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3–Levels of Successful Selling

By Paul Shearstone

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Any selling approach that lacks a proven strategy, a practiced proficiency for its application and most significantly, a full understanding of its psychological, human behavioral import - is at best, a wishful endeavor. ...Paul Shearstone 2003

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No one ever questions the fact there are born athletes who, when compared to others, make what they do look effortless. For these athletes, instinct seems to guide them like a good road map. That is their gift.

Exceptional though they may be, even athletes like Wayne Gretzky or Michael Jordan, would never rise to their true potential without one integral ingredient – Coaching.

Although I've written many articles on Coaching, this isn't one of them. I mention it only to point out that the aspect of coaching, is Mental. That is to say, gifted athletes already possess the physical skills necessary to excel. Nevertheless, it is only one aspect of their sporting expertise.

Who among us hasn't heard a professional coach say things like: "I only want players with a good head on their shoulders" or, "I only want players with Heart!"

What are they saying? They [Coaches] are saying there is more than one key discipline for success in sports and that what's in the heart and head is more important than most all other attributes. The right knowledge and the right attitude, compensates for, often usurps, things like natural talent.

Can the same thing be said for Natural Born Sales People and the Discipline of Selling? Bet on it!

The Rule:

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Renowned sales guru, Dale Carnegie, is known to be the architect of the 'Five Steps to a Sale' selling process. Over the years, his successful program has stood the test of time and spawned many other successful interpretations upon his theme. "Up Your Income! Solution Selling for Profitability" by Paul Shearstone [available at all fine book stores and on the Net], is just one of them. :-)

The reason for the success of Carnegie's strategy is largely due to its simplicity. In short, five clearly defined, easy to understand Laws or Rules that apply to almost all products or services. For example:

Step #1: "Talk to your customer Briefly regarding something that interests Them".

Easy to say but what does it mean? Simply put, when salespeople meet customers for the first time, they must say or do things to help with the initial Get–Ta–Know–Ya bonding process. Dale said, in your opening meeting with customers, the best way to get them to like you is to engage them in brief

conversations about things they find most interesting. I could go on to elaborate further but the fact is, it works.

The real lesson here is, now knowing this Rule, those without natural born sales abilities can integrate it into their selling approach and be guaranteed better results in the introduction stage of the sale. Incorporating the four remaining steps can unquestionably level the playing field with other competitive seasoned selling professionals - but only if the steps are applied Correctly!

The Application:

Home Depot may have every tool we could imagine but if you don't know how to use them, what good are they? In professional selling, RULES are TOOLS. Use them right and they work.

One need only look at the home libraries of most mediocre salespeople to find plenty of books and tapes filled with time–tested and proven rules designed to garner more sales, profit and success. The courses have been taken and the rules have been learned but sadly, NEVER PRACTICED!

Tiger Woods / Michael Jordan / Wayne Gretzky - pick any one you like. At the top of their game, they still practice/d the basics [the Rules]. Name any professional discipline; would a surgeon be allowed operate on someone without first having benefit of exhaustive practice? I sure hope not!

The irony is, selling is the only professional discipline that allows someone to start with no experience and learn on the job. Even a professional laborer has to apprentice first.

The point? Knowing what to say is only part of the success–formula in selling. Much like any Academy Award–Winning actor, his or her part is honed and made convincing [award–winning] only through rehearsal and practice.

In Sales: To the degree a sales–pitch appears natural and spontaneous, is in direct proportion to the practice put in it! ...Paul Shearstone 2000 [from the book Up Your Income!]

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The Psychological Import:

Independent, confident personalities may make great leaders - not always great believers. My policy in life has always been to be guarded in what information I'll take in or believe. I am not a skeptic but since: [According to Albert Einstein] "We become what we believe", and, [According to Abraham Maslow] "Most people live lives of quiet desperation", my reluctance to accept the reality–interpretations of others has served me well. It hasn't, however, stopped me from asking the question, "Why?"

Anyone looking for the one defining ingredient that separates top sellers from the rest can find it here. Much like the runner who wins gold by 1/100th of a second, the difference is subtle - but dramatic.

In selling, knowing the Rule and learning to deliver the Rule, still pales in comparison to the importance of knowing WHY the Rule is so integrally important to the success of the process.

How much more successful, more convincing could one be if they knew the answers to: "Why is it so vital the Rule be done at this time, this way and not another? What is the psychological, human–behavioral importance of such a rule and why are my chances of success predictably

diminished should the rule be overlooked or poorly articulated? How does this Rule psychologically embolden my interaction with the customer resulting in mutual respect, rapport and better communication?" - and so on.

At the risk of diluting this point, consider this. The worlds best Landscape Architects concentrate their designs more on the artistic value or utilitarian purposes of the open spaces - where nothing is - giving lesser importance and an academic expectation to the fact, the flora and fauna appeal is a given.

Comparing that to elite salespeople, their methodology is focused at a higher level, gravitating more toward the natural laws of human interaction and psychology - the esoteric - the essence for which the Rules of Selling were written and in which they find credibility. Their delivery appears effortless albeit transparently deliberate. What they do and the success they achieve is not by accident!

The Bottom Line:

The discipline of the Professional Sell is both an art and a science. As such and in keeping with all other disciplines, mastery finds bedrock in the academic understanding of its Laws, its Applications and its Rationales.

Paul Shearstone aka The `Pragmatic Persuasionist' is one of North America's foremost experts on Sales and Persuasion. An International Keynote Speaker, Author, Writer, Motivation, Corporate Ethics, / Time & Stress Management Specialist, Paul enlightens and challenges audiences as he informs, motivates and entertains. To comment on this article or to book the Pragmatic Persuasionist for your next successful event we invite to contact Paul Shearstone directly @ 416–728–5556 or 1–866–855–4590.

or

What Are You Really Selling?

By Mike Delaney

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What are you selling? The answer to that simple question must be deeply ingrained if you are to succeed. But the answer is not as simple as it appears.

If your answer named an item, such as "light bulbs", your light bulb company will soon perish. If you named a service, such as "employee anti–shoplifting training", your time as a consultant is short–lived.

Light bulbs and employee training are the products you provide. If you are to be successful, the product cannot be what you sell to potential customers. What does your product provide to the customer?

In other words, if you are an anti–shoplifting trainer, what benefit does your service provide for the particular customer to whom you are selling?

"Oh, I get it ..." you might think, "I'm not selling employee anti–shoplifting training, I'm selling the educated staff that the training produces. Very clever gimmick, Mr. Delaney."

Now you are thinking along the right line, but that is still not what you are really selling. While employees who are educated about theft are, indeed, a result of your training, there are thousands of employees working for companies, other than your customer's, with that same advantage. Does this particular customer derive any benefit from those employees? No. How will this particular customer benefit from the training you can provide?

By training this client's employees, you provide the client with educated employees. As a result of having a

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staff of shoplifter–aware employees, shoplifting in the store is reduced, resulting in what? It results in greater profits for the customer. That increase in profitability for the customer's business is what you are really selling.

The most important client question that your presentation must definitively address is "what's in it for me?" or, "why do I need what you are selling?" Continue digging deeper into your answer to "what are you selling?" until the your response also answers the customer's most important question. If your are to be successful, **that** is what you are selling.

So, if your product is a light bulb, and a feature of the light bulb is that it provides light, what's in it for the customer? What are you really selling? You are selling the customer the opportunity to see clearly.

So again I ask: what are you really selling?

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