

## The Changing Customer

So as I am in the process of training a class of Sales People I reflect with them on the fact that if you look at most systematic sales approaches out there they all still revert back to the one's developed by Dale Carnegie and Earl Nightingale. As someone who has done some sales in the past and who trains Salespeople I take pride in the fact that I try to keep up to date on "New" sales ideas. None of us know enough to think we don't have to continue to sharpen our skills. Think of a knife that you use quite often, you need to sharpen it so it will work well. Knives are most dangerous when they are dull, that's when most people get cut. Why? It's not sharp, it doesn't work well and you must put more effort into cutting thru a product. So I read books and study new ideas. What I have found is that the sales processes have not changed, the customer has.

So how has the Customer changed? First customer's are much more demanding. In the past businesses could dictate how they served the customer but now with more competition the customer can call the shots. Let's look at the hours of operation; businesses must now be available when customers want to do business. Banks used to be 9 to 5, Monday thru Friday operations. Banks now are opened extended hours in the evening and many our open on Saturdays. Service companies used to schedule repairs Monday thru Friday 8 to 5. Call up today and try to make an evening appointment and you'll find companies that will comply. You can also make Saturday and Sunday appointments for service and maintenance. How about location? Banks are now available in supermarkets, airports, and office buildings. Dry Cleaners can be found in supermarkets, office buildings, and even at drive thru locations. These are just a few examples of how successful companies have changed to meet the demands of their ever-changing customers.

How else have the customers changed? Who are the decision makers? In the past most companies marketed to the man of the house as the decision maker. The man made the money so the man made the decisions when it came to cars and most big item purchases. How has this changed? Cars have many more features focused on family and safety. These are characteristics that are important to a woman when she makes decisions. Let's also look at the marketing done by Disney, McDonald's, and Toys R Us. Who are they marketing to? Children in the homes now have more buying power in homes.

The customer has also changed in respect to how many choices they have to spend their money. No longer can a company assess its competition as other companies that sell the same goods or wares. Companies need to expand their horizons and understand that wherever a customer's money goes takes money from their business. Companies need to judge their level of service not by the best in their field but rather in the world. Vacations are now competing with car purchases. Treadmills are competing with new refrigerators.

And most of all the customers have a new weapon that has changed how they can make purchases, share their buying experiences, and spend their money. What is it? It's called the Internet. The Internet helps the customer compare products with a touch of a button. The Internet let's the customer share their good and bad buying experiences with a click

of a button. The Internet allows customers to shop, bank, and so much more at any time of the day or night.

So what must we do we keep our knives sharpened? First we must perfect the skills of selling that have been around since the 1950's. Study Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Nightingale's sales technique. Below I have included Mr. Carnegie's 5 steps approach.

Let's review Dale Carnegie's Sales Process:

- Step 1 Attention
- Step 2 Interest
- Step 3 Desire
- Step 4 Conviction
- Step 5 Close

Listen to the Strangest Secret and learn from Mr. Nightingale the importance of you become what you think about.

The definition of insanity is that if you keep doing the same thing and expect different results. You must change to move forward. If you stay where you are you do not remain status quo but rather fall behind. Why? Because for those that change and move ahead raise the bar. Don't fall behind but rather continue to sharpen your knife and keep your tools in great working order.

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