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**CREATIVE SELLING
MAKING AND KEEPING
CUSTOMERS**

CREATIVE SELLING MAKING AND KEEPING CUSTOMERS

BY

CHARLES HENRY MACKINTOSH



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INTRODUCTION

EVERY ONE SELLS SOMETHING

Selling begins when we lead another to **THINK** as we do about something; it ends when he **ACTS** on that thought. Every one applies the first part of that principle a thousand times a day, but the second part we apply only occasionally; and the ability to apply the second part is what makes all the difference between people. Those who can apply it are leaders; those who cannot are led—or lonesome.

Let us watch it working in the commonest kind of casual conversation. "Gee, it's hot today!" says Fred, and Jim answers: "Yes, it surely is." Fred has led Jim to **THINK** as he does about the weather. He has applied the first part of the principle of selling. Now, suppose he goes on to suggest that they go swimming, or turn on the fan, or open the window, or match for the drinks, as a means of cooling off. If Jim **ACTS** on Fred's suggestion, then Fred has applied also the second part of the principle of selling—he has made a "sale"—in the sense that he has led another to think as he does about something, and has persuaded him to act on that thought.

Viewed in the light of that simple illustration,

we see that **EVERY ONE HAS TO SELL, THOUGHTS IF NOT THINGS**, in order to amount to much. There are only three kinds of people: leaders, followers, and hermits. There are few of the first and far fewer of the last; most people fall into the middle class. These are they who continually accept and act upon the suggestions of others. Those others—the leaders—are such simply because they apply the principles of selling. Sometimes they do so instinctively, without really understanding what it is they are doing. They do it themselves, perhaps six times out of ten, but they could not explain **How** they do it, nor could they tell others how to get equal results. Leaders who understand exactly what they are doing get results, perhaps nine times out of ten, because they make systematic and scientific use of the simple principles of selling. A study of these simple principles, then, may *lift into leadership* those who have always been followers, and may strengthen the power of those who already have the instinct of leadership.

Selling Is Applied Common Sense.—Selling is simply applied common sense, and any one who was born with common sense may be a salesman. It has been said that a salesman must have “personality,” but every one has that. Even the deaf, dumb, and blind beggar has his bit of personality and may be a successful salesman, if he

uses common sense in bringing the pathos of his condition to the attention of his patrons.

A masterful personality may help, but the lack of it need not hinder any one from making a success in selling. The best insurance salesman I know has the personality of a country school-teacher, but he writes a million dollars in policies every year. He claims that his unobtrusive and inoffensive personality makes it possible for him to get in where stronger personalities might be held up because they would be suspected of having something to sell!

Nor is cleverness needed in selling. Indeed, the salesman is better off without it, because success in selling begins with the ability to lead others to think as we do. Most people are not clever, and cannot be led to think clever thoughts. Their minds are simple, and the thoughts of which they are capable are necessarily limited accordingly.

Not many years ago some one connected with the Bureau of Education in the Department of Commerce of the United States made the statement that ninety-four per cent of the people of the United States never get beyond the fourth grade in grammar school. It is obvious that any one who talked to that ninety-four per cent in terms of high school or college, or even in terms of the seventh grade of grammar school, would

be making it very hard, if not impossible, for them to think as he did.

The very first principle of selling, then, is SIMPLICITY, because it is not so much what the salesman says that makes the sale, as it is what the prospect gets out of what the salesman says. It is upon his understanding of what the salesman says that the prospect will ACT for or against the proposition, and so the simpler we can make our thoughts the more people we may lead to understand, accept, and act upon them.

Shrewdness, trickiness, the ability to think up "schemes," these all harm rather than help the salesman under our present-day code of commercial morality. Without arguing whether the world is getting better, it surely is getting *wiser* under the pressure of self-preservation in an era of mass production and mass sales. These things demand of the merchandiser that he shall discover and develop markets that renew and repeat themselves constantly—customers that come back to buy again. And customers do not come back to be cheated again, unless there is nothing but like competition.

Mass marketing, with its vital need for repeat sales, has discovered commercial honesty and reliability to be shock troops in the battle of business; and the modern salesman who does anything to undermine the morale of these shock

troops is slated for a swift and summary drum-head court-martial, with subsequent dishonorable discharge! Honesty is the only successful policy in mass marketing.

And now we have arrived at four convictions:

1. That every one needs to know how to sell.
2. That every one has to sell—thoughts if not things.
3. That leadership depends upon conscious application of the principles of selling.
4. That a study of the principles of selling is the best possible preparation for success.

Following which we have four facts:

1. Selling is simply applied common sense.
2. Selling demands no "hypnotic" personality.
3. Selling needs no special cleverness.
4. Trickiness, "slickness," are not only unnecessary, but undesirable qualities

And from these two sets of related inferences, we may draw a final one:

Every one should learn how to sell, and every one possessed of ordinary common sense can learn how to sell.

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PART I

EFFECTIVE THINKING

CREATIVE SELLING

PART I

EFFECTIVE THINKING

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, former President and now Chief Justice of the United States, once pointed out the obvious impossibility of conveying to another an idea of which oneself was not possessed. No matter how much I may wish to tell you the date of the battle of Hastings, at which William of Normandy earned his title of "The Conqueror," I cannot possibly do so unless there has first been impressed upon my own memory the necessary sequence of numbers—1066. If I tell you "1016," obviously it will not be possible for you to understand "1066."

Hugh Chalmers used to drive this same trifling but vital truism into the minds of his younger salesmen, when he would take a pencil out of his pocket and pitch it towards one of the men, asking "What have you caught?" "Your pencil,"

the other would reply. "You're sure it's not my fountain pen?" "No, it's your pencil." And then Chalmers would turn to the audience and make his point impressively: "When I threw a pencil to this man, he caught a pencil; he didn't catch a fountain pen, or a book of poetry, or an orange. He caught a *pencil*. People always catch exactly what we throw at them." And so he would go on to plead for simplicity and clearness in thought and in expression.

The beginning of selling is the ability to make others THINK, and effective selling demands the creation of a clear-cut thought definitely directed at some direct action. Now, before we may hope to give other people thoughts of that character, obviously, we must first possess them ourselves. And if we are not in the habit of effective thinking—thinking that is clear, simple and precise—then our first task is to commence the development of that habit, and the attainment of that power. "Ah," some among my readers may exclaim, "now we are going to be asked to *work*; we knew there was a catch in this somewhere." Yes, in a way it is work to learn how to use words effectively, but it is the most delightful work in the world, and the most productive of power and pleasure. Man is higher than the animals because he has words in which to record his

experience, and with which to transfer it to others. His power over the earth and over other human beings is bounded by his ability to think and to express his thoughts in words that others will understand.

Effective Talking the Result of Effective Thinking.—The foundation of effective talking is effective thinking. The power to think effectively is the most valuable thing in the world, and probably the rarest—rarer than gold. Gold is dust beside it. Rarer than diamonds. One gem of thought, just one, may be worth untold wealth.

Edison had a thought: Resist electricity and it produces heat; heat, in certain substances, produces light. Find the substance that turns heat into light, use it to resist your electricity and you have the electric light. Of course, it wasn't as simple as that when he came to work it out, few things are as easy to make as thoughts. He had to find something out of which to make his first thin carbon wire, and then he had to keep it in a vacuum or it would burn out at once. It used to break at a touch anyhow and so he had to find a filament that would not break. He found it in tungsten, but he had a terrible time learning how to draw it into a wire. He did it through a hole in a diamond at last, but that's

the way with thoughts—one leads to another and that to the next. When a man starts to think, the whole universe is at his service.

The Greatest Force.—Thought is the greatest force in the world. Millions of men neglect that force almost utterly. They weep for wealth when they have potential mines of diamonds and of gold in their own brains, ready to bring rich rewards for an hour's daily development. They will not pay the price of that hour devoted to development, to the building up of brain stuff. They prefer to watch the pictures pass before them in the silent drama, demanding no creative thought from them. They prefer to loll on the porch in idle chatter, or to spend the evening in a cabaret practicing the intricacies of some new dance step to the clangor of a jazz band.

They complain bitterly because they are not successful in business, because others are advanced over their heads. They complain that they have never had any chance, but all the while they themselves have been selling their chance for a song—or a dance! Like Esau, each allows himself to be cheated out of his birthright for a mess of pottage, for a little idle entertainment.

We think that man foolish who sells a valuable property for a trifling sum. What, then, shall we think of the one who trades fifty years of

happy, prosperous, successful, useful life for a few evenings of dissipation in youth? And yet that trade is being made continually, and there are those who will argue that it is a good bargain. "Youth is the time for enjoyment," they will argue speciously. "Why waste the golden hours in dull toil?"

Youth Is the Time for Growth.—It is true that the capacity for enjoyment of physical pleasures is keener in youth than it will ever be again, but the physical is merely the instrument of the mental, and a keen physical instrument should be a thrilling invitation to splendid mental growth and service. Youth does everything with less fatigue than age. Is that any reason why youth should neglect the mind to enjoy physical pleasures, or is it the strongest argument for developing the mind, when it is best prepared to profit from development? Youth is the time when the field is prepared and the seed sown for the harvest of maturity and age. According to the soil and the seed, so shall be the harvest; and the youth who sows "wild oats" in his field never can reap the golden harvest that might have been.

Who wastes the hours of youth is like the farmer who devours his seed grain; he is expending not a handful of grain, but a potential field full of sheaves. He is selling for a song some-

thing of almost incalculable potential value. He is like the company that sold Ocean Island, in the Pacific, for a few dollars. Years before the sale was made, one of the ship's captains of that company had brought back to the office in San Francisco a pretty rock which he had picked up on the island. It was used to hold the office door open on hot days, until one day a chemist stumbled over it and broke off a piece. He took it in his hands and asked from whence it came. "From Ocean Island," they said. And then he asked permission to take the sample to his laboratory for analysis. They questioned him, and he answered that he thought the rock was practically pure phosphate. It turned out to be true. There were between thirty and forty million tons of phosphate on Ocean Island, when phosphate was worth ten dollars a ton. Ocean Island, sold for a song, was worth nearly half a billion dollars!

Instances of this sort, taken from the history of investments, might be multiplied almost indefinitely. Mount Morgan, in Australia, was sold as an unproductive farm of one hundred acres for \$3,000 by the farmer to a stranger who thought that he had detected traces of gold on the property. The purchaser worked the property for one week and then he was offered \$30,000 for it by another and sold out. The third owner was

bought out by a syndicate for \$300,000. Now that property is capitalized for many millions and its shares sell at many times their par value. Sold for a song by three people, and worth millions all the while!

There is a thrill in such stories. Always we think that WE would have known better than to sell for a song. I wonder if we would!

Our Undeveloped Selves.—So many millions among us are selling just as cheaply things more valuable than undeveloped gold or phosphate mines. We are selling our undeveloped *selves* for a mere pittance compared with what our value to the world and to ourselves would be if only we would AWAKEN and begin to develop that which is the source of worldly fortune and human power—our MINDS.

Hundreds of thousands of people, young and old, devote themselves to physical training. They stand in front of mirrors for an hour or so a day and go through exercises calculated to give each the torso of a Hercules coupled with the grace of an Apollo. Not one per cent of that number ever sits at desks for an hour or so a day to go through exercises calculated to give them the minds of masters among men. And yet the one is just as possible, just as easy of attainment, as the

other. Muscles grow by exercise, and so do minds.

Sandow was a weakling as a boy but he wanted to be strong. Exercise made him the strongest man in the world. Lincoln had no chance to learn—nowhere to go, no books, no teachers—and so he made his own chance, earned his own books, stayed at home and taught himself. He had no chance at the beginning, but at the end he had the homage of the world. What man *has* done, man *can* do. Any man of reasonably sound mind—and they say that none of us is perfectly sound!—can *learn* to think and can THINK. Schools and colleges are supposed to teach people how to think, but it doesn't do any good to learn how unless we put our knowledge into practice. Schools help us to think; but it is not what we know that counts so much as what we Do with what we know.

Chess is a very good game to develop the intellect. It requires really concentrated thought to play a good game of chess. It is one way to build mind stuff; but I knew a man who could play ten games of chess at once blindfolded and win them all, and he wasn't a mite of use to the world. Playing chess doesn't add anything to the world's production, nor does it help in the great business of distribution. It teaches one how to think,

but that doesn't help any one unless he uses his power of thinking on worth while things.

The problems of Euclid afford excellent training in logic, but it will never help a lawyer in pleading his case before a jury that he knows how to prove that, when the sides of a triangle are equal, the angles also are equal. It will help him, though, if he is able to use the same principles in proving the particular facts of his case. In the same sense, it helps a man to be able to concentrate his mind on a game of chess for three hours because, having learned how to concentrate, he can do the same thing on a worth while book or on a practical problem. But, if he doesn't do that, if he uses his power of concentration only on games, he might as well never have developed it. It isn't what we have, it's what we Do with what we have that helps or hurts us.

The athlete who develops his body to the highest possible point of perfection will probably die young if he drops out of training too suddenly and too completely. That is because he has created a vast quantity of tissue that cannot be used except in physical work, and when he stops doing that kind of thing, the unused tissue is very apt to become a friendly refuge for dangerous germs. Nature does not believe in leaving things unused. When she gives us something or allows

us to take it, she expects us to use it or she will either take it away again or use it for something else—for germ culture, for example. Let's not develop our minds, then, unless we propose to use them for real THINKING.

There are too many folks in the world now who believe that they are intellectual aristocrats because they know the ancient Grecian alphabet and could make war maps of Julius Cæsar's Gallic campaigns. What the world wants is practical thinking applied to its immediate affairs—social, business, artistic. It is worth while to develop mentally along those lines, and it is possible for practically every man on earth to multiply his value to the world many times over by intelligent and energetic development along lines of practical thinking applied to the work of the world by means of well chosen and carefully connected words that all may understand.

Babel in Business.—When the Lord wanted to stop the building of the Tower of Babel, He did it by the simple expedient of confounding the builders' language, that they might not understand one another's speech (Genesis ii :7). Plenty of modern business building is stopped or delayed or done wrongly for the very same reason, because the people working on the job use con-

founded language and do not understand one another's speech.

"Send down to the consolidated ticket office and get me a ticket and section to Cleveland to-morrow," said the General Salesmanager to the House Service Department. He brought his traveling bag to his desk next day and, as the proper time approached, called for his tickets. "Why, we were going to get them on the last trip to-day; you told us yesterday to get them to-morrow, and that's to-day, you know." Muddy thinking and confounded language at both ends. The General Salesmanager slept in an upper berth that night, and arose unrefreshed to attend a vital sales conference, in which a competitor thought just a little faster than he and landed the contract. It pays to think fast and *first*; second thoughts often are costly and humiliating. How many of us have lain awake nights thinking "what we might have said" in some situation the day before!

"Boss, I want a raise," said Williams to his foreman. "We are not raising any one right now," answered the foreman. "Well, I'm worth it and I want it!" persisted Williams, who really *was* worth it, because he had been doing two men's work. "I've told you we're not raising *any one* right now!" "All right, then, I want

my time!" countered Williams curtly. "Go right to the timekeeper and get it!" snapped his superior, thoroughly aroused by the antagonistic wording of Williams' demand. And so there was a trained man out of a good job, and a good job without a trained man just because he hadn't known how to word a perfectly reasonable request.

Examples might be multiplied almost indefinitely. Ninety per cent of all the trouble in business is the product of misunderstanding, and most of the misunderstanding is the result of confused thought and careless speech. The trouble is few of us ever *learn* how to think and to speak; we just "pick it up" as a dog picks up fleas. The very idea of learning such subjects must sound ridiculous to many people, because they have never previously heard of or given consideration to such a thing. Speaking "came natural" to them, just as walking did, and yet the officers at our army training camps in 1918 say that seventy-nine men in a hundred had to be taught how to walk, and ninety-nine had to learn how to march. Things that we do "instinctively" usually we do very badly indeed, because man is no longer a creature of instinct but of REASON. There is a *best* way to do everything,

but only right thinking can reason it out and apply it.

A big firm of painters in the Middle West began to lose a lot of contracts to a smaller competitor because his prices were lower than theirs, notwithstanding their advantage of quantity-buying of paint and brushes. Finally the manager of the larger firm made a series of time studies on the work of their own painters, to see how long it took the different men to cover an equal surface with paint. The manager found one man who did nearly one-third as much again as the average, and who did it with less fatigue to himself, because he had acquired the knack of rhythmical and economical motion. The movements of that man were carefully timed and recorded, and all the other men were shown just how they could spare themselves effort by adopting them. The final result equaled a twenty-five per cent increase in production without any increased cost, and with actually reduced effort from the painters. Now that firm gets practically all the contracts it goes after, and gives its customers better work at lower prices than ever before. Some of those painters had been plying paint brushes for a quarter of a century, and would have taken oath that they couldn't improve any further. Yet they were

the very ones who made the greater gains after they had been persuaded to try the new method.

The number of times an act is performed does not necessarily govern the perfection of its performance; in fact, the more frequently an act is done badly, the easier it becomes to keep on doing it badly. On the reverse, the more frequently it is well done, the easier it becomes to keep on doing it well. The important thing is to get *started* properly.

Jim Ten Eyck, the famous rowing coach, who trained the young office men of Duluth to capture all sweep events year after year against the picked oarsmen of America and Canada, says that he would much rather train a beginner than *untrain* and *retrain* one who thinks he knows now how to row pretty well. Other athletic coaches will tell you the same thing. In all human activities, there is a *best* way to do everything, and the man who does a thing most frequently isn't always the one who does it best. Even in such commonplace activities as sleeping and breathing, walking and talking, we can increase our personal efficiency many times over by simply paying attention to them and thinking about them, until we are able to apply the best ways to all our own activities.

Concentration.—Most people find it hard to think—that is, to concentrate the mind upon a single subject until some logical judgment or decision has been arrived at concerning it. Concentration is the first essential to effective thinking, just as effective thinking is essential to effective talking. Concentration is essential not only to the act of effective talking, but also to acquiring the power of effective thinking that makes possible the act of effective talking.

Psychologists have said that three seconds is the extreme period during which the average human mind can concentrate upon a single point. After that it takes a tiny rest and then returns to the point—sometimes. Often, though, it never does get back to the point because its attention is attracted elsewhere during the rest period. One of the oldest of aphorisms is that “a change is as good as a rest,” and so if the mind may but change the point upon which it concentrates, that will serve instead of the rest period. This is why voices, street noises, so many sights and sounds and scents conspire to take the attention from that upon which we strive to concentrate.

Complete concentration excludes everything but the point. Such a state is difficult, but not impossible, to attain. The yogi of India attain it frequently through constant practice, and what

yogi have done, others may do. Indeed, many an Occidental writer has recorded that he has become so absorbed in his work as to hear and see and feel nothing else. Clocks might strike, the sunlight fall across his desk, flies buzz about his head, but the concentrated writer keeps on and knows nothing but the fact of his work. The same condition occurs even more frequently in reading than in writing. Who has not become so absorbed in a story of adventure as to be oblivious to everything but the action in the book?

Now in this connection there is another interesting psychological axiom to the effect that memory depends upon attention. We remember longest and most clearly that upon which our attention is most thoroughly concentrated. Throw your mind back along your own youth, what comes most clearly into memory? You will think first of those sights, sounds, scents and feelings which were impressed upon your mind by unusual events that gripped your attention firmly and caused CONCENTRATION.

In moments of physical danger, intense concentration is instinctive. That is why people are capable of such surprising exertions when the need is urgent: cripples fling themselves from before speeding vehicles; exhausted swimmers,

sighting a sail, make last efforts greater than all that have gone before; chronic invalids leap from their beds to fly to the streets at the alarm of "Fire!" All the faculties are under the control of the mind, and when the mind becomes thoroughly concentrated, the human machine appears to be almost irresistible. How rarely, though, is it concentrated!

Concentration a Habit.—The reason that concentration is so rare is because so few people truly realize that it is a habit which can be acquired through practice just as all other good or bad habits are acquired.

The man who wishes to swim five miles does not jump off a jetty at once and strike out for his distant mark, without training or practice. If he did, he would drown. Instead, he begins to practice the different strokes until he finds the one with which he can make swiftest progress with least exertion, or else he inquires among successful long-distance swimmers and adopts the results of their experience. Let us say that he decides on the Australian crawl as the swiftest and least tiring stroke. Then for days and weeks he must practice the scissors stroke of the legs, the trick of exhaling under water, of catching a full breath in a single second above surface, the upreach and down dip of the hollowed hands—

all this before he can even begin upon his distance work. Having the stroke perfected as a series of semiautomatic movements, he may then begin to extend the distance over which he swims daily—fifty yards, a hundred, two hundred, at length a mile—and then, by gradual increase, the full five.

The same principle must be followed by any who would excel in physical prowess, whether in the water or on the land. Indeed, even such sedentary occupations as piano or violin playing demand physical education of the fingers lasting for years. All who aspire to be athletes or musicians, however, readily recognize that the one royal road to all their goals is the road of PRACTICE, constant and unremitting. The would-be strong man who swings his dumb-bells for half an hour to-day and not again for a week will get nowhere. *Constant* practice is the price of proficiency, and there are no sales or bargain days. Every one must pay the full price and pay it in personal effort, since none other may develop us but ourselves. Now, those who wish to enjoy the rewards of mental efficiency may find them by following the same royal road of practice.

Developing Concentration.—Practice in concentration on worth while things is the surest road to power. Merely to practice concentration

for the sake of excluding all physical things, as do the yogi of India whom we have already mentioned, will never get any one anywhere in a world of physical facts. To practice concentration upon a pin point or a flyspeck on the window-pane is another asinine form of employment which may ruin the eyesight, but can scarcely profit the mind.

There is nothing mystical, nothing esoteric, nothing magical about acquiring the faculty for concentration. It is simply a matter of profitable work painstakingly applied. What do we want to be and do? Let that question guide us to proper objects for concentration. Do we wish to be effective talkers in business? It is obvious, then, that we must concentrate upon a study of those books and papers which will give us an orderly stock of knowledge upon this particular subject. Then, like the embryo long-distance swimmer, we must learn the stroke and practice it. We must learn to fix our minds upon the chapter or the written exercise until nothing can distract us until it is well finished.

At first the extreme limit of absolute concentration may be the three seconds granted by the psychologists, and then will come the tendency to distraction. It is this tendency we must learn to overcome, and we will soon discover that we

can overcome it, too, not by resisting it—because resistance demands attention to the thing resisted—but only by renewed application to the object of concentration. Adopting this method, we will add three-second period to three-second period, until we can “hew to the line” for hour after hour.

We are familiar with the tiny coral insects which build islands and continents of firm, dry land above the surface of the ocean by heaping the almost invisible cells of their bodies upon each other. So can we heap these tiny three-second periods upon each other until first the point, and then the island, and then the continent of concentration appears above the drifting sea of idle thoughts, in which so many lives are wrecked and drowned. It is the one absolutely certain road to power, and any one whose mind is not diseased may take it. The fact that so few do take it is because so few really WANT power. Many *wish* for it, but we wish for things in thoughts and words; we WANT them with our WILLS, and only then do we get them. Power or weakness, we may have whichever we want; but if we do not take power and pay the price for it, then we must take weakness because one or the other is inevitable.

Everyday Thinking.—Most of us would go ahead much faster if only we would train ourselves to think about all the little things we do. It is appalling how few folks really use their brains even to a tenth of their true capacity. Once in a while each one of us is confronted with some situation which actually demands thought before judgment, but in a dozen other cases do we not deliver judgment without thought? Indeed, the situation must be so serious as almost to present a mental pistol at our heads to force us to use them: life, limb, future must be at stake before we will really stop and think before action.

On the minor matters of life, particularly upon the routine of our daily work, how few of us exercise our minds at all? These things are done often in a sort of daze, without any of the true mental activity of volition entering into them. Who has not been in some office or store in which mistake after mistake, blunder after blunder, has been made entirely because of want of thought? The poet voiced a great truth when he said: "More ill is wrought through want of thought, than is through want of heart."

Many of us have trained ourselves to devote a part of each day, or at least of each week, to constructive thinking, and this is excellent and profitable exercise. We often overlook, however,

an even greater, because more constant, opportunity to exercise the faculty of constructive thinking upon our multitudinous minor tasks of every day. After all, in attaining true proficiency, the deciding factor is continuity of practice.

In physical development, it is said, no athlete, no matter how scientifically he may develop his body, ever can bring it to the same perfection of endurance attained by a blacksmith in the regular course of his work. This is because, while the amateur is developing his muscles, perhaps to a greater degree than the blacksmith develops his, still the continuity of the blacksmith's exercise develops not alone his muscles, but also thickens and strengthens and renders more flexible the tendons that attach the muscles to the bones.

So it is also in mental matters. The man who takes his mental exercise at set daily or weekly intervals will develop mental power far in excess of that possessed by the mental drifter. But the man who puts thought into every act of his life will carry his mental development at least equally far beyond the periodical exerciser of constructive thought. Continuity of practice is the way to proficiency in any pastime or employment.

Few People Think Clearly.—Some years ago, Professor Paul Cherrington, then of Harvard, conducted an interesting psychological experi-

ment upon a group of students. The experiment was designed to show whether these students possessed the power of thinking clearly and expressing a concise opinion upon certain subjects given them to define. For example, one might be asked: "What is the major purpose of the League of Nations, and how is it proposed to achieve that purpose?" It is understood that this question is to be answered orally and without undue delay. No less than 85 per cent of those college men demonstrated that they shared, with the common run of humanity, a distressing inability to organize their thoughts swiftly and clearly and to express them concisely and simply, so that others might understand. "Let's see, the League of Nations—mmm—well, the main purpose, probably, is to bring together all the big nations in a sort of compact to preserve the peace, operating through a sort of Supreme Court to be located at Geneva, Switzerland, enforcing its rulings by means of boycotts declared against nations that refuse to accept them, by all the other nations belonging to the League."

That would be above the average, because it is clear enough despite the fact that it goes too far into details and uses up too many words. Ex-President Wilson answered that question once in eleven words: "To preserve world peace by or-

ganizing the major force of mankind." There we have an excellent example of what it means to be able to think quickly and clearly and to express concisely.

We can't all be ex-President Wilsons, of course, and we can't all be college men; but each of us can quite readily train himself to organize his thoughts before expressing them, and so to express them in the clearest possible form and in the fewest possible words. To do this requires simply the formation of a habit of thinking before speaking. So many people let their thoughts trickle through their mouths without any attempt at organization in advance!

Starting with a simple impression which tends towards expression, they immediately begin to babble, something after this style: "Gee, it's hot to-day. Wonder if it will be like this to-morrow? That's Sunday, and if it is, it would be a good day to go in swimming. Down on Chubb Creek, for instance. And then we ought to take the fishing tackle along and do some fishing. Make a day of it. What say, Brown, are you on? Let's go down to Chubb Creek to-morrow and go fishing and go in swimming and take our lunches along and make a day of it."

You can see the thoughts forming and trickling out like rain water from a barrel with a hole in

the bottom! Now, that may be a natural way for thoughts to form in the mind, but it should not be a natural way to give oral expression to them. The thinker should train himself to think silently and swiftly until he has arrived at his decision and then to voice that decision. He might conclude his chain of silent thought on this same problem of the holiday, thus: "Brown, it's going to be hot in town to-morrow, but it will be cool and pleasant along Chubb's Creek. Let's spend the day there, fishing and swimming. Have a lunch ready, and I'll call for you in the car at eight in the morning."

The same thoughts could be expressed in fewer words, but probably not so effectively. The purpose of speech in this case, it must be remembered, is not only to convey an idea to another, but also to secure its acceptance in his mind. Effective speech, then, is that which accomplishes its purpose with the least expenditure of energy by speaker and hearer. If, through too great brevity, it fails to secure conviction and demands supporting speech which might otherwise have been unnecessary, it is not truly effective. If the speaker had said simply: "Brown, let's spend to-morrow fishing and swimming on Chubb's Creek," Brown might have answered: "Aw, it's too hot. I'd sooner stay in town. Where'd we

get any lunch? How'll we get there? It's nearly twenty miles," and each of these objections would have demanded an answer of its own. The properly planned expression, however, anticipated all these objections by presenting the proposition at once in its most favorable light, throwing into relief, too, all the essential features of the proposed trip.

The Value of Clear Thinking.—Perhaps some of those who read this may be inclined to question the need for, or value of such careful organization of thought before breaking into speech; and it is, of course, true that the examples given are more highly organized than would be possible or necessary in the average case. The great value of such organization of thought, however, consists more in its effect upon the thinker than in saving a few seconds of time for the hearer.

We have seen 85 per cent of a group of college men failing in a psychological test to demonstrate power of clear thinking and concise expression. We may discover by opening our ears, that the percentage of those who cannot think and speak clearly is even greater among those who have not attended institutions devoted to the encouragement of organized thinking. And yet it is obviously true that the value of all knowledge depends upon its accessibility and upon the use

that can be made of it. Simply to have seen, to have read, to have known, is nothing unless that which was seen, read, or known is immediately available when needed. The fact that I dimly recall reading what to do to revive a partially drowned person, but cannot remember any of the details, will not serve when I am confronted with the actual event.

Just so, in less urgent but equally important degree, the fact that I have read a clear and convincing reason for the high prices of my goods, will not serve me if I cannot recall it in time to answer the indignant question of my prospective customer. That is why it is of vital value to any one to practice organization of thought before speech; first, because it trains in the prompt location of material in the mental files; second, because it leads to the swift arrangement of this material in logical sequence before it is presented to effect; third, a known and planned purpose.

If the habit led only to the last, the planned purpose preceding speech, much would have been accomplished. So few people, speakers or writers, plan their purposes in advance. Themselves not knowing in advance what effect they wish to produce by their speech or writing, what wonder that they so often produce no effect at all, or else

secure effects entirely at variance with that with which they themselves eventually conclude?

Thinking Is Chemistry.—To produce a desired chemical reaction, it is necessary to mix certain things in fixed proportions under known conditions. If we take one part of carbon and blend it with two parts of oxygen, we produce a gas in which flame is extinguished instantly. Let us, through haste or carelessness, get the proportions wrong so that there is but a single part of oxygen to one of carbon, and then if we plunge our flaming taper into the mixture to test it, instead of darkness and black smoke, we shall have a geyser of blue flame and a fearful explosion!

Thought also is a chemical reaction, perpetuated along the nerves until it reaches the mind, and just as in inorganic chemistry, so in psychological chemistry (and, indeed, in everything else in the world of matter!), action and reaction always are exactly equal. We cannot convey our thoughts to others unless we possess the power of simple and concise expression, in which no double meanings are possible, because people cannot listen to our thoughts except through the medium of our words. Ideas may be dissolved in words, just as a powerful drug may be dissolved in water, but when the solution is absorbed, it is the drug and not the water, the idea and not

the words, that produces the effect; and the degree of each effect depends upon the purity of drug and water, the clarity of idea and words.

The great thing to strive for, then, might be expressed otherwise as the power of visualizing ideas so that they may be painted in words. It is difficult to paint a vague memory, but given a clearly cut conception, the words to describe it will come easily enough with practice in the art.

To sum up, then: It is not enough to know; we must also know what we know when we need our knowledge, and possess the power to express it so that it will become of equal value in the minds of others. To become expert in this needs constant practice—before speaking always we must know what we are to say, and how and why. Practice of this sort, in addition to giving us minds of a quality possessed by not more than 15 per cent of the human race, will enable us also to leave so many useless or harmful things unsaid.

How We Think.—Thinking is the hardest of work to those who have not learned how to do it effectively. It is harder to use an undeveloped mental muscle than it is to use an undeveloped arm or leg, because it is perfectly possible that the exact mental muscle, or idea, we want isn't there at all, and we will have to make it first. We have to take two or three other ideas and

mix them according to art to make a new idea. Then we may exercise that new idea until it grows strong.

Imagine a carpenter having to *make* all his tools before he could build a house! Imagine him casting a hammerhead and boring holes in it and fitting a handle; imagine him smelting iron and working it into steel and hammering it into a plate and cutting saw teeth in it—before he could do that he would need a file, and he would need other tools to make the file. It would be years before he could get to his house-building.

That's the way it is with a thinker. He has to make his tools as he goes, stopping often to make tools with which to make tools. The tools of the thinker are his concepts and his channels of association—the actually existing gray-and-white cords that connect concept cells together in his upper brain.

Building the Brain.—Let us give just an elementary glance at the process of building a human brain. The brain proper consists of three principal parts—the cerebrum, or upper brain, connected by a bridge of cords, known as the “Pons Varolii” with the cerebellum, or lower brain, which leads down into the medulla oblongata situated between the lower brain and the spinal cord. There are lots of little brains else-

where in the body situated where bunches of nerves branch away to their respective organs, but the three parts mentioned constitute the central station of the thinking plant.

Now, only the upper brain produces what we call original thought. The lower brain is the mind of the physical, and it issues its orders through the medulla oblongata which is practically the first sergeant of the nervous system.

Every original thought — every abstract thought—indeed, every thought of which the human mind is capable, must originate in something the owner of that brain has felt, smelt, tasted, heard or seen. These are the only avenues *into* the body which at birth possesses only dull race memories (also originally tracing back to often repeated sense impressions) stored in the lower parts of the brain, in the centers along the spinal cord, in the solar plexus, and in other centers of reflex action.

At the moment of birth, a child is completely incapable of what we call conscious thought. Its mental life is restricted to the dull movement of racial memories in the depths of the subconscious. Before it can think a conscious thought, it must first build the upper brain with which to think it. Its first concept may be created by a recognition of the fact that stuff taken into the mouth tastes

good. When first that concept is clearly conceived, it is said that a tiny speck of gray matter rises from the lower brain and floats up into the cortex, or surface lining, of the upper brain, trailing a tiny gray cord behind it, connecting it to the lower centers of activity. This gray matter is not actually nerve stuff, but is merely insulating material. The nerve stuff is white, but every bit of it in the brain is covered and protected by gray insulating material so that impressions carried by the white wires cannot jump from one to another.

Each subsequent original concept repeats this process, and the speed with which the baby's brain is builded during its first few months is simply amazing. If we could only keep on building brain stuff at the same rate for the rest of our lives, what intellectual giants we might become!

Thought Is Combination of Concepts.—These original concepts, however, cannot produce thoughts. They can only reproduce themselves. Thought is made by the combination of two or more original concepts to form an abstract idea. For example, the baby has the concept of pleasure-in-food, and the concept of its food bottle. Gradually the inevitable association between these two concepts makes itself felt. The appearance

and feel of the warm, round bottle always precede the act which brings food into the mouth and stimulates the concept of pleasure-in-food. Recognition of this association is accompanied by the actual building of a bridge of nerve stuff between the two concept cells in the upper brain. The concepts are linked together by this nerve wire, and henceforth stimulation of the one will tend to arouse the other. The sight and feel of the bottle will arouse the desire for food. The desire for food will arouse a demand for the sight and feel of the bottle.

Meanwhile other original concepts are being formed at an amazing rate, and scores and hundreds of these little nerve-wire bridges are being pushed across to join one to another, or one to a hundred others. The concept of heat, for example, might well be related to a thousand other concepts of things capable of generating or of holding heat. That's how a brain is builded, and the process of original thinking implies the actual building of bridges between these tiny cells of gray-clad nerve matter in which sense impressions are permanently registered by the perpetuation of chemical action along the nerve wires from the nerve endings on the surface of the body.

The Sensory System.—Let's go into the surface system just briefly, so that we may have the complete process clearly in mind. Sown so thickly under the skin that it is impossible to insert the point of a needle in any part of it, without making a contact with one of them, are other tiny blobs of nerve substance, from which several tiny arms of similar substance branch out through the skin, to collect sense impressions from contacts with the outer world. From each of these tiny sense centers, a single nerve wire trails away to the nerve center governing its part and so is connected with the brain. Every one of all these uncounted billions of tiny nerve centers of sense is in touch with the brain.

Now, when the point of a pin touches one of the tiny fibers connected with one of those sense cells in the skin, a chemical reaction takes place, which reaction is carried to the surface sense cell and thence relayed, by way of the proper spinal centers, to the lower brain. A baby cannot do anything about an impression of this sort except to register misery, until some person, capable of conscious thought, connects the cry with its probable cause, and institutes a search for the offending pin. This is because all our nerve substance is highly specialized and we can use nerves of touch only to convey impressions of

touch. The infant can feel pain, but it cannot do anything to relieve it until it has created a concept of pain, and connected this concept with other concepts of the causes of pain. A burnt child dreads the fire because it has connected its concept of fire with its concept of pain.

These upper brain processes are the bridges (or perhaps it would be better to compare them with the knife switches on an electric switch-board) between sense impressions and motor actions.

The Motor System.—The motor nervous system is entirely distinct from the sensory nervous system. The sensory system carries sense impressions from the surface to the brain; the motor system carries orders from the brain to the muscles. I touch a hot stove. The sense centers in my finger telegraph wildly to the brain "It's hot!" The brain throws the necessary switches connecting the effect with the cause and then plugs in on the motor system and wires back to the motor nerve centers in the biceps of my right arm telling them to get busy and take a series of reefs—as they would say on a sailing vessel—in the muscle fiber. As they do this, an increasing pull comes on the tendons attached to the forearm which can be felt at the inside of the elbow, and so the forearm folds up away from the hot

surface. All this, of course, happens with the speed of electricity.

Now, let us briefly review the entire system as we have seen it in action. It is a five-point system. First, the sense cell on the surface; second, the sense cell in the lower brain; third, the recording and associating processes in the upper brain; fourth, the motor cell in the lower brain; fifth, the motor cell in the muscle. The ganglia in the upper brain constitute the crown of the five-point system, and it is because of their wealth of these ganglia that men are the lords of creation.

The lowest forms of life have a one-point nervous system, in which impression and expression are simply automatic reactions. A little higher in the scale are living forms having sense system and motor system, the one to feel and the other to act, but action still is automatic and inevitable. Then comes the duplication of this two-point system in a distant center of instinctive control called a brain; but not until we get among the upper classes of the placental mammals do we find traces of the fifth point in the system, the point which gives the godlike powers of memory and of conscious choice of actions.

It has been estimated by an eminent physiologist that man has about nine billions of these

fifth-point ganglia in his upper brain, but the number appears to be capable of almost infinite expansion, limited only by the energy and will force of the individual. A tired man cannot think, a weak one will not; but the tired may recuperate and the weak may develop strength. Every man should build his power of thought to the fullest extent of his personal powers, meanwhile developing those powers so that the process may continue. In his power of thought is potential fortune—wealth and power.

Better Thinking.—Just how can we develop our powers of thought? We know that thought is produced by the association of simple concepts and that every one of our concepts came to us through our organs of sense. Everything we know we must have seen, heard, felt, smelt, or tasted at some time. Everything we think is made up of simple or compound combinations of these concepts which came to us through our senses.

There are two ways, then, in which we may increase the scope of our thinking: we may learn to recognize more of the relations between the concepts already existing in our minds, or we may increase our stock of concepts. Of course, we may also do both at once.

Now, what is meant by recognizing the rela-

tions between concepts? Simply an extension of the process that takes place in the baby's mind when it recognizes the relations between its concept of hunger and its concept of its bottle. Let us take another example along a similar but perhaps more vital line. We have in our minds concepts of all the good and evil qualities of mankind. We have concepts of what is shameful, cowardly, dishonorable, dishonest; we have concepts of what is noble, kindly, generous, honorable and honest. When we come in contact with other people, instinctively we commence to compare them with these concepts; but rather more than half the human race is negative minded in these matters.

The average man uses his stock of concepts of negative qualities far more frequently than he employs the positive ones. "This fellow is an egoist," he decides, after listening to him awhile when he wanted to talk himself. He does not see that the same man is also kindly and honest. "This man is a liar," he says. He does not see that the liar is lying because of his intense loyalty to his house. See how much he misses because he has not trained himself to recognize the relations between more of his concepts! He might have known the first man as self-assertive, but with a kindly and honest self. He knows him

only as an egoist. He might have known the second as loyal to a fault. He knows him only as a liar.

Let us by all means, then, learn to recognize more of the relations between our concepts of people, qualities and things. To do this is literally to make finer the mesh of that mental net which is woven of gray-clad nervous matter connecting the cells in which sense impressions are registered in the upper brain.

Employ the Senses.—Let us also increase our store of concepts, of those original sense impressions which are brought to us by our five senses, and established in consciousness by the simple act of recognition. Few of us employ our senses to a tenth of their true capacity. We walk along the highway of life with our eyes blinded by the dust of the road, dust that chokes the nostrils and irritates the skin and gets into the mouth; and as we march along, we hear nothing but the tramping of the marching millions, every sense stopped with the dust of life. Tramp. Tramp. Tramp. So we go down the road among the smothering dust.

We never see the blossoming hedges beside the road. We cannot hear the skylark overhead. The scent of the wild rose cannot come to us among the dust. Our eyes are on the road, and so we

never see the morning sunlight weaving wonderful, cloudy fabrics of light and color on the loom of the sky; and when night falls it is black, black. We never lift our faces to see the deep purple mantle of the evening strewn with golden and jeweled stars.

The world is full of beauty and harmony, perfume and color; but how few of us take even one-tenth of all the gifts the gods hold out to us! We go from toil to rest and from rest again to toil; stopping only to take food and drink. Our recreations consist perhaps in resting our minds upon some moving picture or being charmed by the same sort of music that set the savages in their Senegambian swamps to dancing much as we dance to-day.

There is a universe of magnificent music of which most of us know nothing. There are a thousand thousand other worlds in books, but we know few of them! Generations of dreamers have crystallized their dreams into things of beauty—pictures, and poems, and carven things little and great, from the carven cameo to the dream-haunted high and dim façade of Rheims Cathedral.

Most of us see painted canvass and pretty pebbles and big magnificent buildings; we cannot

see the dreams because we have no concepts of that sort in our upper brains. We are practical people. We pride ourselves upon our practicality. But *is* it practical to take the dust of life and to leave the gold and jewels? *Is* it practical to take a tenth—and the dullest, deadest tenth—of what belongs to us freely if only we will stretch out our hands and take it?

We do not need to forget our practical things, to leave our work, to go far afield to find the other nine-tenths of our lives. It is right around us, but like the air, we cannot see it; gold and diamond mines may be beneath our feet, but we will not know it. We think that we must go far away to find precious things. They are never where we are. And when we get to that far-away place, still the precious things are far away, because they are never where we are unless we carry them within us.

Years ago, when the great West was little more than a dim and dangerous dream, there was a tiny house beside the trail at the last frontier of civilization, and here there lived a little family of pioneers. There was a well of sweet water beside the trail, and the old grandmother of the family liked to sit beside that well in the shade of the trees, waiting for the occasional caravan

that came down the dusty trail, heading out into the unknown.

Granny and the Pioneers.—Every wagon train would stop to water the thirsty stock and to exchange greetings with Granny. “Howdy, strangers?” the kindly old lady would call, as soon as they came within hearing. “Howdy, Granny?” they would reply; and then the old lady, eager for news of the civilization she had left so long ago, would proceed to draw them out.

“Where are you-all from?”

“Oh, back there along the trail a piece, reckon ’bout a hundred mile.”

“And where are you-all going?”

“Out into the new West to make a place for ourselves.”

“I suppose it’s right hard to leave the old home, though?” Granny would say sympathetically. And most of them would answer: “Mighty hard, Granny, and we’re surely sorry to leave; but the boys are growing up and there isn’t room for them back there, so we just had to pull up stakes and hit the trail, though it most broke our hearts to leave all our kind friends and good neighbors back there.”

“Nice folks, eh?” Granny would murmur.

“The nicest, kindest folks ever you could

know; always smiling and cheerful and ready to lend a hand."

"Well, well," Granny would wag her wise old head, "don't you worry, folks, I reckon you'll find plenty more of the same kind where you're going!"

But one day there came down the trail a wagon train bringing a family with hard bitter faces, quarreling amongst themselves continually; and to those Granny put the same simple questions.

"Howdy, strangers?" as cheerily as ever.

"Howdy, Granny?" this gruffly from the leader of the wagon train.

"Where you-all from?"

"Back along the trail about a hundred miles."

"Where are you-all going?"

"Out into the West."

"I suppose it's right hard to leave the old place?" Granny went on with her friendly formula.

"Not on your life!" the leader answered, unexpectedly. "Why, we're glad as we can be to get away from those folks back there—narrow, bitter, mean folks they are, never have a kind word or a pleasant look for any one. Always quarreling, too; we're glad to get away!"

Granny knew that it took two to make a quarrel and she looked up into their hard faces

and shook her wise old head. "Well, well," she said, "I'm afraid you'll find plenty more of the same kind where you're going!"

And Granny, gentle old philosopher, was right. They *would* find plenty more of their own kind wherever they went, just as the friendly and helpful folks would find *their* own kind wherever *they* went.

People Are Mental Mirrors. — People are mostly what we make them. If we are quarrelsome, they will quarrel with us. If we are friendly, they will be friends with us. They will smile at us if we smile at them; but if we are harsh and bitter with them, they will defend themselves with similar weapons. It never pays to pull stakes and take the trail looking for the gold of friendship and the jewel of love unless we carry them in our own knapsacks. If we have them not, though we travel thrice around the earth, they shall be as far away at the end as in the beginning. If we have them, however far we travel we will never get away from them.

And so, if we would build our minds and mold them to right habits of clear thought, let us begin by deliberately practicing our natural faculties for observation upon all the beautiful, happy, heart-moving things that come to us as we pass along the way of life. Let us remember that

our brains are builded by our own sensations—largely by what we see, and that we *see* only the things we really look at. This is what the Christ must have meant when he said, “They that have eyes to see, let them see; they that have ears to hear, let them hear.” A thousand may walk along a path, but only one see the jewel in the dust. A hundred may hear the violinist, but only one hear and marvel at the perfection of his tone quality. Sensation demands observation—let us pay that price for better brains; and then let us pay the second installment in concentration so that we may know what we know and be prepared to express it in clear and simple and concise form for the understanding and acceptance of others. Thus, surely and pleasantly, may we pass along the path of personal power to whatever is our heart’s desire.

PART II

**SEVEN KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL
SELLING**

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SEVEN KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SELLING

ALL selling may be classified as written or spoken. It has been estimated by competent authorities that nearly fifty per cent of all modern business is done through the mails. The application of the sound principles of success in selling also to the betterment of business letters, cannot fail to produce tremendously profitable results. It is probably true that the average person who has to build a sales talk or dictate a business letter, approaches the task without any previous preparation, and usually proceeds without in any way planning the purpose and contents of his messages.

There are seven keys to the building of effective sales arguments, and these seven keys may be strung on two rings—The Plan, and The Performance.

THE PLAN

The first of these rings is the plan. Every effective action depends for the certainty of its success upon the degree to which it has been

planned in advance, and provision made to surmount all obstacles and to overcome resistance to its proper performance. Unplanned and uncharted action sometimes succeeds, but when it does, it is a matter of luck, and it is not good business to rely upon luck.

Successful business men plan their strategy well in advance of the action which brings it into concrete existence; and the same system that is successful in the major branches of business is no less applicable to those "tremendous trifles"—the sales messages that go out to represent the business to its customers and business friends.

Three of the seven keys open doors into the plan.

The First Key—*Knowledge of the Subject.*—The purpose of every sales message is to convey ideas upon some subject from the mind of the author to the mind of the reader or hearer through the medium of WORDS. Hugh Chalmers used to tell his young salesmen that they must not expect to say one thing and have the prospect understand another, and he used to illustrate that thought by saying: "You can't throw a teacup at a prospect and have it turn into a teapot on the way!"

What is true in speech is equally true in writing; the message the reader receives depends

entirely upon the extent to which the writer understood his subject, since he cannot possibly convey to others information of which he himself is not possessed. Knowledge of the subject, then, must always precede any effectual attempt to convey ideas through the medium of the spoken or the written word.

In considering just how to set about gaining knowledge of the subject, it is essential to consider also the second of the three keys to The Plan that precedes the preparation of effective sales messages.

The Second Key—*Knowledge of the Object.*—A great deal of time might be wasted in acquiring knowledge of a subject unless first the object to be attained with that knowledge is held clearly in mind. For example, a man who wished merely to interest another in the beauty of tapestry brick as a possible material for the building of a library fireplace, would be very wasteful of time to make a profound investigation into the entire subject of brick manufacture; yet, if his object was to persuade architects to order his kind of bricks for all suitable buildings under their control, then it might well be wise for him to make just that kind of investigation, since architects are interested not only in beauty of surface, but

also in qualities of durability and economy, and in general fitness for particular purposes.

The purpose or object to be achieved by the effective use of what the salesman knows about his subject, must always circumscribe his search for knowledge upon that subject and so we may consider these two keys together: What does the salesman hope to accomplish with his knowledge when he has acquired it? Well, his final object, of course, is to convince others of the truth and value of that knowledge. Now, in order to do this, he must first get the *attention* of the prospect, since however true or valuable the subject may be, it cannot become true or valuable to any individual, until that individual has given it his attention, become interested in it, and realized its truth and its value as applied directly to his own personal well-being.

So, once again, we find that even a knowledge of the object, coupled with a knowledge of the subject, is not sufficient as a basis for our plan, but that we must also add to these two kinds of knowledge a third.

The Third Key—*Knowledge of the Prospect.*—People pay attention most readily to matters that already have a place in their minds. That is why it is so much easier to secure acceptance of a new idea by connecting that new idea with

existing ideas in the prospect's mind, rather than by endeavoring to place the new idea solely on its own merits. For example, supposing a life insurance solicitor went in to see a prospect and simply said: "I have here a very excellent life insurance policy. It is in one of the strongest and biggest companies in the world. The rates are reasonable, and the policy is in every way equal to anything you could possibly get, even without the security offered by our company." What would happen to that solicitor? In nine cases out of ten the prospect would respond: "Don't bother me. I'm not interested in insurance!"

On the other hand, supposing the same solicitor went in to see his prospect after careful preparation and said: "It was a sad thing about Jones, wasn't it?" Jones was an acquaintance who was recently killed in an accident, which fact is known to the solicitor because Jones carried a policy in his company. Following up this knowledge, he might continue: "It's a mighty fine thing for the family, though, that Jones had the forethought to double his insurance only forty days before the accident. I had been talking to him just a little while before that, pointing out to him that he hadn't increased his insurance for ten years, during which period his income and

his obligations had more than doubled. I reminded him that when the stock inventory of his business doubled up, he didn't follow that same system, but promptly increased his fire insurance to cover; and I asked him whether it wouldn't show equally good business judgment to apply the same reasoning to the even more important matter of the comfort and security of his family. He agreed and increased his insurance accordingly. I shall always regard that as a fine afternoon's work!

“By the way, Mr. Smith, how are *you* fixed in regard to this matter of full protection?”

Is there any doubt that the prospect's attention and interest will have been aroused by that introduction? The reason why the second talk succeeds where the first fails is obvious. The successful salesman concentrates his knowledge of the subject, which is life insurance, and his knowledge of his object, which is his desire to increase the amount of the policy now held by his prospect, upon his knowledge of the prospect, approaching his proposition from the standpoint of the prospect's sympathies and interests instead of from his own. In consequence, although the knowledge of the subject may have been the same in both cases, and the object of each certainly was the same, still the result depended entirely

upon the application of the third key in The Plan—knowledge of the prospect—which may be termed the master key in written or spoken salesmanship.

Some years ago I witnessed a very interesting example of the potency of that key. I had just taken over the management of a new Sales Promotion Department for a manufacturer of heavy logging machinery. In order to obtain a knowledge of the product and of the prospect, I went out on the road first with one and then with another salesman of the company in order to watch them sell.

The first salesman began by taking me in to see a prospect in a little river town in Arkansas, and there, while we were seated across the desk from the prospect, who was the owner of a small sawmill with a capacity of about 30,000 feet of lumber a day, the salesman began to tell him all about the mechanical construction of the machines which our company manufactured for the handling of logs. He told how a careful chemical analysis was made of the iron and steel that entered into the parts; and how certain parts contained some proportion of costly alloys which produced desirable effects. He went on to tell how the teeth in the important gears were cut by machinery instead of being cast, and he explained

that this process made it possible to mesh the gear teeth more exactly and so to eliminate noise, and friction which is the cause of noise.

At this point in his monologue he got the first "rise" out of his prospect: "Gee whiz, that wouldn't suit me at all!" the prospect exclaimed. "Why, the only way I can tell whether the men are working in the woods when I am three miles away in the mill is by the noise of the gears in the little old hoist we are now using!" Of course, he meant that semihumorously, but it was the only time that salesman's mind came close to meeting his. The prospect was a lumberman who knew nothing about machinery. His interests all lay along lines of logging and lumbering. The interests of the salesman, on the other hand, lay along lines of mechanical methods and contrivances, because he was a mechanical engineer as well as a salesman. Where he made his mistake was in not fitting his mechanical engineering knowledge to the understanding of his prospect.

After all it is not what we know that helps us to make sales, but how much of what we know we can make our prospects know; and that is limited, not by our own education, but by the education of our prospects. Many a man has told me he feared he could not make a good salesman because he had only a grade school educa-

tion. It is said that ninety-four per cent of all the people in America have an education that does not proceed beyond the fourth grade of grammar school, and if that is true, then the man who has finished grammar school is a whole lot better off than most of the rest of his fellows! Some of the most successful sales campaigns that have ever been carried on were conducted by men of very small educational attainments, but of wide knowledge of their subjects, objects and prospects.

There used to be a man selling farming machinery by mail in Iowa, whose early letters were almost illiterate; but they went to farmers and persuaded those farmers to buy heavy farming machinery in such quantities as to make that man many times a millionaire within a few years. He hadn't much education, but neither had his prospects, and so there wasn't any danger that he would shoot over the heads of those he was trying to hit. He talked in terms which they could understand, having been a farmer himself, and not only used words they could understand, but also ideas that tied up directly to their interests. He did just as the second salesman of the logging machinery company did.

Let us now go out and watch that second salesman at work and find out just why he held the

sales record for five or six years in succession. His territory was down in Texas, where I went out with him, and together we approached his first prospect, who was woods superintendent for a company logging 250,000 feet a day.

After the usual salutations, the salesman introduced a topic very pertinent in those times: "Have you been having any trouble with the I. W. W. down this way?" "No," said the woods superintendent, "but I understand they have been working down around Lake Charles, and I shouldn't wonder if we had our share a little later."

"You have a big gang of men here," said the salesman. "Pretty nearly nine hundred," replied the superintendent.

"Gee whiz! why do you need so many men?" "Well," said the woods superintendent, "you know we log quarter of a million feet a day here, and we have got to have the men to do it."

"I don't see why you need so many men as that, though," said the salesman. "Why, the Brownsville Lumber Company logs just about the same amount, and they have only 150 men on the entire operation!" "That's impossible!" exclaimed the woods superintendent. "Why, they couldn't even manage their bull teams with that number of men."

“Oh,” said the salesman, “they don’t have bull teams. They log with machinery.” And then he went on to explain how a four-line steam skidder with a crew of only 24 men would bring in its eighty or ninety thousand feet of logs every day just as regularly as—well, machinery! He didn’t go into any elaborate explanation of the machinery even then. After he had the prospect vitally interested, he arranged a little trip for him and took him over to a neighboring lumbering company where the machines were in actual use, and there he let the prospect acquire the mechanical facts with his own eyes, and hear the comments of his brother superintendent on the other job.

The object of both those logging machinery salesmen was the same—both wanted to sell logging machinery; but while one was selling fifty or sixty thousand dollars worth a year, mostly small machines or parts, the other counted it a bad year when he dropped below the half-million dollar mark! The successful salesman based his work upon a knowledge of the objects of his prospects, and so he was able to achieve his object where the other fellow failed. What is true of the salesman of the spoken word, is no less true of the one who sells by means of business letters.

People buy things because *they* want them, not

because *we* want them to buy. And if we are to make them want to buy what we have to sell, then we must first find out what they can *do* with what we have to sell, if they do buy it, that will add to their well-being. And we must base our appeal for a purchase upon that appeal to the prospect's desire for greater well-being.

A quarter of a century ago, there was a certain novel of the Mid-Victorian, moralizing type that ran into several editions. I do not remember who wrote it, and I don't remember what it was about, but I do recall the title. That title, slightly changed, is worthy to be set down here as the summarization of the first three keys to the creation of an effective sales message. Let the salesman write these six words on a piece of white card and paste it in his hat; and let the correspondent set it up on his desk where he will see it every time he starts to dictate a sales letter: "Put Yourself in Your Prospect's Place!"

THE PERFORMANCE

Now that we have decided just how to plan the writing of an effective sales message, the next ring of keys leads us through the preparation of the message itself. For the sake of brevity and simplicity these keys may be subdivided under four admonitions to the salesman, as follows:

- I. Make it easy to *pay attention*
- II. Make it easy to *understand*
- III. Make it easy to *believe*
- IV. Make it easy to *act*

Let us consider these separately.

The Fourth Key—*Make It Easy to Pay Attention.*—We have already seen how important it is to attract the favorable attention of the prospect; and our communication must begin to do this from the moment it is delivered through the mouth or through the mails.

In the spoken word, the personal appearance of the salesman will have a great deal to do with the degree of attention accorded to his message by the prospect. Neat appearance; personal cleanliness; good taste, which implies conservatism, in dress; these are the things which win favorable attention for the salesman. In written salesmanship, in which branch of selling it is possible to establish scientific tests of results based upon appearance, the first thing that catches the eye of the prospect is the appearance of the envelope; the second, the letterhead; the third, the appearance of the typescript; and so it is well to give considerable attention to the physical form of the letter.

Definite experiments have established, time and time again, that it does not pay to economize

on stationery. Here is an account of one such experiment conducted by myself and originally reported to *System* magazine. It is repeated here because it offers tangible evidence of the value of good appearance as an aid to securing favorable attention in selling, either in person or by letter.

A large list was not involved in this case, only ten or eleven thousand names, and the test was conducted rather from a sense of inquiry than from a sense of economy. That was why a full thousand names were used for each test. Otherwise five hundred might have been enough to waste on the less successful of the two forms. For scientific test purpose, though, a thousand is three times as good as five hundred. The list used in this test was made up of the names of past prospects who had written for information and received the follow-up without response. It was known as the dead list.

The letter offered a story-style catalogue at the price of a green postage stamp, which was to be stuck on a return card inclosed with the letter, and already filled in with the address of the prospect on the card for correction in case of error, because "You know that the post office will not forward third-class mail matter, and this first-

class letter may have to be forwarded in order to reach you.”

The first test was made by choosing a letter shop with a reputation and sending to it copy, card, envelopes, and letterheads, with an order to turn out one thousand letters in its very best style with pen signatures and perfectly matched body type and fill-in. It charged seventeen dollars a thousand for the work of multigraphing, filling in, folding, stuffing, sealing, stamping and mailing. The cost of the first test follows:

Letterheads	\$ 2.79
Envelopes	2.27
Return cards	4.07
Stamps	20.00
Addressing envelopes and cards from stencils40
Multigraphing, etc. (as above) ..	17.00
	<hr/>
	\$46.53

The result of the first test was three hundred and fifty-two cards returned with corrections or O.K.'s out of the thousand—35 1/5 per cent—at a cost of 13 1/5 cents for each inquiry. These inquiries were placed in the hands of salesmen, who were able to close a little better than 25 per cent

of them, making 91 sales at \$62.50 each, a gross total of \$5,687.50 worth of business. The profit on this type of business is almost exactly 20 per cent, or \$1,137.50.

The second test was made in a private multi-graphing department where the facilities at that time made it impossible to produce work of the quality used in the first test. The body type did not quite match the typewriter type used in filling in the name and address, and a zinc etching was used to print the signature instead of having it pen signed. The cost of the second test was \$10.57 less than the first, all the items being the same as given before, except the last, which was only \$6.43 instead of \$17.00. The result of the second test was 202 cards returned from the thousand sent out—20 1/5 per cent—at a cost of 18 cents each. Thus the actual cost of each inquiry was nearly five cents more than those produced by the better looking letters of the first test. The salesmen fell a little below 25 per cent sales on these inquiries, although that fact probably may be attributed to chance rather than to any difference in value, closing 49 of them. At \$62.50 each, this represented \$3,062.50 worth of business, upon which the profit, at 20 per cent, was \$612.50.

A comparison between the two tests gives these interesting results:

COMPARISON OF TESTS

Items	First Test	Second Test	Difference
	<i>(Better looking letter)</i>	<i>(Rush-it-through letter)</i>	
COSTS:			
1000 letters.....	\$46.53	\$35.96	\$10.57 against Test 1
Inquiry cost.....	13 1/5c.	18c.	4 4/5c. against Test 2
RESULTS:			
Inquiries.....	352	202	150 against Test 2
Sales.....	91	49	42 against Test 2
Gross business...	\$5687.50	\$3062.50	\$2625 against Test 2
Profits (at 20%)..	\$1137.50	\$612.50	\$525 against Test 2

To sum up the tests, the better looking letters cost \$10.57 more than the others, but produced \$525.00 more in profits. Deducting the first from the second, the neat sum of \$514.43 remains to be credited to the account of this thousand better looking letters—surely convincing evidence that prospects pay attention to physical appearance, and that their reactions reduce or increase results accordingly!

Having selected a letterhead and envelope of good quality, it is highly desirable to adopt also a letterhead design which is harmonious and artistic; but in many cases, of course, it is not possible to alter an existing letterhead, which may have been in use for a great many years and

have become identified with the company. Sometimes, however, even the very old style of letterhead may be modernized without entirely sacrificing its identity in form and appearance. It is well worth while to submit this problem to a good commercial artist, if one is not entirely satisfied with the present letterhead. And while we are invoking the services of the artist, since every letterhead requires a different shaped block of typewriting underneath it to secure the most harmonious effect, it is a splendid plan also to request the commercial artist to block in model letters as they should appear upon the letterhead, illustrating the best forms for the average long letter and the average short letter likely to be used most frequently in correspondence work. Being familiar with the laws of design and balance, the artist can do this for you quickly and at trivial expense; but when once it has been done, his product can be framed and hung in front of your stenographers, so that every letter that leaves your concern thereafter may conform to the highest type of design.

Other things that add to the easy-to-read appearance of letters are short paragraphs, with good spacing between them; and, most of all, brevity. Brevity brings us back from letters alone to the spoken message also. It is the soul

of selling. Let us not confuse brevity with shortness, however. Brevity means much more than merely "short." Many a salesman uses sales messages that completely fail to achieve good results because they are *too* short and do not cover their subjects. A message need not necessarily be short in order to be concise—to say all that is to be said in the fewest possible words—and that is what is properly implied here by the use of the word "brevity" as an aid in making it easy to *pay attention* to the sales message. People recoil from listening to long talks or reading long letters, although a certain proportion of them will do so. If the message can be put in five hundred words, however, it is certain that the proportion that will attend to it will be much greater than if it were stated in a thousand words. On the other hand, if the message cannot be carried in less than a thousand words, then it would be equally ineffective to attempt to compress it into five hundred.

The object of an effective sales message is to secure action of some kind; and that action must be based on the information contained in the message. If the information is vague and indefinite, so will be the urge to action. Much of the material in the average sales talk or letter is formal and meaningless, and might be omitted

entirely without injuring the sense, with positive benefits of greater conciseness and forcefulness.

This is even more true of the letter than of the talk. Consider such formal introductory phrases as: "Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 10th inst.," "In reply to your esteemed communication of the 8th, will state." Who among us uses such language in our face-to-face contacts? And why should we use in our letters phrases that would sound like the babblings of mild insanity were they to issue from our lips? What salesman would go into the office of a prospect who had sent an inquiry about his goods and say: "Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 10th instant, and in reply to same will state," etc.? And yet how often the letter salesman commits that very crime against good sense!

Such dead words and formal phrases, while they add nothing to the letter, but take from its sense and force, also actually cost money. Careful investigation into the cost of dictating letters has established the fact that nearly 90 per cent of the total is represented in time costs of dictators and transcribers. By eliminating unnecessary words and phrases from letters sent out by correspondents of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Mr. L. A. MacQueen, of that

company, was able to effect a saving of approximately twenty thousand dollars a year.

As an illustration, take any business letter written in the stereotyped, formal phraseology of the average letter-writer, and strike out every word and phrase that does not directly advance the thought. You will find at least fifty unnecessary words in the average single sheet letter—fifty words that were dictated, reported, transcribed, checked by the transcriber, and read by the dictator, at a cost of at least five minutes wasted time! Cutting wasted words out of letters leaves more time for planned productive work, and makes for better letters. A good thought for the dictator is this: Employ only words and phrases which you would use in personal, face-to-face conversation with your reader, but eliminate all the hesitancies and repetitions of ordinary conversation. And that last holds good in the spoken message, too. Preparation before approaching the prospect will enable the salesman to use the conversational tone, but to go straight to the point without wasted words.

Summing up the fourth key: If a sales message is to hold attention, it must be presented by a messenger who is neat in appearance, it must be concise in contents, courteous in tone, and complete in information.

The Fifth Key.—*Make It Easy to Understand.*
—To make a sales message easy to understand, it is essential that simple words and clearly pictured ideas be employed. We have seen that the education of the average prospect is not great, and we have already considered the fact that the effect of a sales message is dependent upon what the prospect can get out of it, rather than upon what the salesman can put into it. Simple words of Anglo-Saxon derivation, therefore, are the best, since nearly everybody understands them; and the ideas expressed in these words should be ideas of common acceptance so far as possible.

It never pays to be *too* original when one is trying to appeal to the great general public. A good example of that may be borrowed from the Middle Ages, when a certain master sculptor was commissioned to execute a statue of the Christ to occupy the principal place in a new cathedral. Ambitiously he planned to produce a statue which would, for the first time in the history of Christianity, properly portray the divine conception. He knew of no authentic likenesses of the Christ, and so he could not see why his work should be hampered by imperfect previous attempts of others to portray the same features. He decided not to pay any attention to previous attempts, but to create something entirely origi-

nal—a face that would manifest all the loftiest emotions of which the human features are capable. He worked upon his statue for seven years, and then, though he was not satisfied with it, decided that it was as good as he could make it. Before delivering it to the officials of the cathedral, however, he put it to a simple but effective test. He called into his studio a little child and, pointing to the statue, said: “Do you know who that is?” It was his hope that he had so completely characterized the spirit of divinity in man, that even the little child would be able to perceive the inner meaning of his work. The child looked at the statue carefully for some time and then answered simply: “It is some great man.”

The sculptor tried this experiment upon others of the common people, and invariably received the same or a similar reply. Then he realized that he had failed to achieve his purpose, but, instead of being despondent about it, he learned from his experience, and set to work again upon another statue. This time he took the old familiar features, which had been used by painters and sculptors for centuries to portray the Christ, and, using these as a foundation for his final conception, produced a statue which far transcended all previous creations. Again he

applied his simple but ingenious test; unveiling the new statue before a little child, he inquired: "My child, do you know who this is?" The child looked at it for only a moment, and, immediately associating the familiar face with something in its own experience, exclaimed: "Why, that is the One who said 'Suffer little children to come unto me'!"

So long as the sculptor tried to be entirely original, he failed completely, but when he had made use of old associations and familiar ideas that had lain long in the minds of men, and endeavored to build upon and to beautify these, then he became successful. It is so also with the artist in words, with the salesman, and with the successful writer of business-building letters. If he would move his prospects' mind, he must speak in terms that will conjure up pictures behind their eyes, and this he can do only by using words and ideas of common human understanding—words and ideas that will be understood by everybody.

A word is simply the seed of an idea. It has no value until it has been planted in the warm soil of a human mind and watered with sympathy and understanding; then it soon strikes down roots, and expands into a living, moving idea, which has power to cause appropriate action on

the part of the one in whose mind it has been planted. Until this growing process takes place within the mind of the reader, the spoken or the written word is dead; and unless word seeds are selected that will do well in the particular soil for which they are intended, the salesman cannot hope to achieve his purpose, and there will be no harvest of action.

To sum up the fifth key: Let the message be expressed in simple words, of Anglo-Saxon derivation wherever possible; and let the words describe ideas which are likely to prove interesting and acceptable to all. Let these ideas be grouped in logical order, so that the mind progresses naturally from one to another, seeing the relation of each to the next. Most of all, let these interesting ideas which are explained in simple words center around the interests of the one who is to read, rather than those of the one who writes.

The Sixth Key—*Make It Easy to Believe.*—It has been said that the purpose of selling is to convey facts from one mind to another. To do this, the first mind must have the facts, and the second must accept them. Before the second mind will accept the facts, they must be presented in believable form. However true they are, unless

they *sound* true, they will not necessarily be accepted as true.

For example, I have a testimonial letter from a student of a home study course which tells how he advanced from the job of machinist at a lathe to the position of general manager, secretary, and treasurer of the company for which he used to work at a lathe. And this leap was taken in less than one year, as a direct result of his studying that particular course! A letter like that ought to make fairly convincing evidence of the value of that particular course, one would think. I used it as an inclosure with a form letter that had been quite successful. Immediately after I began to use this particular testimonial as an inclosure, the percentage of results from the letter began to fall off.

Following a plan which I recommend to all letter salesmen when they wish to base their work upon known facts, instead of upon theories or guesses, when something seems to be going wrong, I took a little trip into the territory and made a few sales personally, using this particular testimonial letter to drive home one of my arguments. I very soon discovered what was the trouble with the letter. The prospects simply could not believe it, although it was absolutely true, and I had it reproduced on the letterhead

of the company, with the signature of the general manager signed to it. Despite the most convincing presentation of that letter, a doubt lingered in the minds of all to whom it was shown. It was simply too good to believe!

I stopped using it and instead used one which gives a detailed description of how a student of the same course rose from a salary of \$87.60 a month to an annual income of \$5,600.00. Presented in a single paragraph, that advance seems almost as unbelievable as the other, but this second letter did not present the facts in a single paragraph. Instead, it gave a complete record of the rise of the student, and told just how each step was taken that led always to a little higher salary, until finally he reached the \$5,600.00 mark. The effect of this letter upon prospects is profoundly different from that of the first, because, in explaining each of the steps taken by the successful student, it gradually develops belief in and conviction of the truth of the case in the mind of the reader. It is an essential principle, then, in the planning and presentation of effective sales messages that the facts contained in them not only shall *be* true, but also shall *sound* true, because even the soundest facts must be believable if they are to be believed.

In securing this quality of believability, perhaps the most important point in the choice of language is that it shall convey the impression of **SINCERITY**. One of the great rubber companies, the Goodrich Tire & Rubber Company, of Akron, Ohio, has adopted that word as the keynote to all their sales work, because they believe that if even the youngest salesman will adopt sincerity as his guiding principle, his words will carry conviction and so produce good results, despite other faults due to inexperience.

It is true that the tone of sincerity in a sales message goes further towards making it easy to believe than any other quality. No matter how catchy the opening paragraph, and how logical the subsequent sentences, if the message lacks this quality of sincerity, it cannot carry conviction into the mind of the prospect.

Recall Hugh Chalmer's statement of cause and effect to his young salesmen, and consider how impossible it must always be to project clever insincerity in the paragraphs of a message, and to convey thereby an impression of honest sincerity into the mind of the one who hears or reads those paragraphs! To fix in words the substance of this quality of sincerity is indeed a difficult task. Perhaps it is contained most of all in simplicity and directness of statement—by leaving

out all unnecessary words and purely rhetorical phrases.

Many a salesman endeavors to cover flaws in his reasoning by using high-sounding words and phrases. Such a one reminds us of the way in which the word "sincerity" came to be added to our language.

In the days when Rome was mistress of the world, and the wealth of all the nations poured into her in tribute, there were, in the capital city, hundreds of artists and sculptors engaged in the creation of works of beauty to decorate the temples and houses of Rome's many millionaires. So great became the demand for pieces of sculpture, particularly, that blocks of the finest marble were at a premium, and many sculptors had to use pieces of inferior quality. Then, because of the inferiority of the raw material, an unfortunate sculptor often found, as he approached the end of some laborious work of art, that a flaw in the marble had ruined his product, or, at least, reduced its value to a mere fraction of what it would have been without the flaw. It wasn't long, however, before some acute craftsman discovered that with the use of common beeswax, melted and molded into such cracks and flaws, they could be covered up completely, and so a flawed statue could be sold at the full price of a

perfect piece of work. Of course, after the purchaser had placed it in his atrium where it would be exposed to the action of weather, it was not long before the wax began to dry out and crumble away, leaving the flaws exposed. To offset this practice, it became a custom to guarantee such works of art to be *sine cera*, which is Latin for "without wax," and from that expression we have our modern word "sincere."

The salesman, then, who desires that his messages shall carry the quality of sincerity, will do well to leave out of them all flowers and figures of speech—the wax of words—intended to supply the places of sincere reasoning. After all, a sales message achieves its purpose because of the *facts* it contains, and if the facts are not there, no quantity of mere words can hide the omission and enable that message to succeed in its mission! A message must be sincerely conceived if it is to be sincerely believed.

The Seventh Key—*Make It Easy to Act.*—The last essential in the creation of an effective sales message is to insure *favorable action* of some kind from the prospect. Action may take the form simply of a mental decision that the prospect is not particularly interested, or that he does not intend to do anything about the proposition. On the other hand, it may take the

form of positive physical action destined to secure the article or service, or to perform the action desired by the salesman. Action of one sort or another is unavoidable, even though it be only negative mental action.

Since favorable action is the end of every effective sales message, and action is the product of FORCE, which is applied power, it is essential that this quality of force shall be present in the message itself. Most of those who attend to our messages are not particularly anxious to exert their energies in doing what we wish them to do. As a general rule they listen or read in a quiescent mood, when they do so at all, and if they are to be stirred to action, as the result of what they hear or read, there must be something stirring in the words and phrases and sentences in which the salesman expresses his message.

To put the quality of forcefulness into a sales message demands a combination of many of the characteristics which we have already considered. To begin with, the message must be simply worded, so that the mind of the prospect does not need to stumble or hesitate about the meaning of the words as they unfold before him. Then, short paragraphs, with proper pauses between, incline the prospect to continue paying attention. The ideas must follow each other simply and clearly,

and with the quality of sincerity which we have already discussed and which, reduced to its essentials, means simply that what is said shall be believable to the one who listens.

We may well adopt here the thought of a series of steps leading down through the construction of an effective sales message; because a message that is to secure action should be built like a flight of steps, literally leading the prospect's mind down step after step until it reaches the last step and enters the arena of action.

The most essential thing in the preparation of a sales message is that it shall end with a definite invitation to action, no matter what that action may be. It has been well said that even messages of the most commonplace routine character should have as their function the "selling" of GOODWILL, since success in business is based upon the goodwill of customers, and that is based upon good service courteously rendered.

Messages about credit and about the adjustment of complaints must "sell" an acceptance of the points made in them; collectors must "sell" the recipients the desire to settle their accounts. Indeed, every effective message that is made on behalf of a modern business house is, in one sense, a sales message, and so it is essential that the mind of the prospect shall emerge at the end of

the message with a clearly formed resolve to take some immediate action as the result of what has just been said or read.

The place in which to concentrate that resolution is in the last paragraph. Few sales messages close with the proper "punch," because salesmen seldom plan them carefully enough in advance of the call on the prospect! Experienced public speakers have a saying that a carefully prepared and memorized peroration or conclusion, is enough to secure a considerable degree of success for *any* speech; and that is no less true in selling. The weak ending reaches its worst development, however, in the written message. The concluding paragraphs of business letters usually are the weakest and most meaningless part of them, because of the inherited custom of concluding our letters with a "courtesy phrase," a participial ending, such as "Trusting that you will find this information of value to you," or "Trusting that this answers your inquiry satisfactorily," or "Expecting that we may hear from you at your earliest convenience," or some such jumble of formal and meaningless words. Even more advanced letter-writers frequently fall into this error, feeling that a letter is not finished unless it contains some participial paragraph that leads up to the "Yours truly." As an example of how

unnecessary are all such participial endings, and how the average letter is strengthened by their omission, turn to carbon copies of letters containing such endings—they are usually to be found by the hundreds in the letter files of any business!—and see how much more concise and forceful those same letters would sound if their participial endings were simply left out entirely!

It is particularly unfortunate that the final paragraph of a letter should be the one that is so often weak and meaningless, because this is the paragraph upon which the letter most often depends for the achievement of the purpose for which it was sent out. An excellent rule to follow in concluding a letter or a talk is this: Give the prospect something to Do at once about what he has just read or heard! This may be accomplished in many ways: he may be invited to write an answer directly on the face of a letter which he has received; or he may be asked to sign, or O.K., or fill out certain forms; he may be urged to turn to his telephone immediately and call a certain number; or the urge to action may take the form of moving him to come into a store or place of business, in order to discuss some particular proposition in person. Whatever the urge to action may be, it should be forceful, and it should end the interview, because it is the aim

of every salesman that his visits, in person or through the mails, shall close with the favorable action of his prospect.

All seven of the keys here given are needed to unlock the many doors into the mind of the average prospect. If a message be prepared with a clear knowledge of the object in view, and with the knowledge of the subject expressed in terms of the prospect's well-being; if it be made easy to pay attention, because it is stated interestingly, in short paragraphs, with proper pauses; if it is easy to understand, because it contains clear ideas expressed in simple words; if it is easy to believe, because the facts are stated with the quality of sincerity in terms which tend to prove themselves; if there be a stream of force flowing through the message and leading irresistibly to some logical, definite and desirable action to be taken by the prospect immediately; then, all the doors having been unlocked, that action will be taken by the prospect, and **THE AIM** of the salesman will have been attained.

PART III

MASS SELLING

PART III

MASS SELLING

THE process of distribution, or mass selling, may be compared to the creation of a vast pipe line leading from a great tank into which the producer pours his manufactured article. The first link in the pipe line of distribution is the merchandise broker. Then there is a joint of transportation, carrying the merchandise on to the second link, the wholesale house. Another joint of transportation connects that link on to the jobbing house, and again there is a joint of transportation which connects on to the last link in the pipe line, which is the retailer. Any manufacturer who thinks that he has made a sale because he has moved his merchandise out of this tank of production along to any of the lengths in that pipe line of distribution, is making a great mistake. Brokers, wholesalers, jobbers and retailers do not *use* merchandise; they merely handle it. Let a manufacturer move a thousand cases of his merchandise into the warehouse of a wholesaler, and until that mer-

chandise moves along the pipe line of distribution to the ultimate consumer, the only effect is to *clog* the pipe line at that point.

The only sale that really counts is a sale made to the person who will wear the stuff out, or eat it up, or break it up, or in some way render the reproduction of that merchandise necessary. The merchandise must pass clear out through the end of the pipe line of distribution before the sale has really been completely made.

At the end of the last length in this pipe of distribution, there is a tap, and through that tap ninety-odd per cent of all merchandise must pass, and does pass, into the hands of the ultimate consumer. That tap is the retail sales person behind the counter.

Fifty-Five Per Cent Failure. — Experiments made recently have shown us (in the case of our experiments at least) that this tap is just 45 per cent open; that 55 out of 100 sales made possible by customers coming into stores are lost inside the stores. Even the best of advertising and merchandising cannot *sell* goods for retailers; all that these things may do is to bring customers into stores where salespeople may either sell them goods or fail to make sales, as happened in 55 per cent of the cases in our test.

Not long ago, one of the great department

stores of the country wished to know how many people it had to accommodate on its main floor in the course of a day, and so young men were put at all the doors equipped with little counting machines. It was found that 200,000 people passed into that store in one day. The store records revealed the fact that 60,000 individual sales were made on that same day—an enormous volume of sales—but the striking point is the fact that 140,000 people walked out of that store that day without buying anything! Seventy per cent of the chances to sell offered to the salespeople in that store were lost when 140,000 potential customers went out without buying.

Allowing for a larger percentage of purely “showcase shoppers” in a great department store of this type, the example compares with the nation-wide tests in stores of more modest size and character. It is possibly a fair average that 55 out of 100 potential customers brought in to stores as a result of advertising and good merchandising, go out without buying. And when we speak of advertising, local advertising of all types is implied just as much as is national advertising. The success or failure of advertising conducted by a local store depends as much upon the sales ability of the salespeople as does the success of any of the great advertising cam-

paings. Advertising merely brings customers in to buy the goods from salespeople, and if for any reason the salespeople are unable to complete the sales, then, of course, the advertising and everything that preceded that failure, fails at the same time.

The National Sales Campaign.—Let us consider this problem of the relation of retail selling to distribution from the angle of the national advertiser. How does a man become a national advertiser to-day, and what happens to him after he has become a national advertiser? To illustrate, we will take the case of a manufacturer who has never been greatly interested in the actual process of selling, because the entire product of his factory or plant is taken up by one, or, at the most, by some half dozen great customers. There are hundreds of such concerns in New England alone, whose entire product, for two or three generations, has been taken up by a small group of wholesalers or jobbing houses.

Imagine an advertising agency on the spot to talk to such a manufacturer about the idea of becoming a national advertiser, trade-marking his product and creating a national demand for it. The manufacturer asks, "Why should I? I sell my entire product to-day without that expense; why should I add the cost of national

advertising and apparently get nothing out of it?" His answer seems fairly conclusive, doesn't it? But, the agency's answer would be: "Could you not increase the production of your plant if you had greater demand for your goods?" "Why, yes, of course!" the manufacturer must reply. Indeed, he may say: "In fact we have increased it some 10 per cent in the last fifteen years."

The agency may then continue: "Is it not true, however, that no group of jobbers or wholesalers is going to *beg* you to double the capacity of your plant, just to enable them to buy from you products which they can get from any one of two hundred or three hundred other manufacturers, each of whom is producing a similar product? They will take what you produce and get the remainder of their requirements from the rest of the trade. But if your merchandise were *known by name* to the buying public, and if people went to stores and said they wanted your particular product, calling for it by name, why you are the only manufacturer who has a right to put that name on that article, and so the demand must all come back to you. Only by national advertising can you hope to center national demand upon the name on your merchandise so that your capacity for production may

have to be multiplied many times to keep up with the demand."

Supposing that this manufacturer is convinced of the possibility of increasing demand by means of a national advertising campaign, which one of his many products shall be selected as the center of the campaign? Obviously, national advertising cannot be concentrated upon fifty different things, because the public mind is not immediately receptive to an entire chain of products. Having driven one product home in the public mind, then it becomes possible to take up others and say, "Made by the maker of the 57," or some similar tie-up.

Picking the Product to Advertise.—Let us consider the case of a manufacturer of brushes, who makes a complete line from brooms to tooth-brushes, and whose entire product has been marketed in the past to a small group of wholesalers. He has decided to become a national advertiser and desires to pick one of his products upon which to base the national advertising campaign. How shall he set about the making of his selection?

Since he is going to use media of nation-wide circulation, and naturally desires to be able to influence to the buying point as large a percentage of that circulation as possible, the problem

is to pick the product with the widest potential demand—a product which nearly everybody can use, and which everybody can afford.

Well, let us consider some of the products of a brush manufacturer, in the order of their potential distribution.

How does the broom meet the problem? The broom is used in millions of homes and there never has been a nationally advertised broom. Shall he put a trade-mark on the handle of his broom, and by advertising, concentrate that national demand for brooms on his broom? But the demand for brooms is not at all general. Men and children rarely use brooms, and in the case of women, the vacuum cleaner is coming in to take the place of the broom. It would scarcely be wise to build a national advertising campaign on something for which there may be practically no demand a few years from now.

The scrubbing brush falls into the same category, doesn't it? It is still used in some countries, but few modern women will get down on their knees even to a floor, and so we may abandon the scrub brush and go on to consider the nailbrush.

How many people use nailbrushes, compared with the total population? A tiny proportion! Indeed, it seems certain that people who need

nailbrushes most never use them; and while there may be a potential market among such people, let us consider other, more responsive opportunities first.

Let us pass on and consider the hairbrush. There is a brush that everybody—child, woman and man—no, on second thoughts, at least half of the adult males have really very little use for a hairbrush!

Well, how about the toothbrush? The toothbrush is, or should be, used by every man, woman and child every morning at least, and better still, twice a day. It is almost a national habit in America already, and in the course of time, the entire world will be doing the same thing because it is a sound, sensible habit. Incidentally, again, the toothbrush is the cheapest brush in the line, and so lends itself admirably to general advertising, since it has wide potential distribution. Everybody ought to use it and everybody can afford it. Let the toothbrush be selected, then, as the basis of this campaign.

The Pre-Advertising Article. — This brush manufacturer naturally has in his line the pre-advertising toothbrush. It was a straight-handled brush, you will remember, and it had a perfectly straight crop of bristles like those little mustaches that used to be fashionable. Shall he lift

that brush out of his line, put a trade-mark on the handle, and by sheer weight of publicity concentrate the existing demand for toothbrushes upon that toothbrush? That was the way they would have conducted a national advertising campaign twenty years ago.

To-day advertisers have come to realize that no article is worth advertising that will not *sell itself* when the full facts about it are thoroughly understood, because the most that advertising can do for any article is to make the full facts about that article thoroughly understood.

That is why all intelligent merchants have long passed the point where they need coercion in the matter of truth-in-advertising, because they realize that advertising is simply an attempt to describe merchandise so attractively that people will come into stores and see if the goods square with the description. If the goods don't match the description, they don't buy; or if they do, they take them back to their homes, test the articles in the home, and discover just how big a liar that advertiser was!

Any merchant who tries to sell by misrepresenting merchandise in his advertising, is tearing down with his own hands the only foundation upon which permanent success in merchandising may be based, the goodwill of the customer.

That same truth holds good for the national advertiser, whose success depends not upon single sales but upon constant repeat orders; and so the alert advertiser to-day begins by building his advertising into his product.

Of course, the retailer cannot build advertising into the article, but he can pick articles into which advertising has been built by the manufacturers.

Sell Uses, Not Articles.—How is advertising built into an article by a manufacturer, or how may the retailer recognize merchandise into which advertising has been built? Effective advertising may be built into any article only by looking at that article through the eyes of the prospective customer. We must realize clearly that we cannot sell *articles*. Customers may come in and *buy* articles, but we never *sell* articles. We sell the *use* to which the article will be put. Twenty years ago Mr. Simmons, of the Simmons Hardware Company, of St. Louis, used to say to salesmen in hardware stores: "Don't try to sell an auger; comparatively few people are ready to believe that they stand in need of augers, but if you can sell the customer *holes*, then he will have to buy an auger to make them."

The same principle holds true of everything

that you and I may try to sell. Let's take the example of overcoats. Perhaps you think you bought an overcoat last fall? Think it through, and you will see that you didn't buy an overcoat; what you bought was warmth, comfort, protection, style and fit—you bought the *functions* of the overcoat. Every woman who buys clothes buys *style* first and then other considerations. If a merchant can sell her the style in a garment, she must get in that garment in order to be in the style. It is always true that what we must sell is the *use* to which our merchandise will be put by the purchaser. To find that use, we must look at each article through the eyes of the prospective customer and consider what the customer could do with that article if she or he bought it.

Building Advertising into the Toothbrush.—Let us now consider the possibility of building advertising into a toothbrush by looking at the toothbrush through the eyes of the customer and considering what the customer does with a brush, and what he could do with a better one.

What did the customer do with the pre-advertising toothbrush? Well, his first observation probably was that while the human mouth is made always on a curve, the manufacturer of toothbrushes always made a straight-handled brush. The first advertising point may be built

into the new brush, then, by curving the handle of the brush to fit the face of the user.

The next objection to the old brush was the fact that the bristles came out too easily. That objection may be overcome by sinking the bristles directly in the substance of the handle.

Next, the old type of toothbrush, with its even surface of bristles, really didn't *clean* the teeth. Teeth do not need cleaning across the surface nearly so much as they need cleaning in between, and the only way to clean in between teeth is to have a brush with the bristles cut so they can get in between. The next point, then, will be to cut the bristles of the brush with irregular surfaces, so they can get in between the teeth.

Any one of those three points built into a brush might capture the entire toothbrush market in time as they became generally known, unless other manufacturers built better points into their brushes; but because of that possibility our manufacturer mustn't stop with these points. He must go on and build every possible point into his brush, and patent and protect each, so that he will be able to keep the market after he has won it.

Now, what does the customer do with a toothbrush after use? He would like to hang it up out of the way where it could dry, but the old-

fashioned brush had no hole in the handle; and so the next thing to do is to drill a hole in the handle of the new type of brush so that the customer may hang it up after using it. But a hole in the handle calls for a hook, and the average household usually isn't supplied with hooks, so the next advertising point may be to supply just the right kind of hook, slipped into the hole in the handle of the brush and held in place with a gummed slip of paper. The customer may then tear off the paper, take out the hook, screw it into the bathroom cabinet, and hang on it the hole in the handle of the brush which has been curved to fit the face, with the bristles that won't fall out, that were cut to clean between the teeth.

Another minor, but not unimportant, point that the manufacturer may build into his brush is to number them in sets, say, from one to six, so that families up to six all may use his brushes by buying a set and each taking a different number, doing away with the danger of using each other's brushes.

Now, let us see how many points have been built into this new type of toothbrush. The handle has been curved to fit the face, the bristles have been cut to fit the teeth, they have been set in solid rubber, a hole has been drilled in the handle, and a hook supplied to hang the hole on;

then the brushes have been numbered in sets of six to get the family trade—six advertising points have been built into the brush.

Building Advertising into the Container.—Now, let us see whether it is possible to build one or two advertising points into the package that contains the brush. That is the next big feature of a modern advertising campaign. Take cereals, for example. A few years ago when mother sent us to buy rolled oats, we would go into a grocer's store and say: "Mother wants two pounds of rolled oats." What did the grocer say? Well, once in a while he would have to say: "Pussy, get right out of that box of rolled oats; you and your entire family get right out now!" and then he would scoop out our oats for us. But after he had handed over the bag of rolled oats, pussy and her family would go right back into the box! Now, there was always a certain number of people who objected to buying rolled oats upon which pussy had raised her family; and so some marketing genius evolved the idea of taking rolled oats at the mill and dropping them into cartons to be hermetically sealed so that the oats came to the customer untouched by pussy's family. On that idea of greater cleanliness, the entire package cereal business of the world has been built.

Precisely that same thought may be applied to a toothbrush. Do you recall how you used to buy pre-advertising toothbrushes? You were shown a tray full of brushes, perhaps with handles of many different colors; but the important thing about a toothbrush is not the color of the handle, but the stiffness of the bristles, and so you would pick out a brush and test it with your thumb. If you found it too stiff, you picked up another one, and so on until you found one that suited you. You took that one home and you put in your mouth a brush that perhaps fifty people had had in their hands. You didn't like to do it, but you had to because it was the only way you could buy a brush in those days. Obviously, then, the brush manufacturer may capitalize on that objection by automatically wrapping his toothbrush in an oiled paper envelope, on which have been printed these words: "This brush comes to you untouched by human hands." If that brush in its neat envelope was lying alongside of a brush which had obviously been touched by many hands, who would hesitate a minute in deciding which brush to buy? That point alone might give a manufacturer the entire toothbrush market in the course of time as it became known, unless some other toothbrush

manufacturer built more and better points into the package containing his brush.

The Carton as a Sales Help.—Because of that possibility, however, our manufacturer will not market his brush in the envelope, because he can use, as an effective link in the selling chain, a carton printed in “high-speed” colors that have attention value, and on that carton he will have a description and picture of his brush.

Then he will use a picture of that carton in all his advertising, national and local, for the reason that if a prospective customer goes into a drug store to buy something else, and while buying this other product, his eyes fall on that carton which has been pictured all over the country, he may say: “Why here is that new toothbrush I have been intending to try!” The carton makes the tie-up between the potential demand, and the place where the article can be bought.

Printed upon the carton may be one more advertising point in the form of an unconditional guarantee, which might run thus: “If for any reason this toothbrush fails to give you the service and satisfaction you think it should, bring it in and get another!” The manufacturer can risk making a guarantee of that kind to-day, because if his article cannot stand the fierce, white light of publicity, he had better not turn on the light;

and if he has made a mistake in thinking that it can, the quicker he finds it out the less he is likely to lose. On the other hand, if it can stand the light of publicity, he may as well make use of the additional selling-power of that unconditional guarantee.

Premature Publicity.—Now, six points have been built into the brush and three points into the package, but the manufacturer is not yet ready to begin his national advertising.

Just a few years ago a breakfast food concern brought a very fine product precisely up to the point to which we have just brought this tooth-brush. They built many good advertising points into the breakfast food, and others into the package. Then they started a national advertising campaign, at a time when they had dealer-distribution in only four cities—Duluth, Superior, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. As a result of that campaign, thousands of housewives all over the United States went into grocery stores all over the United States—on the Pacific Coast, in Florida and in Maine—and said to the grocers, “I want to get a package of this new breakfast food.” The grocer didn’t have it; his jobber didn’t have it; the wholesaler didn’t have it, but the grocer did have many other brands of breakfast foods on his shelves. Did he tell the pros-

pective customers who had been brought into his store by that national advertising, "I am sorry I haven't got what you want"? No, he set out to make the customers want what he had, and in most cases he succeeded.

And so in selling articles such as toothbrushes to-day, in line with modern merchandising methods, the manufacturer will get dealer distribution nationally *before* he starts his national advertising, unless he is able to put millions into the campaign and cover the country in one gesture.

If he is operating on a smaller scale, however, he may start his advertising in his own home town, using local newspapers, billboards, street car cards, direct mail or other media, whatever the product will warrant in the way of expense, to create demand among the local population, and to concentrate that demand upon local dealers. Local dealers are responsive to that kind of demand, and they will stock the brush for which the manufacturer has been able to produce a demand of that kind.

So he may multiply cities, either one at a time or many at once, according to his resources, until he has distribution on a national scale; and may use national advertising with the knowledge that every dollar put into it may be turned into cash.

Of course, in the meantime he will be building up prestige and preparing for distribution among dealers by the effective use of their own trade periodicals.

If he starts national advertising before he has national distribution, however, what he is doing is precisely this: He is bringing thousands of prospective customers into stores where they will either be disappointed or diverted to some other article; and that isn't good business.

Success Still Depends on the Store.—Having surveyed this whole process of the growth of a national advertising campaign; having picked out the product; having built nine advertising points into the product, six into the article itself and three into the package containing the article; having obtained national distribution, and then perhaps appropriated many hundred thousand dollars for a national campaign, what is the final result? Just this: If the campaign is successful, one day a woman (who may represent the average customer created by the advertising) walks into a drug store in Podunk, California, and says to the salesman behind the counter: "I have been thinking about trying this new toothbrush," mentioning it by name. And right there 55 per cent of the potential sales may fall down. Fifty-five per cent of the customers who

come into stores go out without buying because of a failure in courtesy, in knowledge of stock, or in sales ability.

Common Errors in Retailing.—Perhaps the commonest error made by retail salespeople is in the manner of greeting customers. A favorite form of greeting in thousands of stores is this, "Is there something for you?" How much better to take it for granted that, of course, the customer wants something and so project that conviction into her mind.

In other stores, particularly in parts of Canada, clerks have a way of coming forward to confront the customer without saying a word, forcing the customer to speak first.

If these were guests coming into their homes, instead of into their store-homes, what would these salespeople say? Instinctively they would smile a "Good Morning!" or a "Good Afternoon!" and no better greeting could be recommended for general use in retail establishments. The customer is the guest of the store.

Even after a sale has been made, however, many salespeople lose excellent opportunities to make additional sales, and so to increase turnover and at the same time reduce overhead.

After the first sale has been made, about 80 per cent of retail salespeople use some positive

suggestion to the customer, such as: "Now, will there be something else this morning?" In 20 per cent of the cases some negative thought is given, such as: "Will that be all this morning?" All the customer has to do to the negative form is to agree and walk out; while even the positive form of that generality suggests the obvious answer, "No, I think not." Then, after walking a block, perhaps, the customer who has bought a toothbrush may remember that she needed some tooth paste! If instead of merely saying "Something else?" the names of a number of articles related to the thing the customer had just purchased had been mentioned, what would have taken place? The customer would have been reminded of her need for tooth paste, and perhaps of the need for other allied articles.

Automatic Companion Sales-Makers.—Seventeen years ago a department store in Chicago worked out an automatic system of such companion suggestions through the use of a series of little trays that just fitted their show cases. In those trays were displayed articles that logically went together—for example, some toothbrushes, tooth paste, mouth washes, etc. The salespeople in that store were then instructed that whenever a customer came in and asked for any article, they were not to lift the article out of the tray

to show, but to lift out the whole tray, place it in front of the customer with its collection of companion or associated articles, and then they were to stand back and let nature take her course!

We may readily imagine what would happen if a tray of that kind was used in the ultimate distribution of the article we have selected to illustrate a national mass-sales campaign—the toothbrush.

A woman comes in and sees in that tray the carton which she has seen previously in the advertising. Now she may have come in to buy some tooth paste, but possibly when she sees that familiar carton she asks the price, and probably makes the purchase. Then she may go on to select several other articles in that tray, and so help the retailer to realize a larger profit.

Seventeen years ago this method of using trays made an average sale of a dollar and a half to the customer of a drug department. Where is the retailer who wouldn't want something that would make an average sale of a dollar and a half instead of one of, say, a quarter? Retailers realize that it costs about as much in overhead charges to sell a quarter's worth as it does to make the dollar and a half sale, and so the merchant who can make the larger sale is not only cutting down his overhead cost of doing business,

but also he is building up his turnover—the principal things upon which profits depend.

If a dead tray can accomplish so much, then *any* salesperson who will make it a mental habit to repeat to every customer the names of two or three articles that logically go with the article the customer has just purchased, instead of saying simply “Something else?” can increase his or her sales at least 10 per cent.

That isn't real selling, though, since an inanimate tray can make such sales as well as any salesperson.

Creative Sales Suggestions.—Let us apply the principles of *creative* selling to the problem of distributing toothbrushes, and see if we cannot create an argument by the use of which a retail salesman may increase the demand for brushes.

Toothbrushes are usually manufactured with bristles in three degrees of stiffness, and so even after the customer has come to the counter and asked for the brush by name, still the clerk has to ask, “How stiff a brush do you wish—soft, medium or hard?” The customer nearly always says, “Medium.” When any article is made in three types and we don't know the difference anyhow, we nearly always choose the one in the middle.

Then the salesman might say to a male custom-

er something like this: "When you start to use this brush you may notice that the bristles seem considerably stiffer than those in your old brush. You may even think that I have made a mistake and have given you a hard brush instead of the medium one. The reason for the greater stiffness of the new brush is that each time you use your brush, putting hot water and paste on it, and rubbing it in vigorously, you soften down the bristles, just as similar treatment softens the bristles of a beard before shaving. At the end of a month of such treatment a toothbrush is just about as much good, for really *cleaning* teeth, as a soft wet rag. Those who want *clean* teeth should buy three or four brushes at a time, and use them alternately, giving each brush a chance to dry out and stiffen between uses!"

There is a possibility of selling three or four toothbrushes through the use of such an argument, instead of one which would be bought if the customer were left to the dictates of his own conscience.

Increasing Demand for Garters.—The principles of creative selling can be applied to any article. Let's apply them to the sale of men's garters. Consider how most men wear garters. A man will put on a clean pair of socks and attach the garters to them. That night his wife

or mother or some other responsible person takes the socks away and throws them into the laundry hamper. The garters are carefully removed from those soiled socks and placed on a clean pair of socks and the next night the socks are changed again, and again the garters removed to another clean pair; and so on until almost every man, sometime in his career, has had the distressing experience of having a pair of garters fall apart through old age! Now, that would never be allowed to happen by any man who really cares about personal cleanliness, after he has had this thought suggested to him. A diplomatic suggestion as to the quickness with which garters become soiled, particularly during hot weather, may lead many a careful dresser to buy a new pair of garters every two weeks, instead of wearing one pair to destruction as he may have been doing in the past! The key thought in this example also, you will note, was "What does the customer *do* with the goods?"

Selling Two Pairs of Shoes.—Apply the same principles to the sale of shoes. Salesmanship, in most shoe stores, consists in trying to sell a higher priced pair of shoes than the customer came in to buy. What the salesman *ought* to do is to sell two pairs of shoes and at least one pair of ventilated shoe trees, throwing in some good

advice on how to wear shoes, because most men wear them just as they do garters.

At the beginning of the summer, a man goes into a store to get a pair of Oxfords and, as a general thing, he wears those same Oxfords day after day. Now, he doesn't really buy *shoes* any more than you bought an overcoat last fall. What he really wants to buy, when he gets a pair of shoes, is foot comfort and foot appearance; but if he wears the same pair continuously, he soon loses both the things he paid for. The lining of the shoes soon begins to rot and crack if they are worn every day, and so he loses the comfort, and good appearance goes even sooner.

The real salesman will suggest that he buy *two* pairs of Oxfords—perhaps one black pair and one tan pair (so that every one may realize that he has two pairs!)—and a pair of ventilated shoe trees. Then he will suggest that the black pair be worn one day, and the shoe trees put in them that night and next day to give them a chance to dry out and be pressed back into shape. The second pair of shoes will be worn in the meantime and the process repeated with them so that they also will be kept in good condition. Thus the customer may retain the two things he really wanted to buy—foot comfort and foot appearance.

He will find also that two pairs of Oxfords, worn in this way, will last as long as three pairs worn the other way, and so his goodwill is gained.

The shortsighted merchant might say, "Why should I urge the sale of two pairs to be worn in such a way that they will last as long as three pairs?" The answer to that question is obvious. The shoe dealer who sells shoes on the basis of better service and longer wear not only clinches the sales of two pairs of shoes and a pair of trees at a single selling, thus cutting down his overhead cost of making sales, but also he insures that when that customer wants more shoes, he will come back to get more of that same sort of service.

Business Is Based on Goodwill.—Business—successful business—is based upon the goodwill of the customer. The United States Supreme Court recently defined goodwill as that which brings customers back to deal again with the same house. Customers who come back are the assets upon which success in business is based. We must do business constantly with the same people and with their friends. Years ago Elbert Hubbard used to say, "We must do business with our friends because our enemies won't deal with us." It is absolutely true that we must do business with people whose goodwill we

have been able to retain, because we cannot do business with those whose goodwill we have lost—they won't buy from us.

Emerson once said: "The only way to *have* a friend is to *be* one." That holds true in business to-day. We may go further back than that if we wish to find a motto for successful selling to-day: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets." Arthur Freeman suggests that we may spell that last word "p-r-o-f-i-t-s" and the suggestion is sound, since more than a hundred thousand business men have already discovered the truth of this motto for successful merchandising, and have adopted it as the Golden Rule of modern business: **HE PROFITS MOST WHO SERVES BEST.**

Success in selling depends upon service to the customer.

Service must be built into the goods.

Service must be expressed in the advertising.

Service must be the guiding principle of wholesaler, jobber, and retailer.

Service to the customer must be the life work of salespeople behind counters.

Every link in the chain of distribution must be welded with the spirit of service; and whoever wishes to make mass sales will do well to keep

in mind constantly the old adage that *no chain can be stronger than its weakest link*. To search for weak links and strengthen them all along the chain of distribution, is all part of the task of the maker of mass sales!

PART IV
KEEPING CUSTOMERS

PART IV

KEEPING CUSTOMERS

IT isn't enough to know how to make customers; we must know also how to *keep* them. Goodwill is the foundation of every successful business. It is the one essential without which success is impossible. Businesses have succeeded with very little stock in trade or, indeed, with none at all, since instances have been known of concerns that purchased goods for delivery only after they had already been sold; big successes have been built up in little buildings, and even by concerns having no fixed places of business other than a post-office box to begin with. But no business ever has succeeded, in the full meaning of the word, without the goodwill of its customers, because goodwill is what brings the customer back, and customers who come back are what make business successful.

Creating Customers Is Expensive.—Montgomery Ward & Company of Chicago estimate that it costs them \$10.00 to put the name of a new

customer on their books. In many instances the profit from the first sale which puts the customer's name on the books is very much less than the cost of opening the account. So Montgomery Ward & Company realize very keenly the essentiality of retaining the goodwill of each new customer so that he or she will return, through the mails, again and again, until the \$10.00 item "in the red" has been counterbalanced "in the blue"!

If it costs \$10.00 for a mail-order house to put a customer on the books, how much must it cost a concern securing business through the agency of traveling representatives to secure a new customer? One of the largest wholesale houses in Chicago estimates that the cost of creating each new customer is just a little under \$200.00 in their case, while in other cases it would run much higher than that. A manufacturer of heavy logging machinery estimates that it costs not less than \$600.00 to create a new customer.

This high cost of creating new customers persists notwithstanding the fact that nearly 90 per cent of all the creative brains in business are devoted to this phase of the work—securing new business.

Only about 10 per cent of the creative brains

in any business are devoted to the handling of orders after they have once been obtained—most of that 10 per cent is in the Credit and Collection Departments—the rest of the routine work being handled by people of the purely mechanical type who do not bring any creative faculty to bear upon the performance of their daily duties.

Yet, despite the fact that 90 per cent of the creative brains in business are devoted to the securing of new business, it is a fact that successful business is based upon goodwill, and goodwill is not the product of new customers, but of those who have become thoroughly well satisfied with the goods and service given them as the result of their original contact with the concern.

Goodwill Defined.—Goodwill may be defined as a feeling of satisfaction based upon satisfactory service, and service is never satisfactory until after it has been tried and tested. It is not enough that good goods shall be provided, because nowadays that is the rule rather than the exception. So, the deciding factor in the satisfaction of a customer must always be the manner in which the account is handled after once it has been secured. The goodwill of the customer, then, usually depends upon the proper performance of what the creative brains in business are so apt to regard as “petty details”!

Analyzing Causes for Dissatisfied Customers.

—Some years ago one of the largest wholesale hardware concerns in the world was brought to the very brink of bankruptcy by some mysterious cause, the nature of which could not be determined for a long time. Dealer after dealer ceased to do business with the concern without giving any reason for his action. He just quit and that was all.

Very few business men realize how seldom their customers do give reasons for not wanting to do business with them any more. Not long ago, investigation into the record of the great retail establishments on State Street in Chicago revealed the fact that 75 per cent of all the customers that stopped dealing with a particular store never gave any reason for so doing. They just quit and started to deal with another store.

That was what had been happening in the case of this great wholesale hardware concern. So many dealers had quit that it became urgently necessary to find the reason for it before the concern was driven out of business entirely. Before the reason could be detected, it became necessary to organize a staff of special investigators who were sent out into the territory, not to sell goods, but simply to interview the dealers to find out from them how they had been

impressed with the goods and service of the company.

Dissatisfied Customers Usually Noncommittal.—For a few weeks they could not secure any information from the dealers that would tend to explain the surprising slump. In most cases it appeared that even those dealers who had quit the house did not themselves know why they were “sore” at it. At least the only reason they would give for discontinuing their dealings with the house was that the other fellow’s salesman had just happened in at the psychological moment and so had landed the order. When they were asked whether they might be counted upon for orders in the near future, however, their replies at once became evasive, and it was evident that a very dangerous spirit of dissatisfaction with the service of the house had been created in some way, although the dealers, as a general thing, did not desire to enter upon argumentative discussions concerning it.

One Who Explained.—At length, however, one of the investigators encountered a dealer who did not object to a “scrap,” and as soon as the object of the visit had been announced, the investigator found that he had a very healthy one on his hands.

This dealer started out by saying that he would

never buy another nickel's worth of goods from that concern, and explained his attitude by bringing out fourteen letters, which he had been compelled to exchange with the house in order to secure a trifling adjustment involving an amount of about \$5.40 on some goods which had been delivered to him in bad order. The replies to his communications had been so general in character that he had been compelled to take time from his real work again and again to restate, and to explain the situation upon which he based his claim for adjustment. His last letter reached one of the heads of the concern and brought a satisfactory settlement, but not until he had become thoroughly disgusted with the situation and with the house responsible for it.

Further investigation along the lines of this clue uncovered scores of similar situations, all centering upon inefficient correspondence, and emanating from the head office. The scene of the investigation was then shifted to the head office, and a search was made through the letter files in order to find out just how the correspondence of the house had been handled during the period of the slump.

Good Counsel Often Misapplied.—It was discovered that there had been apparently an epidemic of very short letters during that period,

and upon further inquiry it developed that this epidemic had its inception in a general house memorandum, sent around by a vice president of the concern, containing quotations from an article which he had read in a business magazine, emphasizing the fact that business letters should be brief. "Put it in a paragraph if you can; certainly not in more than a page," said this article. "A busy business man will not read a letter of more than one page."

Realizing his own reaction to lengthy letters, this executive had accepted these statements as axiomatic and had sent them out to every correspondent in the house without realizing that brevity does not necessarily coincide with shortness.

A letter may be brief without being short, because "brevity" is a term descriptive of *conciseness*, while "short" is defined as "inadequate, defective, deficient, abrupt, petulant." "Concise" means "condensed or terse" and "terse" is defined as "elegantly and forcibly concise." So, a letter might contain two pages of closely spaced text and still be brief, because it stated everything that had to be said in the most concise form possible, but no one would call such a letter short.

Distinctions such as these, however, are not to

be expected from the routine workers of any business. On the reverse, self-interest dictated that they should interpret the order to mean that their letters in the future were to be kept short. Each of them had only so much mail to dictate each day, so the shorter the dictation on each letter, the less actual work each had to accomplish in the course of the day.

Naturally enough, under these conditions, it began to be the ambition of each correspondent to see just how few words he could put into each letter and in many cases replies to correspondence became little more than acknowledgments, and statements that "the matter was being looked into."

For example, a dealer might write in to the house:

On May 20th we ordered from your house twelve cases of your 8663a and have heard nothing of them since. Please advise when these goods were shipped and by what road. Also please start tracer, but repeat order in the meantime as we are in urgent need of the goods.

The correspondent who handled that letter replied:

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of June 2d. In reply will state the goods in question

were shipped promptly and we regret to learn that they have not yet reached you. We are entering a duplicate order to-day and trust you will have no further trouble. Thanking you for past favors, and soliciting a continuance of your business we are

Put Yourself in His Place.—You see the principle behind that letter is to “waste” the least possible time upon it—to answer it from the desk without looking up or calling up to secure any of the essential information upon which a complete reply would have to be based.

The curse of the routine correspondent is this very habit of “dictating from the desk,” feeling that it is his job merely to write letters and forgetting that the chief reason for writing letters is to convey information from one mind to another and that information usually consists principally of facts. The motto of the good correspondent, then, should be a revised version of the old advice to the cook: “First, catch your *facts*.”

In consequence of the wasteful “time-economy” of the correspondent in this case, the dealer was left without a single essential fact bearing upon his questions. He wanted to know when. He was told “promptly,” which is no answer at all. He wanted to know by what railroad or express company the goods had been shipped, and this

question was ignored entirely. It should be obvious, too, that he would like to have these same facts upon his duplicate order; and sooner or later something will have to be said about what he is to do with the original order, if it shows up, and the proper place to settle that question is right in this same letter.

That little example eloquently explains the letter-writing methods that brought this formerly great wholesale house to the brink of bankruptcy. It wasn't the "important" letters involving big sales or collections that counted in this case. The probabilities are that all such communications were handled by the possessors of the creative brains in that business. The trouble came through the little everyday letters dealing with the details of the business and, after all, the success of even the biggest single sale depends upon the manner in which the details connected with it are put through. The seller may be satisfied when the order is entered on the books, but the buyer will not be, until the goods are safely on his shelves.

Acts More Important Than Words.—By means of words, the good traveling salesman can convince his prospective customer that his house is a mighty good house with which to deal, but let that house make material mistakes in packing

and shipment, and then be short and snappy in replies to the dealer's protests, or else let it send cold-blooded, cutting letters about credits and collections, and it isn't very long before the newly made customer discovers that he really never had been convinced that this was a pretty good house with which to do business. He had just taken the salesman's word about it and, of course, when he stopped to think about it, the salesman was a prejudiced witness.

Now, from the facts of his own experience, the dealer is convinced—but to the exact contrary of what the salesman told him. The WORDS of the representative of the house had said that it was a mighty good place with which to do business, but the ACTS of the representatives of the house had said that it was careless, arrogant and curt.

Everybody remembers Lincoln's answer to the fellow who promised everything but performed nothing: "What you Do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you SAY!"

It is what letters Do to the customer, not what they say, that counts, and even though they are full of the elaborate ceremonial phraseology of the Middle Ages, still, unless they really give him the facts for which he has asked, he cannot possibly be expected to be satisfied. It is almost inevitable that we will get back exactly what

we give. It is impossible to mail an inadequate, deficient, abrupt, petulant letter to a customer and have it create an adequate, efficient, forcible and pleasing impression.

Let us consider the case of the particular customer, the uncovering of whose grievance brought about the discovery of the entire condition: He operated a small general store in a cross-roads settlement, and handled hardware simply as one of many lines. He had to have it but he did not want to be worried too much about it.

Small-Town Dealer Handicapped.—Now, consider the conditions under which such a dealer has to write letters: It isn't possible for him to press a pearl button on a mahogany desk, call in a stenographer, and say: "Miss Jones, take a letter to the Blank Hardware House." Instead, he has to go in from behind the counter, where his real interests lie in meeting his customers face to face; he has to crawl into the little "counting house" at the rear of the store and there his letters must be laboriously produced with pen and ink. As a general thing, he dislikes the mechanical part of writing even more than he does the mental part, and it may readily be imagined that the concern that compels him to go through this operation fourteen times when

once would have sufficed has bred up such an accumulation of bad will in his breast toward them, that when the rival salesman comes around, his work is all done for him in advance by "his friend, the competitor." All he has to do is to enter the order!

Intelligent Supervision.—Well, that is what had been happening in the case of this particular concern until it was on the brink of going out of business entirely. But it didn't do that. Instead, it immediately put into effect a system of supervision over the work of the correspondents, which began by giving them a better vision upon what their work really meant to the house, and went on to check their work in the future to see that it really expressed the spirit of service which was essential to the success of all concerned.

Hundreds of houses have found it desirable to create such systems of supervision during the past few years, but thousands of others will do so after they have been convinced it will PAY them to add another "system" to their already apparently thoroughly systematized processes.

Some interesting evidence along this line has been produced by the correspondence supervisor of the Goodrich Tire & Rubber Company, Mr. L. A. McQueen. One year after his system of correspondence supervision had been put into

effect, he had saved his house the sum of \$22,000, simply by eliminating unnecessary words from the 182,685 letters written monthly by the 2,000 correspondents of the concern.

For example, a letter that would have gone out in something after this form :

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of June 12th, inquiring about shipment of 12 No. X66 cord tires, ordered by you on the 5th; in reply, will state that these goods went forward to you by American Express on the 8th, and have undoubtedly reached you by now. Thanking you for this business, which we assure you is appreciated, and soliciting a continuance of your favors, beg to remain.

Now, the sense of that letter is contained in 28 words:

The 12 No. X66 cord tires which you ordered on the 5th were shipped to you by American Express on the 8th and have undoubtedly reached you by now.

It might pay to put in an entirely new paragraph, saying something like this :

We did not get your letter until the 8th because it was mailed on Friday and was held up by the holiday period.

Even with that additional explanation, there is a net saving of 42 words and the letter is very

much more effective without those words than it would be with them.

Mr. McQueen found that it was possible to eliminate an average of 15 words from every letter written by his house. The average saving was approximately a penny a letter. With 182,685 letters going out monthly, the origin of his \$22,000 saving becomes obvious!

To some, however, it may seem unreasonable that the elimination of 15 words from a letter could cut as much as a cent from the cost. Not long ago Louis Balsam, formerly secretary of the Direct Mail Advertising Association, made an exhaustive investigation into the costs of dictated letters. The systems of 60 representative concerns in Chicago were investigated and a special cost system was created for the purpose. This system contained the following 28 items:

A. Direct Cost.

1. Salaries.

- (a) Dictators' time cost.
- (b) Transcribers' time cost.
- (c) File clerks', mail boys' and messengers' time.
- (d) Mail sorters' time.

2. Stationery.

- (a) Letterheads.
- (b) Envelopes.

- (c) Special printing.
 - (d) Carbon paper.
 - (e) Carbon copy paper for files.
 - 3. Equipment and miscellaneous supplies.
 - (a) Typewriter upkeep.
 - (b) Ribbons for typewriter.
 - (c) Stenographers' supplies, including books, pencils and erasers.
 - (d) Phonographs and cylinders.
 - (e) Furniture.
 - (f) Special office and mailing appliances, such as scales, sealing machines, etc.
 - 4. Stamps.
 - (a) Direct postage cost.
 - (b) Stamp affixing machine cost.
 - 5. Waste.
 - (a) Return mail.
 - (b) Loss of stamps.
 - (c) Spoiled stationery.
- B. Overhead.**
- 1. Direct department expense.
 - (a) Salaries of correspondence officials.
 - (b) Incidental department expense.
 - 2. Indirect or house expenses.
 - (a) Salaries of general officers.
 - (b) Rent.
 - (c) Light and power.
 - (d) Fuel.
 - (e) Taxes.
 - (f) Insurance.

Not one of these 60 concerns had anything like so complete a cost system as this which was eventually worked out, but the surprising part of the investigation was that not one of all the 60 included the first item—dictators' time cost—and in many cases the second item also—transcribers' time cost—had been omitted. Yet the investigation revealed that approximately 90 per cent of the cost of dictated letters is contained within these two items.

In one case, among the sixty investigated, 11,000 letters had been dictated in one month at a total cost of \$2,367.42. Of this amount \$1,137.39 represented dictators' time cost—nearly one-half of the total—and \$880.18 represented transcribers' time cost. The two items together made approximately 90 per cent of the total cost of dictating letters. In this case, the dictation was done by routine letter-writers, whose pay was only a little higher than that of their stenographers.

In another case where the dictation was done mostly by executives, the cost of dictation was proportionately greater. With this concern it cost \$314.50 to dictate 1,000 letters. The dictators' time cost was \$208.36—two-thirds of the total—and the transcribers' time cost represented a further \$70.40. Again the two amounts made

approximately 90 per cent of the total cost.

Now, since 90 per cent of the cost of dictated letters must be charged up to the dictators' and transcribers' time cost, it is obvious that the eliminating of even fifteen words from the average letter will count up tremendously in the long run. Consider the process through which the morning mail has to go: To begin with, the dictator takes up the letter which he is to answer and dictates:

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 12th, and in reply to same will state.

The stenographer, seated beside him, takes down:

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 12th, and in reply to same will state.

A little later, she goes to her machine and transcribes:

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 12th, and in reply to same will state.

The finished letter is brought back to the dictator and before signing it he reads:

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of the 12th, and in reply to same will state.

Now, 90 per cent of the cost of dictated letters is covered by the time of those engaged in the work—and see how much time has been wasted by including just one useless and meaningless phrase! Multiply that many times over in a single letter and continue the process throughout the day's dictation, and it becomes obvious that there is an opportunity here for very marked savings, such as those secured by the Goodrich people after Mr. McQueen set his system to work for them.

A Simple System of Supervision.—A simple and effective method of starting a system of correspondence supervision is to assign some one with a fair share of creative brains, who can think in terms of the customer as well as in terms of the house, to the task of reading through a representative collection of carbon copies of letters actually sent out recently. Half a dozen from each correspondent should be ample. If there are many correspondents, it would be well to take a department at a time.

Having made a careful study of the style of each correspondent, the supervisor dictates a confidential memorandum, constructively criticizing his work. A good method is to commence by complimenting the correspondent on whatever he does well, continuing with the things he might

possibly improve by following certain suggestions which are given, and concluding with the things that should be eliminated from his letters entirely. This method usually secures the coöperation of the correspondent, which is, of course, highly desirable.

Careful attention is given by the supervisor to copies of letters written *after* the memorandum has been received by the correspondent, and other memoranda, followed if necessary by personal interviews, may be necessary. It is probable that all will readily see the wisdom of eliminating the wasted words from their letters, and thus a start will readily be made, easily enough, in the right direction.

A very great deal has been written recently about the need to eliminate sterile and stagnant phrases from business correspondence, but despite it all, business letters continue to be overloaded with them. Not long ago I had occasion to write to fifteen large concerns in Chicago, twelve of whom would be rated AA1 by Bradstreet's. In every one of these twelve cases, the reply began: "Beg to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 12th," or some similar form of that stilted phrase. Similar phraseology was sprinkled through all their letters and yet this happened only a day or two ago, and the letters

were from very large houses, who are admittedly progressive in all other phases of their merchandising methods.

Primitive Letter-Writing.—The origin of this phraseology which clings with such persistence to the correspondence of the twentieth century is interesting. Just a few hundred years ago no business man knew how to write, and when he wanted business letters written he had to go to the scrivener, as the paid letter-writers of those days were called, and have him write the letters.

Now, consider the case of the scrivener: He knew three things. He knew that his customer couldn't read or write; he knew that the chances were that the one to whom his letter would be sent wouldn't be able to read it, but would have to take it to another scrivener and have it read to him. The third thing the scrivener knew was that he would be paid so much a word for every word he worked into that letter! No wonder the letters of those days became very involved and verbose, repeating a single thought from two or three different angles, partly to make sure that there would be no mistake, and partly because every additional word meant additional remuneration for the scrivener.

This process naturally ran up the cost of letter-writing in those days, and so very few

letters were written except on really important business matters, such as touched directly upon the transfer of property—either offering it for sale, accepting the offer, or arranging the details of collection and payment afterwards. In those days, no less than in these, questions of the transfer of property were continually coming into the courts, and letters written upon the subject naturally constituted the very best of evidence. Such a letter as we have considered, dealing with the transfer of a piece of property, would be passed upon by the court which would rule that it constituted a legal deed of transfer. After that, there wasn't a scrivener in the country who would dare to leave out a word or phrase from that form for fear the very word or phrase which he did leave out would invalidate the legality of the document! So it was that the work of the scrivener, founded upon the desire to make as much money as possible, became fixed in legal forms.

Now most letters, until very recently, were nothing more than little legal documents, and for a long time business men continued either to take the advice of their lawyers before writing such letters, or at least they adhered very closely to the legal forms when they wrote them themselves. In the meantime, however, lawyers them-

selves have been quicker to see the absurdity of retaining these many redundancies even than the business men who borrowed them from them.

For example, here is the form of a simple deed, based upon the old procedure of innumerable repetitions. This particular form has been reduced to the smallest possible size, consistent with the old legal practice, and would probably be considered by the old type of lawyer as rather concise than the reverse. Read it through and see how many of the words and phrases might be eliminated without altering the sense of the document.

It begins "This indenture," and right there we have a very interesting survival from the dead centuries. Centuries ago, when it was the custom to write all legal documents by hand on parchment, the necessary number of copies of the same document would all be made upon a single skin and then each copy would be separated from the others by means of a wavy cut or indenture. Later, when the parties to the transaction came together again, in order to establish the genuineness of their respective copies, the pieces would be laid upon the table and the indentions fitted into each other. If they fitted exactly, it became evident that no substitution or forgery had been made. From this practice all such legal docu-

ments were given the name of indentures. So it is that this "legal" form of the simple deed commences:

THIS INDENTURE, made the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three, between A. Jones, of the city of Chicago, in the county of Cook, and in the state of Illinois, merchant, party of the first part, and Will Smith, of Elmhurst, in DuPage County of the same state, party of the second part,

WITNESSETH: That the said party of the first part, in consideration of the sum of one hundred dollars, lawful money of the United States, to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part, at or before the ensembling and delivery of these presents (consider the antiquity of that phrase!) and receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and the said party of the second part, his executors and administrators, forever released and discharged from the same; by these presents (up to this time most of these words, while antique, may seem to have been more or less necessary, but from now on we will start to make a little money for the scrivener!) has granted, bargained, sold, aliened, remised, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents does grant, bargain, sell, alien, remise, release, convey and confirm (!!!) unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all that tract of land known and described as follows: the SW quarter of the SW

quarter of Section 10, Township 16 north, Range 11 east, together with all and singular tenements, (imagine tenements on a farm!) hereditaments (whatever those are!) and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining; and the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues, and profits thereof; and also all the estate, right, title, interest, property, possession, claim and demand whatsoever, both in law and in equity of the said party of the first part, of, in, and to (three words where one would have done!) the above granted premises and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances,

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above mentioned and described premises, with the appurtenances (let's be sure not to forget the appurtenances!) and every part thereof, to the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said party of the first part has hereunto set his hand and seal the day and year first above written.

Signatures and seals on the right-hand side and signed and sealed in the presence of a complete flock of witnesses!

Now, as has been said, that is rather concise and dainty, compared with the legal forms that were employed down to a very recent time. But, not so long ago, some of the more progressive lawyers came together to discuss whether it would not be reasonable and possible materially

to abridge such forms and still retain all their sense and legality. Very much abbreviated forms have long been accepted by courts under common law, and similar short forms were eventually worked out by the lawyers and are now rapidly superseding their ponderous predecessors.

For example, here's a perfectly complete and legal short form of the simple deed which we have just discussed :

For the consideration of \$100.00 received January 1, 1923, I convey to Will Smith and his heirs, the SW quarter of the SW quarter of Section 10, Township 16 north, Range 11 east.

A. JONES.

Now, if the Goodrich people can save a penny a letter by eliminating merely fifteen words, how much money will be saved by eliminating all those unnecessary words from this simple deed?

But, while lawyers are eliminating unnecessary words from their forms, business letter-writers appear, if anything, to be multiplying theirs, until the average letter seems to consist mostly of meaningless phrases, with perhaps one-tenth of one per cent of sound common sense.

I don't often descend into alleged poetry, but not long ago, in an effort to express the almost complete lack of thought, and the multiplicity

of words contained in the average business letter, I perpetrated the following:

YOUR VALUED FAVOR

Your valued favor of even date
Has come to hand. In reply will state
Our records show that the goods whereto
You refer were shipped by B. & U.
We regret to learn they have been misplaced
And will state that will promptly have same
traced.

You realize, of course, that we
Make all our shipments F. O. B.
And so cannot assume the blame
For failure to deliver same.
Trusting this unforeseen delay
Won't inconvenience you, will say
We thank you for, and appreciate,
Your valued favor of even date.

Curiously enough, I hadn't any more than finished this, when I came upon an actual example paralleling it very closely, which caused the loss of a valued customer. This was the case:

The Lost Case of Peaches.—It seems that a little retail grocer had ordered from his wholesale house a single case of canned peaches. He sent in his order on July 7. The house acknowledged it on July 10, but by July 21 the case had

not yet arrived, and so he wrote again to the house, asking what was the trouble. His letter was handled by the regular routine correspondent, who replied :

Your favor of July 21 received and contents noted. Regret to note that you have not received the goods ordered on July 7 which were shipped to you by the So. Cent. RR. on July 11. We are having the shipment traced and every effort will be made to expedite delivery.

Regretting the delay which, however, is entirely beyond our control, and trusting that these goods will soon reach you, we are.

The purpose of the letter, of course, is to "pass the buck" to the railroad company, to whom possibly the blame belongs; but, on the other hand, the customer belongs to the wholesale house and it might well pay to assume the responsibility, if by so doing the house can also retain the customer! It probably cost the house \$200.00 to put that customer on the books. Now a ten-cent letter written by a five-cent correspondent produced an effect upon the customer which can be best expressed in the terms of his own reply :

GENTLEMEN : I have been dealing with your house for eleven years now, giving you most of my business and always pay prompt. Apparently my business

ain't worth anything to you, though, and I expect you are doing me a favor when you put your stuff on a freight for me. Now, your goods ain't any use to me in your warehouse and they ain't any use to me on some sidetrack on the S. C. I buy your goods to sell to my customers, and my customers come into my store to get them—it don't do me any good to tell them that the goods are somewhere between here and Center City, and it don't do you any good to tell me that, either.

If I can't get your goods in my store, I can't use them and if you don't care whether they get in my store when I need them (that, of course, refers to the unfortunate phrase, "which, however, is entirely beyond our control") then I guess I don't care to buy any more goods from your house.

Cancel that order and have it turned back to you if you ever find it. I'm wiring Jones & Jones to send a case of their Royal Crown brand as quick as they can get it here and I guess they will show me some action because they have been after my business a long time and will appreciate it, if you don't.

Now, despite the fact that this letter contains all the elements of a good letter in that it is written simply, forcibly and directly, still it isn't the kind of letter that any of us likes to receive!

It went to the desk of the president, as letters of this type have a habit of doing, and the president immediately brought to bear upon the prob-

lem a little of the same creative brains which had been devoted to getting the order in the first place. He immediately wired the retailer that another case of peaches would be expressed to him that day, but the time for that was when the complaint was first received, and the only result was to bring back from the dealer the following telegram :

Have already received Royal Crown. Will not accept your goods.

Then the president had nothing left to do but to fire the correspondent and get the high-priced salesman who covered that territory back to work upon the customer in the hope that eventually—after four or five expensive trips—he might be brought back into line and his account reopened.

Keeping That Customer.—It happens that I have in my files the account of the handling of another case so similar to this that it may be made identical simply by changing the kind of goods and the dates. Let's consider it the same case and see how the second correspondent—one of the few who use creative brains in routine work—handled it. When he received the original complaint from the little retail customer in the country, he did not immediately start to dic-

tate: "Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor" because he had learned the first lesson of letter-writing—that letters are meant to convey INFORMATION from one mind to another—and so his first action was to secure the *facts* upon which to base a comprehensive reply.

He went into the salesmanager's office, and the salesmanager had on his wall one of those large maps of the United States, stuck full of pins—pink, yellow, green, brown, and black ones—indicating in visual form all the vital facts about the business, showing where the house had customers and where it hoped to have them; where its salesmen were to-day and where it hoped they would be to-morrow. From this map it was easy for the correspondent to locate a group of regular customers of the house in the immediate vicinity of the complaining customer. It wasn't long before he had located one within eighteen miles of the complainant who had within the past week received half a carload of staples, among which were twelve cases of the same brand of canned peaches. He then wired—not to the complainant—but to the man with the twelve cases, and this is what he said:

Will you lend us one case of our Duchess Peaches for two days? Wire answer collect.

Let's put ourselves in the place of the dealer who received this wire. His relations with the house had been pleasant and friendly right along. He thought they were pretty decent people to deal with; and he knew he had on his back porch at that moment twelve cases of peaches waiting to go into his storeroom. He knew also he could not expect to sell them all within a week or ten days, however good business might be, and so, naturally enough, his answer was:

Sure, but what's the idea?

Now, it didn't seem advisable to enter upon a long explanation since speed was essential, so the correspondent wired back (telegrams only cost a few cents compared with the value of a customer!):

Thanks. Will explain in letter. Please give case to Kelly livery, who will call.

When I first came upon that item I used to be worried to know how the dickens the correspondent got the name of the Kelly Livery in that town, but one evening I was asked to talk to the Salesmanagers' Association of Chicago and I explained this feeling of doubt to them. "Why," one of them said afterwards, "the answer to that is easy. That's one item of information

that you can always be sure of finding in a salesman's expense account!" Well, anyhow, the correspondent had the name of the Kelly Livery and he then wired to them, telling them to go over to the grocer in their town, get that case of canned peaches and rush it over to the complaining customer in the other town—eighteen miles away.

Then, for the first time, the correspondent said something to the man who had made the original complaint and this is what he wired :

Case of Duchess Peaches will arrive in less than three hours by livery from Milltown. Letter will explain.

The case actually arrived in less than two hours, and the contents were completely sold by the time this letter came in explanation :

"DEAR MR. SMITH: Folks are pretty decent when we give them a chance to be, aren't they? When I got your letter of July 21, telling that your case of Duchess Peaches hadn't come, I happened to think that Monroe Jones over in Milltown had just received a dozen cases of the same goods. Now I knew he didn't need them all right that minute, so I wired him to lend us one for you. He came across like a prince, and then we wired the Livery at Milltown to

get it and rush it over to you. I was mighty glad to learn that you got it two hours later.

When the other case arrives—it was delivered to the Southern Central at 11:45 A. M. on July 11—just send it right back to us if you can't use it. We have already expressed another case to Monroe Jones to replace the one we borrowed for you.

Naturally enough, this letter, coupled with the way in which his complaint had been handled, made the customer feel pretty good. He sent back one of those long, effusive "love letters" which occasionally come in business, the substance of which, however, was just this:

You people are right there. I'll keep that other case when it comes and you can send me eleven more. I'm going to buy by the dozen, too, from now on.

It was interesting to learn that the grocer from whom the case had been borrowed was so much impressed with the method employed in the taking care of his fellow retailer that he took occasion himself to tell the episode at two or three grocers' conventions as an example of the sort of service the really down-to-date wholesale house can offer to its retail customers, if it really wants to. Is it any wonder that a house which handles its routine business like that is rapidly

growing to be one of the largest concerns of its kind in the United States?

Other Causes for Losing Customers.—Customers are not always lost, however, because of curt or insolent answers to their correspondence. Even more often, perhaps, they are lost because the routine letters that go to them do not contain the essential note of sales psychology which might prevent them from canceling orders which have already been secured by the creative brains of the business.

As an example of that phase of the matter, let's consider a case supplied by the Addressograph Company of Chicago. Not long ago they held a "100-point Convention" to which they invited all of their dealers who had sold 100 per cent of their sales quotas during the preceding year. During that year it happened that the company had been selling in excess of the productive capacity and so for the first time in the history of those dealers, they had been obliged simply to acknowledge orders instead of immediately delivering the machines, and they were compelled to tell their customers it would be from sixty to ninety days before delivery could be made.

Good Salesmen Often Poor Letter-Writers.—These dealers were all good salesmen, handling specialties which had to be sold and which prac-

tically never sold themselves, but it is a curious truth that salesmen, as a general thing, are among the worst letter-writers in the world. They seem to feel that they are entering upon a strange field when they begin to express their thoughts in writing instead of face to face with a customer. So, instead of making use of the same sort of expressions which they would use face to face with the very same man, when they write to him they make use of all the formal phraseology of the fossil-phrase era of business letter-writing.

Now, the necessity for salesmanship does not end when the order has been taken, if it is not possible to make immediate delivery, because the fact that a certain delay of some months' time will have to be consented to by the customer acts as an alteration of the original contract and gives him a chance, if he is so inclined, to cancel the contract entirely. This, in a very large percentage of cases, was actually being done by the customers of these dealers and it is not unnatural that such should be the case when we consider the process by which the sale of a specialty is arrived at.

Before the customer will put his name on the dotted line to order a specialty of any kind, there must first be built up in his mind a desire for

that article, greater than his desire for any other article costing a similar sum of money, and greater also than the desire to save the sum of money itself to cover future possibilities. In order to secure that state of conviction, it is necessary to hold back all these inhibitions until the prospect has come to the point of conviction, and when he does reach that point, we know it immediately, because he signifies it by signing the order.

Leaving at the Right Moment.—Now, what happens after he has signed the order? Immediately all the inhibitions which have been held back from him up to the point of signing may flow back over his mind and he begins to think of all the other things he might have done with that same sum of money! That is why the Golden Rule of specialty selling is this: "Leave as soon as you have the order!" The specialty salesman of experience adheres religiously to that rule. He does not wait around to discuss business or politics or any other subject with his customer after he has secured the order, but in a businesslike way he goes out to get it in the mails. He does this because probably in his apprentice years he has learned what happens when he does the reverse. This is what happens:

If he stands there playing with the order while

he continues to carry on a courteous conversation concerning the possible paucity of seal pelts next summer due to the open winter this year (or some equally idiotic subject), there comes a time when his prospect's eyes film over—like the eyes of the owl, and no one ever made any money talking to an owl!—indicating that he is no longer paying attention to what the salesman is saying. Instead, he is turning over in his mind what an ass he was to place that order at all when there are so many other things he really needs worse than he needs whatever it was the salesman has sold him.

Then, if the salesman keeps right on talking, there will come a time when the prospect's mind will completely reverse itself, and reaching a hand towards the salesman, he will say: "Let me look at that contract again for a second, will you?" The salesman can but comply and then, tearing it into a thousand pieces, the prospect will conclude: "I have been giving further consideration to this matter and I have decided that I ought not go in on this just at this time. There are a number of things I overlooked when I gave you this order that I've got to go into first, but I like your proposition and I want you to be sure to come in and see me the very next time

you come to town, and I'll be ready to go into it with you."

After a specialty salesman has been confronted with that situation once or twice, and has either started at the very beginning again upon the almost hopeless task of reselling or else has accepted the inevitable and gone without the order that he already had in his hands, he learns that a sale is not necessarily consummated by the mere signing of the order!

If this is true in the face of the flesh and blood salesman, consider how much more necessary it is to use genuine sales strategy in a letter, a mere collection of black marks on white paper, that goes to such a customer after he has had two or three days to think up other things he would rather do with his money, and tells him that in any event he cannot have the machine, he is regretting having ordered, for at least three months! Yet, here is the type of letter that the average salesman sends out to accomplish that important strategic mission.

The Letter That Killed the Sale.—This letter is not the product of any one person, but it is an excellent example of the kind of correspondence that was causing a high percentage of cancellations for the Addressograph Company during the "over-sold" period. This letter is addressed to

the Recording Secretary of the local of a union of carpenters. He had recently ordered one of the smallest hand machines manufactured by the company in order to address the notices sent out weekly to the members to inform them of the time and place of meetings of the Union. Here's the letter:

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your valued favor of even date, inclosing order for one (only) our Model H3 Hand Addressograph, price \$60.00 F. O. B. Chicago.

In reference to same, beg to state that because of press of business at our factory, we shall not be in a position to make shipment on same for at least sixty (60) and possibly ninety (90) days from date.

Trusting that you will not be unnecessarily inconvenienced by this delay, assuring you of our wish to serve you to the best of our ability at all times . . .

Most letters of this type have only one meaningless participial ending. This example has three, but before we come to the last, the Addressograph Company and all its salesmen must be absolved from any "right, title or interest" therein. It did, however, actually occur in a letter which came to my desk on the morning I was preparing this example, so I added it for good measure!

“and thanking you *in advance* for *past* favors, we are . . .”

Now, imagine the effect of a letter of that type on this secretary who has probably already unsold himself on his purchase because he has remembered so many other things that he ought to do with his \$60.00, and also perhaps because he has recalled the fact that for so many years he has got along without the machine by letting his wife and daughters sit up one night a week and address his notices by hand. Is it any wonder the percentage of cancellations was high?

Rewriting the Letter.—The problem, then, is to rewrite this particular letter—and, of course, all similar letters too—so that it will keep the customer sold. To begin with, to make a legal contract, we must restate the terms, but let us do that in the very first paragraph before any controversial points have been raised.

DEAR MR. BROWN: Thank you for your order for the Model H3 Hand addressograph, price \$60.00 at Chicago.

Now, we want to remind our prospect why he bought this machine because we know from past experience that the chances are he has unsold himself in the meantime, so we go ahead:

You are going to find it a great help to you in your work as secretary of Carpenters' Local No. 67.

That, by the way, convinces him you are really writing this letter to *him* and that it is not simply a form sent to all customers. Now comes the process of recalling into his mind the reasons why he bought the machine in the beginning. In order to obtain this effect, it is not necessary laboriously to reproduce all the arguments which convinced the customer to the point of signing the order because men are not convinced by words but by ideas.

Just as a powerful drug may be dissolved in a glass of water, and after it has been taken nothing but the drug produces the effect, so an idea may be dissolved in half a thousand words, and yet, if the idea really is transferred to the other fellow's mind, he does not remember the words in which it was dissolved, but he has a very clear version in his own mind of the original idea. Thereafter to recall the same idea into his mind, it is necessary to give him only the thought and he will find plenty of words with which to make the proper solution!

Recognizing the truth of this, we are able to recall in three short phrases the three ideas upon which had been based the campaign which had

been responsible for the order secured from this particular customer. Here they are :

It will address the weekly notices to your members ten times as fast as you can write them by hand (that's the first idea) and entirely without mistakes (that's the second idea) yet it is as easy to operate as a rubber stamp!

The last phase of the campaign had been based upon the comparison between the operation of this hand-addressing machine and a rubber stamp in order to carry conviction of the simplicity of its operation.

Now we have brought back into the mind of the prospect the ideas upon which he originally based his decision to purchase the machine, and so it is safe to proceed to the next phase of our problem, which is to break the news to him that delivery cannot be made immediately. In introducing this, the dangerous point, use may be made of the known truth that all people have a tendency to want that which a large number of others also have wanted, probably on the assumption that if so many want it, it must be good. The letter continues, then :

We have had so great a demand for this model, not only from organization secretaries, but also from business houses everywhere, that it is keeping our factory

force (remember, he is a labor man!) busy to catch up. As a general thing, it takes ninety days to make delivery, but knowing that you are anxious to begin the use of the new and easy method just as soon as possible, I put through a special memorandum with your order, and hope to be able to get it to you in about sixty days.

Now, that's putting the unpleasant truth in the best possible light, but it must be remembered that a man can drown just as effectively in sixty feet of water as he can in ninety feet, so our problem is not yet entirely solved. Some method must be found to bridge the mental gap that yawns when sixty days has to be mentioned. It is into that gap that prospects have been falling and severing the connection with the proposition! The best possible way to bridge that mental gap is to give the prospect something to do himself in the meantime and in this case we are able to do that as follows:

In the meantime, so that you will be in a position to make use of the machine just as soon as it arrives, I suggest that you have address plates made for your list immediately. This work will be done for you in your own city by Blank & Company of 10 James Street.

Now, having bridged the dangerous gap, let us conclude, not with a meaningless participial end-

ing, but simply by driving home in the prospect's mind the thought that he has *bought* something and that he will never regret it, thus:

This equipment is going to mean a great saving of time and trouble to you, Mr. Brown. It will repay you many times over for the investment you have made in it.

Note the finality of those last five words: "YOU HAVE MADE IN IT!"

Winning Lost Customers Back.—Now we have considered several ways in which customers can be lost; let's consider ways in which to win them back again.

While we were considering the case of the hardware concern's careless correspondence, reference was made to an investigation conducted by the great retail stores on State Street in Chicago. The original purpose of that investigation was to find out how many customers of Marshall Field & Company—the greatest retail establishment in the world—were lost each year and why they were lost. The number of lost customers was large, but the important thing was the reasons why they were lost. In nearly every instance the deciding factor had been one of these "petty details" to which practically no attention is given by the creative brains in business.

For example, one customer might have been lost by delay in delivery of an opera cloak, occasioned by the messenger boy taking the wrong street car, landing him in the wrong end of town before he discovered his mistake. Then, cross and irritated at the lateness of the hour and the fact that he has missed some appointment of his own for the evening, perhaps, he does not respond diplomatically and politely to the querulous customer who has been compelled to pass up her own engagement because of the nonarrival of the expected garment. He is rude to her, and as a result she becomes thoroughly annoyed by the entire matter and tells him that he can just take the cloak right back to the store because she wouldn't think of buying it now! The cloak is returned to stock the next day through the regular department without comment. It goes back into stock, credit is issued and there the matter, and that customer's account, is closed.

Thousands of customers have been lost by occurrences no less trivial and, in common with an overwhelming majority of all concerns—retail, jobbing, wholesale and manufacturing—no attempt whatever had been made up to the time of the investigation, to get in touch with customers who had, for any reason, let their accounts lapse, and to find out just why they were no

longer buying from the firm. Of course, when once an effort of that kind was made, it was very easy, in the majority of the cases, to satisfy the customer after the first heat of disappointment had worn off, and to reëstablish friendly relations.

Finding a Million Dollars.—A similar incident in the wholesale line came to my attention a while ago when I was visiting one of the big drygoods concerns in St. Louis. The auditor of the house, knowing my interest in better letters, brought me a copy of a letter written more than three years previously by one of their department heads to the past customers of their concern. It seems that he had gotten his idea originally when he was looking up some facts to put in a special letter he was writing to one of his customers, and in which he wanted to refer to the business that customer had done with his department ten years previously. In order to get those facts, he had to dig back through the old ledgers, and as he was doing that, his attention was drawn to the large number of concerns that apparently used to be regular customers of the house but whose names no longer appeared in the customers' ledger. It occurred to him, also, that there must have been some real reason why all those customers had suddenly quit deal-

ing with his concern, and he thought that the best way to find out just what that reason was would be to *ask the customers!*

To begin with, then, he set a couple of boys to work copying off the names of all customers who used to deal with the house but no longer did so. Then, he had the list checked to eliminate those who had died, gone out of business, or changed the firm name, and to the remainder of the list he sent a letter which simply said in effect :

Why did you stop dealing with us? Was it our fault? If so, won't you please let us have a chance to make good?

Sixty per cent of those to whom that letter went answered it, and three years after it had gone out the gross amount of business, which had come from the concerns revived as the result of the careful following up of their reasons for quitting in the past, had amounted to **MORE THAN A MILLION DOLLARS.**

Think of that! A million dollars' worth of business absolutely created out of nothing by one idea and a goodwill letter, since most of those customers had not spent one penny with the house for five or six years at least before the letter went to them, and in all probability would

never have spent a nickel with it again so long as they lived if the letter had never been sent.

Similar Plan for Small Store.—Not long ago in a little coöperative house magazine called "Good Hardware," I came across an example of the application of the same idea to a little retail hardware store, possibly the smallest type of retail store, showing that the same plan works well, not only with the greatest retail establishment in the world and with the huge wholesaler, but also it may be made to work for the smallest merchant in the country. Here's a letter sent out by the owner of a little retail hardware store to those of his customers who had, for some reason or another, taken their trade elsewhere:

DEAR MR. DAVIS: Yesterday I got rather a strange idea—an idea that will interest you because your name came up. I got to wondering how many customers had been dealing with me for two years or more. Just to get an actual count I got my bookkeeper to go over our cards and put aside the card for any customer that had stopped buying from me. Much to my satisfaction, there proved to be only thirty-seven people who had left me to deal with somebody else, but you were one of them. Now, I said to myself: "There surely was some reason why Mr. Davis took his trade away. Well, I'm going to sit right down and ask him to tell me what the trouble was. Was there a fault of

some kind on my part? If so, I'm going to ask for a chance to make it right."

That's my reason for writing this letter, Mr. Davis, but I believe you will answer it. To do so won't take more than a couple of minutes of your time and I feel sure you will give them to me willingly. As I recall our relations of the past, they were pleasant right up to the time you stopped dealing with me. Won't you tell me exactly what it was that happened?

This letter was sent to the thirty-seven people who had taken their trade away and thirty-three replied to it. As a result of the personal treatment accorded their replies, twenty-eight again became regular customers of this merchant, each doing with him a volume of business ranging from \$30.00 to \$150.00 a year. It is unquestionably true that a similar plan and a similar letter might be used effectively by hundreds of thousands of concerns in all lines of business.

Conserving Customers' Goodwill.—After all, there is nothing more important in business than the old customer. One old customer is worth a dozen new ones, because successful business is based upon goodwill and goodwill grows slowly like an oak tree, not like a mushroom. It is the product of satisfaction based upon service and it cannot begin to operate, to the fullest extent, on

our behalf until the customer has continued to deal with us for a considerable period of time.

On the other hand, the old customer who says even in the most casual way and without any intention of doing harm: "No, I stopped dealing with Blank & Company some time ago because they sent out such insolent collection letters" or "because they keep one waiting so long for one's packages" carries more weight than many pages of paid advertising telling what splendid and courteous service we are prepared to render!

To keep the old customer, then, should be the first and principal aim of all who would build business to the highest point of success; and keeping the old customer is largely a matter of constant careful attention to the thousands of "petty details," the sum of which equals failure or success in business.

In conclusion, to borrow the well-known words of Michael Angelo, master artist of the ages, "Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle!"

CONCLUSION

A REVIEW

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THE value of knowledge lies in its accessibility; what we have done or read may help us only in so far as we can recall it at need. If one is to be able to recall knowledge at need, one must first fix that knowledge very firmly and very clearly in the memory. Clear recollection depends upon three factors in the process of fact assimilation: first, concentration upon the fact; second, application of the fact to personal experience; third, occasional repetition of fact and application until both become firmly seated in the mind.

Those who find it hard to concentrate upon the first reading of a series of facts, such as have been found in this book, may often secure good results from a second careful reading. As for the application of these facts to personal experience, it isn't necessary to await an opportunity to use them in actual life or business. The mental process of thinking through some past or imag-

inary situation, to which each would apply, usually will serve to fix the real meaning in the mind.

Facts are of value only as they may be applied to life. To memorize a million facts for which one will have no possible use, is the act of an educated idiot, not of a wise man. Let us concentrate upon facts that we can *use*, then; and work out in our minds just *how* to use them in real life. Thus our knowledge is transmitted into WISDOM.

Thoughtful repetition serves, first, to fix facts in the mind; and, second, to refresh them from time to time lest they become overlaid with other facts of more recent acquisition. A brief review of the various facts to be found in this book, then, may serve as a fitting conclusion to it:

First, we have realized that everybody has something to sell; not only the salesman his merchandise; but the professional man his services; the minister his gospel; the social leader her personality; and we have seen that the principles upon which each of these aims may be accomplished are the basic principles of selling, since *selling is simply leading another to think and to act in accordance with our wishes.*

We have seen that it requires no special personality or cleverness to acquire and to apply

these principles, because a powerful personality often arouses only resistance, while cleverness cannot be put into the minds of the majority of folks who are not especially clever. It is true, however, that we think as we are; that we cannot express ideas of which we are not possessed or which we cannot put into the language of common human understanding.

It will serve the thinker to enlarge his sympathies and his interests in clean and kind and beautiful things, because every one is potentially responsive to these things, and to facts expressed in terms of them; yet only a few have developed along these lines to the point of availability. Those who do so, insure to themselves the power to move the minds of the majority of mankind. That this enlargement of the consciousness can be acquired is made clear in the chapter dealing with the building of the brain, and the nervous system over which it presides.

This system may be diagrammed in three parts: (1) the sensory system, to receive impressions from the outer world; (2) the central system, to record those impressions and associate them with other impressions which may help to explain them, and aid in arriving at decisions concerning them; (3) the motor system, by

means of which mental decisions are expressed in physical action.

The brain may be built, then, in three ways: (1) by acquiring new impressions; (2) by comparing old impressions and finding new associations between them; (3) by coming to decisions concerning new and old ideas, and putting these decisions into ACTION.

Along lines of practical selling, we have found seven keys, three on a ring which we have called THE PLAN, and four on a ring called THE PERFORMANCE. On the first ring we have these three keys to the creation of a practical plan: (1) knowledge of the subject; (2) knowledge of the object; (3) knowledge of the prospect. On the second ring, these four keys admit the planner to the practical application of the plan: (1) making it easy for the prospect to *pay attention*; (2) making it easy to *understand*; (3) making it easy to *believe*; (4) making it easy to *act*.

Action is the end of every successful sales message. If the prospect fails to take the necessary action to complete the sale, it is the seller who has failed.

Having the seven keys to selling, it is essential to consider the established means of distribution, since most of us must use these means to exercise our selling power.

The distribution of merchandise may be diagrammed as a huge tank and pipe line with a tap at the end of the pipe line. The tank is the tank of production, into which manufacturers pour their products. The pipe line is made up of many lengths: merchandise brokers, wholesalers, jobbers, retailers—through which the merchandise must flow to reach the actual consumers; and no real sale is made except to the customers who consume the merchandise and render its reproduction necessary.

The tap at the end of the last length of the pipe line of distribution is the salespeople through whose hands the merchandise passes into the possession of those ultimate consumers.

The best of advertising and sales effort anywhere along the pipeline obviously will be reduced to nothing by the failure of the salespeople who contact with the customers.

Selling, then, demands attention to every length along the pipe line of distribution, and particular attention to the turning on of that tap at the end of the line.

Even after the first sale has been made, however, the science of selling has but begun upon its real work. Single sales usually represent liabilities rather than assets. Profits depend upon repeat orders from satisfied customers who come

back to buy again. The complete satisfaction of the customer depends upon every major or minor employee who makes out a check, wraps a bundle, delivers a package, writes a letter, collects an account, or in any way contacts with that customer.

Sales are never made, in the sense of the transaction being completed. Each transaction should lead on to another, and that to the next, if the science of selling is to reach its full efficiency.

The keynote to the whole plan and practice is here: Success in business must be based upon the GOODWILL of the customer. To gain this goodwill is only the first part of selling; to retain it is the second, and the retaining of goodwill depends upon a multiplicity of little things.

To gain goodwill is a matter of applied common sense. To retain it is a matter of remembering and putting into practice the famous epigram of Michael Angelo, master craftsman of the Renaissance—TRIFLES MAKE PERFECTION, BUT PERFECTION IS NO TRIFLE. There you have the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, of the science of selling. Selling begins with the use of common sense; it ends with close attention to trifles. It is simple, but so is everything when we understand it.

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