



# BRIGHT IDEAS

To DOUBLE YOUR SALES  
FROM

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## Sales and Marketing

## Be a servant

There are five characteristics of sales people you can't overlook when you are hiring new staff. It's dumb to hire people because they look nice or have great qualifications or boast long experience. If the basic building blocks are missing then everything else is smoke.

Many clients see their sales struggling and their customer service suffering so they wheel me in to 'fix' their staff. It doesn't take me long to observe that the basic human qualities are missing. I have to say, 'I'm glad to take your money but these people are wrong for the job. I can't repair them.'

Bob Johnson, a Tennessee-Australian and a talented speaker says. "Hey! These people don't need me. They need Jesus!" And ain't that the truth.

In the same vein, you can't promote anyone to a sales management position if they don't possess these inherent qualities.

We already looked at two of them:

- \* Genuine love for people.
- \* An active rather than a passive style

The third is the willingness to serve.

Zig Ziglar tells us that the English verb: *to sell*, has its roots in the Norwegian verb: *selje: to serve*. It's probably how phrases about 'being served' came into the language of retail.

Selling by nature has connotations of servanthood about it.

To be successful in sales (and therefore successful in business)

we have to see ourselves as servants.

This hurts most people to whom I spell it out. The idea of being someone's servant is anathema to 99% of the salespeople I train. That's why they need training! They just don't get it. When they were applying for their job they thought they were applying for a pay packet. The person who employed them neglected to ask if they understood that they were entering a life of servitude. It's like receiving a calling.

This is why customer service is such a hot topic. Over the last few frenzied decades we've lost touch with the heart of it. This is the purpose of business:

To provide a service so well that people will enjoy helping you make a profit.

Customer Service - ie being customers' servants, is the root stock on which all branches of healthy sales grow: Add on sales, repeat sales, referral sales, and long lasting customer relationships.

Think about how you like to be treated when you are the customer. We walk out our front door each morning wearing a sandwich board which reads,

*Notice me,*

*the centre of the universe,*

*the nicest person in the world,*

*the only person I think about from dawn till dusk.*

This is the cruncher. Business is the playing field where our own desire to be served meets the need to serve others. Here we are sitting at our desk, pushing a

mower, fitting a tyre, answering a phone, working behind the counter wearing our 'notice me, love me, serve me' sign and we are confronted by another person wearing the same sign.

This is what we have come to know in customer service studies as 'the moment of truth'.

We have to take off our sign and turn it around so it reads

*'I notice you. I love you.*

*I'm here to be your servant.'*

The Great Storyteller said, 'He who would be greatest among you must humble himself and be servant of all.'

It's a tough one.



**Bright Idea:** Start a discussion among your colleagues about what being a servant means in your business. It will sort out the dead wood almost instantly.

***I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.***

Dr Albert Schweitzer



## A manager is a decision maker

A manager is a decision maker; a forward thinking decision maker.

Many managers become frightened to make decisions if they have been getting a few wrong lately. You suddenly think "I'm no good at this".

Luckily you are not the Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition so every mistake you make will not appear on the front of the funny papers. Keep making decisions.

Good managers are out there getting them right most of the time. That's how they made it to the job in the first place.

Thomas J. Watson Jr., the founder of IBM, said "The way to succeed is to double your failure rate".

Decisions have to be made quickly with a confidence that you only have to be right 51% of the time.

Just don't make the same mistake twice.

There are some simple principles for making a good decision.

- 1 Research—get all the facts. Then check the facts. Isolate that which is truth

and discriminate against that which is hear-say, and emotionally loaded advice.

- 2 Getting advice from a few trusted advisers is the next most important. If you haven't got a close group of friends who will honour you with confidentiality do your utmost to find them.

I need three for major decisions. Sometimes none of them agree but they all tell me the truth from their perspective. I balance that up with my own views and make the decision on my own, not because someone advised me.

- 3 Recognise that risk is always implicit in every management decision.

You always ask yourself, "What is the worst that can happen if it all goes wrong?"

If the consequences are serious then go back through the research and get more advice before you announce your final decision.

## Incoming and Internal Telephone Calls —Machines take over

The worst thing about living in America in 1989/90 was the tone pulse information telephones in government and big corporations.

*For information about award rates of pay for Budgie cage cleaners, press 1.*

*For information about Thailand's medicinal cures, press hash.*

*For information about Indonesian forest logging principles, press 0.*

It has taken a few years to catch on here but at last they have arrived down under. Government departments were the first to realise that these machines would save time and money so you'll find them there in bulk.

Sad thing is they don't save us, the callers, time and money.

Instead of training the employees to value every call as if it were their own mother they said, 'Nah. Buy a machine to do our customer service for us.' It's only the public!

And do you know the really sad news? If you can hang on long enough, the machines (bad as they are) actually do a better job than the humans used to do.

The humans were uninformed, dull witted and impatient.



### Bright Idea:

Get your people to behave more like machines... patient... consistent...calm ...knowledgable ...thorough.

Then perhaps you won't need a machine.

## Tell your angry callers what you are going to do.

Looking at the T.H.A.N.K.S. rule, we've seen that we need to **T- Thank** the angry callers for calling, ask them to

**H- Hold** for a few seconds while you look into something urgent, and **A- Ask** them for the details, **N- Nurse** it along, and **K- Keep** to the facts.

This will get the story out with as little fuss as can be created.

The main advantage to you is that you should still be in one piece; a little bruised maybe, but not mortally wounded.

The benefit to the caller is that the problem hasn't got any more out of hand.

The angry caller should calm down during the call and reach a state of mind where you can lay out what you are going to do.

When you judge that the caller has everything out in the open you **S- Summarise**.

Use phrases like these.

*I'll tell you what I'm going to do about this Mrs Brown...*

*Mr Green, There are a number of ways we can approach this. How about I ...*

*Mrs Black, Let me make a suggestion and you tell me how you feel about it...*

*I'm going to give this my personal attention, Mr White. I'll take your order to the shipping department myself and call you back in thirty minutes. If you haven't heard from me, ring this number again and ask for me. If they can't find me, ask for Jackie who works with me and she'll tell you what I'm up to.*

Explain in detail what you are going to do. Don't just say. 'Righto. I'll get back to you'



**Bright Idea:** Expect there to be a solution. Nine times out of ten there will be one.