salespeople require only enough product knowledge to know how the product works and what its features and benefits to the customer are. Beyond that, the salesperson's expertise should lie in developing relationships and studying the prospect's business.

A salesperson whose training has put too much emphasis on product knowledge will tend to exhibit *technological arrogance*. The result is that the customer loses interest because the conversation revolves around the product and not his needs. A classic example of overtraining in product knowledge was experienced by Tony when he went into a retail computer store to look at a personal computer:

I had great apprehension about going into the store at all because I wasn't sure I could really work with a computer. I wasn't brought up with computers and they seemed to be so technical and complicated—beyond my scope of comprehension. I was fearful, but I did want to go in and see what they were all about.

Computer stores definitely understand retail merchandising. In the middle of the store they had this fantastic computer set-up with a color monitor and a program that was running with great color graphics and sound. I was mesmerized! All of a sudden a salesman walked up behind me and said something that I'm used to hearing at a used car lot: "It's a beauty, isn't it?"

I couldn't believe it, but I was still so stunned at this computer marvel that I said, "Yes, it's incredible! I can't believe it. This thing is much better than I expected." The salesman responded with, "Guess what, it's 64K." I said, "My God, that expensive? Let's look at a more reasonable model." The guy roared, "No, no, no, that refers to its memory."