



# BRIGHT IDEAS

TO DOUBLE YOUR SALES  
FROM

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## Sales and Marketing

## Salesmanship: Painting of Pictures

**S**alesmanship is portraying the idea that you alone can do for your customers what no one else can do. Churchill did it, Roosevelt did it, Hitler did it (in its worst form), Mandela does it.

Salesmanship is also a painting of pictures where your customer is clearly in the centre of the frame; the main subject.

An artist was creating a painting in the countryside working steadily day after day, quietly and gently capturing his impressions. His activity attracted the attention of a small girl who came out every day to watch and chatter.

*"What are you doing?"* she would ask every time.

*"I am painting everything I can see,"* he would reply.

*"When will it be finished?"* she would ask.

*"On Tuesday,"* would come the response.

*"Can I see?"* she'd ask finally.

*"Yes",* he'd say *"You may bring flowers. I shall bring cake. Wear your pretty dress and you will be the guest of honour"*.

Daily the ritual repeated itself.

Finally the great day came. She came out with flowers and a shy smile. The artist had covered the painting with a cloth. The cake and the knife were ready.

Gently she pulled away the cloth. With wide eyes she scanned the painting, stepped back a pace and spontaneously burst into tears.

Shocked at such a response, the artist reached out a comforting hand and drew her near as he asked, *"Child, why are you crying? What is the matter?"*

Without hesitation the inconsolable mite sobbed, *"You didn't put me in the picture."*

It seems that when the artist told her he was painting everything he could see, he virtually promised to include her. When he didn't, he broke her heart.

Well you may smile at the quaint expectation of the child, but I must ask if her reaction might not be similar to your customers' response to you.

As you pack your bag and steal away into the west, can your customers be seen standing bewildered at the door of their home or office sniffing, *"He didn't put me in the picture."* *"She didn't make me the centre of attention."*

You don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to work out that sales people the world over love to talk about everything else but their customer. Read the direct mail you get. Listen to sales pitches over the counter or in the car yard, or over the phone.

*"We've got..."*, *"Ours is..."*, *"I*

*think ..."*, *"It's bigger..."*, *"They're tougher..."*, *"Tests prove..."*

Presentations are based entirely on products, focused absolutely on features and facts, and in summary they are full of hot blow.

Just as the world would beat a path to the door of the person who could invent a better mouse trap, so the world will beat a path to the sales organisation where the staff have the skill of customer focus in all their language.

They'll be heard saying, *"Put yourself in this situation,"*, *"Picture yourself doing this:"*, *"Imagine the day when you..."*, *"Think about the time when you..."*, *"What if your..."* The top three words in the expert marketer's vocabulary are You, Your, Yours.



### **Bright Idea:**

Step up to sales success by adopting a new way of speaking. Paint word pictures with your customer in the limelight.



# You can make more money from every sale.

Yesterday I was speaking to 700 retailers in New Zealand. I was reading from my new book **"Make More Money from Every Sale"** and I was running them through one of the first Money Making exercises in the book.

I asked them all to stand up. Then I read the first of six questions, "#1 - Do you have a system where you phone existing customers a few days after they have made a purchase to ask them if they are happy with the product they bought from you?" I said, "Sit down if you answered, "No".

My expectation was that throughout the process of the six questions I was due to ask I would gradually eliminate about seventy five percent of the audience. I thought it would keep them on their toes.

It backfired right off the starting blocks. Ninety percent of the audience sat down. Rather shocked, I laughed with the audience but I proceeded to the next question.

"#2 - If you have a system, do you follow it and call say 10 customers a week?" Here I lost the last nine percent. I now only had six stores represented in the few audience members standing.

Then I said, "Okay. My fault. I started with too tough a question. I'll give you all another chance. Stand up again."

They did and I proceeded with, "#3 - Do you write to your customers after they purchase from you and offer any of the following: Thanks, Membership of a buying

club, Gift voucher, Friends' discount, Warranty, Invitation to a special customer sale or product display?"

I'd no sooner uttered the word "write..." than the same ninety nine percent sat down again. It was at once funny and sad.

I proceeded through the next questions

"#4 - Do you conduct special customer events like product launches, seasonal displays, midnight sales, Friday drinks, Cocktail hours, pre-stock-clearance sales?"

"#5 - Do you provide an advisory service to bond your customers to you?"

"#6 - Do you cross pollinate with other retailers in your vicinity?"

The same six stores remained standing. I asked them to identify themselves and the audience acknowledged their professionalism.

## Quick Question

At which point would you have sat down?

One of the people identified herself as the manager of *Pumpkin Planet*, a group of ten stores that sell fruit and vegetables.

That night at dinner I asked the locals to verify that a green grocer could really claim to be such a good retailer.

"Oh yes," they said. "These guys are rather special."

It's quite a story, but when I think about it, it's the kind of story which should be commonplace, and is only made remarkable by its rarity.

The owners had commissioned market research to determine how their customers felt about their stores, at the time known as *K.Markets*.

The customers assured them that their service was their best attribute but that their image and name were outdated. They stepped up to new things in the renaming and focussing on their service.

Yes, they do keep customer records. When the new season strawberries are due, they write to their strawberry lovers and let them know. It's the same with other fruits. They hold seasonal competitions like the time they conducted the Apple Pie Contest. Customers had to bring in their best pies for a public judging. They promoted it on radio and had public figures act as judges.

Are they doing ok? You bet!

I rang the head office and one of the owners Jerry Prendergast told me that he and the other owner Paul Fear have 196 staff all focussed on customers.

They give the customers what they want. If they want a refund they get it. No questions asked. They have a non negotiable service policy: The customer is first.

Customers are invited to submit recipes to be collected for the regular newsletter program.

They see themselves as mentors on eating habits and gladly cross pollinate with other stores to encourage customers to broaden their taste in meats, fish, bakery and other culinary experiences.

Does it work? You tell me.

They operate 12 stores in the Bay of Plenty area and have virtually captured the fruit and vegie market.



## Bright Idea

Ring to order your copy of the book **"Make More Money From Every Sale"** \$20 plus p&h.