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EMPOWERING TIMES



THINKING ALOUD

The Toughest Job in the World?
Jay

PODIUM

Roshan L. Joseph
Managing Partner,
B-More Consulting



WE RECOMMEND

Sales People Don't Lie
Roshan L. Joseph

Dear Reader,

One of the main challenges in every organization is to meet sales targets. Added to this, new business development professionals or salespeople are challenged by the anxiety to not only create new relationships but to sustain one for the long run. The sales task is also compounded because salesmen are ignorant of the cardinal principles of the sales function and the blind spots that hinder the success of relationship development with customers.

This month in **ET**, we look at **The Science & Art of Selling: An Under Appreciated Function**.

One might feel overwhelmed by the sales function. However, in the **Podium** segment, **Roshan Joseph** - Managing Partner, B-More Consulting, shares his thoughts on how the sales function can be mastered just like any art or science. In the **Thinking Aloud** section, Jay elaborates on the lack of appreciation of the sales operation. Prasad reviews Roshan Joseph's book **Salespeople Don't Lie** in the **We Recommend** section which touches upon some of the essential points of the sales function.

In **Figures of Speech**, **Vikram's toon** makes a convincing sales pitch!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To read our previous issues, do visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & [LinkedIn](#) - where you can join our community to continue the dialogue with us!



THINKING ALOUD

The Toughest Job in the World?

Jay

Arthur Miller's Willy Loman in 'Death of a Salesman' believed that he had to be well-liked to be successful in his profession as a travelling salesman. The tragedy of Willy Loman (his quest for wealth, his challenges at home with his family members, his lack of success at work leading to more despondency, etc.) echoed well when Miller's play hit Broadway as it struck a chord in the audience who resonated with the stereotypical salesman's life story, particularly the part where being away from home for prolonged periods created major domestic issues. While Loman's case cannot be generalized for all salesmen, the myth of the fast-talking, well-travelled salesman still persists.

Called by various names - Sales Executive, Marketing Executive, Business Development Executive, et al - the salesman is the best kept secret of a successful firm. Often reviled for being a hit-and-run guy who shoots and scoots, the salesman's real contribution has been sadly undervalued. Truth be told, if it wasn't for the salesman, no business would succeed. Unacknowledged, his contribution is hidden in the organization's results but when he fires, the firm shines. For, the reality of business is that you may have a great product or service but unless someone convinces a customer to buy or consume your product, your business goes nowhere. For this role, the man for all seasons is a Professional Salesman.

What is the salesperson's dharma? Not for him the comfort of the office, the luxury of fixed working hours or for that matter the warmth of the family home on a daily basis. The nature of the function requires him to be ready to be mobile, work extended hours and more often than not, travel to locations away from home, and often at the cost of neglecting domestic issues stay focused on meeting his sales goals as this takes precedence over all

matters.

The salesman is the tip of the spear of any firm as he makes the actual advance in the marketplace, visiting real-life customers and interfacing with them on an on-going basis. Not only does he have to convince the customer about the merits of his firm's offerings, he also gets to learn about the reasons why a prospect may hesitate to engage with his firm. Further, being open to this form of engagement with both prospective and current customers gives him access into the customer's mind. This makes him an extremely powerful source of information for a company as the customer feedback that he receives is the feedstock for the firm's progress. Properly handled, he can not only win customers to his firm's point of view, but he also can correctly identify the pain points of the customer and come up with creative solutions for redressal.

The tragedy of the firm is that when the going is hard, no one is willing to empathize with the salesman. Consequently, the sales function is not for the faint-hearted and most firms tend to jettison a poor performer at the earliest opportunity. Worse, only a few firms are willing to genuinely invest in training their sales team on a regular basis. In the volatile and hyper-competitive world of today, the need to sharpen selling skills and to upgrade technical knowledge cannot be over-stressed. Yet, there is insufficient appreciation of the fact that selling is a process driven function just as much as many other operational functions are. The over blown myth of the art of sales does not do justice to the well-researched reality that high-caliber sales professionals are well-versed in the nuances of people interactions which employs elements from psychology and sociology. It is time that we recognized that for every 'born' salesman, the other nine out of ten are actually well-trained and 'manufactured' professionals and as in other functions, insufficient and inconsistent investment to this function will cause deep business challenges in the market place as ill-equipped soldiers go to war on behalf of the firm.

Earlier this year, the world of business recalled the legend of Lee Iacocca when he passed away in July. As with most people, both positives and negatives can be spoken of about him. However, the one indisputable element to his storied life was the fact that he was never loath to call himself a salesman. Even after winning his spurs as a marketing wizard with the success of the Ford Mustang and rising in the esteem of the automotive industry by rescuing a dying Chrysler, Iacocca had no qualms in acknowledging that sales was his true passion. No wonder the tributes paid to him on his passing was that the world remembers him as an iconic Super Salesman for cars. Contrast this with the reluctance of many senior executives who never wish to be seen in the market actually making sales calls and answering customer objections. It is an unfortunate fact that there exist such fake business leaders who never really understand that the most exciting - and perhaps the toughest business function of all - is

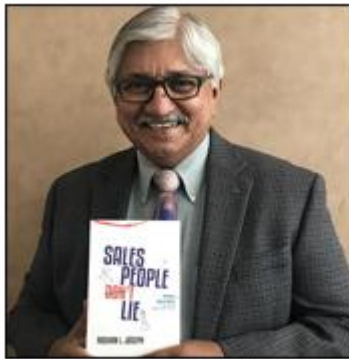
Sales, as this were the rubber hits the road for a firm and revenue is truly generated!

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Podium

Roshan L. Joseph

Managing Partner, B-More Consulting



Roshan L. Joseph has over 35 years of marketing and sales experience. He is a well-respected professional in both, the advertising world as also in the marketing field.

He has also authored a book on sales management titled 'Salespeople Don't Lie' published by Sage publications.

He has been the Executive Director on the Board of Eveready Industries India Ltd., with the accountability for marketing and sales. While in Eveready, he was instrumental in bringing Eveready out of the cold with the path-breaking advertising campaign "Give me Red". This was a repositioning of Eveready as a brand that could connect with the youth. It won 11 advertising and marketing awards and continues to date, the way Eveready advertises. He has since been the MD of a Swiss MNC in the Kitchen Solutions business and today is specialized as a consultant in marketing and sales.

In 2004, Roshan, as Managing Director of Franke, a Swiss MNC, had the challenge of establishing the brand, though no 1 world-wide, into the Indian Kitchen scene. Today Franke is well established as a premium brand of kitchen sinks. Here too, he established a unique positioning and developed a distribution to develop the brand.

He is a Past President of the Advertising Club of Calcutta, having made significant contributions to the growth of

the industry in the eastern region. He was instrumental in creating the first industry/academia effort to bring in a professional advertising diploma in Advertising in cooperation with St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. Roshan also taught Principles of Marketing to the first-year students in the BBA program of St Xavier's (then a part of the Calcutta University, now an autonomous university).

In 2007, he started a marketing and sales development company of his own with collaborating with Carew International, Cincinnati, USA. He has worked with diverse clients across the Middle East and India.

ET: Why is the sales function considered a science and an art?

RJ: Sales, or the process of making a sale, has evolved since its inception, as a personality-based art form. Great salespeople are eulogised and honoured, yet no one really cared to figure out the science of selling. It is much better to have some mystique over the ability to sell, rather than make it an idiot-proof system, that everyone can copy. Magicians never tell, so that magic never dies.

Over 45 years ago, Jack Carew, a phenomenal salesperson, discovered that every time he moved out of a sales territory, the results would crumble. This got him curious. He commissioned a study by a college Professor to assess what it was that he did while making a sale and how do other salespeople do the same task.

To his surprise he discovered that everybody did whatever that delivered an order. There was no common approach. No system, no discipline. He wondered why the profession did not get the respectability that was commanded by Doctors, Architects and Engineers. He set out to make a difference to this and committed his life to Professional Selling. Carew International USA, has over the better part of the last 50 years, worked to make sales a science. Their flagship program is available over most of Asia, Middle East and India, of course called the 'Dimensions of Professional Selling'.

Sales is a science of how to serve the customer better. Anyone can do an acceptable job and get the required sales. Once that is mastered, there is no ban on being an artist while selling.

ET: How has the sales function evolved? What role has technology played in enhancing this function?

RJ: Sales evolved based on personalities. In my book, 'Salespeople Don't Lie', published by Sage, this evolution

has been written of. In the early days, the salesperson was the repository of all product knowledge and there was a very ambiguous line between fact and fiction. There was no way to check facts. Relationship building was the key (it still is important today). The sales image got sullied with the hard-selling automotive salespeople. At the worst of Nixon's presidency, there were cartoons showing Nixon with the caption 'Would you buy a used car from this man?'

As information became freely available with technology, the consumer became more knowledgeable. This made making wild promises and statements more difficult. Today, the consumer has many sources of information and checks user reviews before buying. This development is a positive one as the final test of a profitable sale is also when the consumer is convinced that the decision taken was a smart one.

Technology has also come to supervise the working of the salesperson. Today it is easy to track where your emissary is working. Management information is readily available to the salesperson to make a judicious sale. The unique contribution a salesperson still can make is to build relationships of trust. A software is a cold substitute to the warm handshake from a professional salesperson.

ET: In meeting sales targets, customer needs can sometimes be overlooked. What are your thoughts to avoid this?

RJ: This quite simply is sales malpractice.

Yes, across the world there is focus on the way a sale is made. There are several instances that ignoring the customer's needs, resulted in losses. Companies have a way of quietly writing off the 'mis-capades' of their sales staff but the bad debts are being questioned. Some companies are taking erring salespeople to court too.

As the premise of a good doctor is the wellness of the patient, so also is the need satisfaction of the customer the prime objective of the sales personnel. When the doctor works against the interest of the patient it is medical malpractice. Similarly, when salespeople sell against the interest of their customer, it is quite simply, sales malpractice.

ET: In your experience, what is your advice to our readers who would like to master the art of selling?

RJ: There are many reasons people choose to be in sales. Good money is not a reason to ignore. However, you need to ask yourself why would you choose a career that is demanding physically, requires travel, uncertain food, both in quality and timely eating, questionable hotels with assured lack of hygiene and be shouted at by bosses when not meeting their targets. You must have a good 'why?'

You must enjoy people. Meeting them, understanding why they should buy from you and overall be determined to serve them and guide them to making smart buying decisions. You must believe that your efforts can shape your customer's destiny. Believe that you can make a difference.

And yes, you will make money as you succeed. A successful salesperson can rise to any management level and be a captain of the industry.

ET: Can you please tell us about your company, B-More Consulting?

RJ: B-More Consulting has its genesis in the frustration of finding sales training that was more noise than substance. In 2007, I scoured the US to find a sensible sales training program that could lift our salespeople to international standards. My experience with home-grown sales training consultants was far from satisfactory.

Carew International, from Cincinnati, Ohio made the best sense to me. Positional selling, as Carew International preached, became the sales training message across India into the Middle East and up to Malaysia. We have also collaborated with Louis Allen International, based out of Bangalore, for content on Management Systems covering all areas of Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling...the work all managers must do every day.

All facilitators are trained by the rigorous Carew Accreditation system. Each Dimensions of Professional Selling (DPS) program is done true to the Carew modules with local flavour and case studies. The Carew delivery ensures an engaged participant who experiences the learning with fun and a dynamic competitive spirit. The takeaway after the DPS three-day program is a more powerful motivating force than any motivational speaker can achieve. Sales teams leave with skills they can use for life.

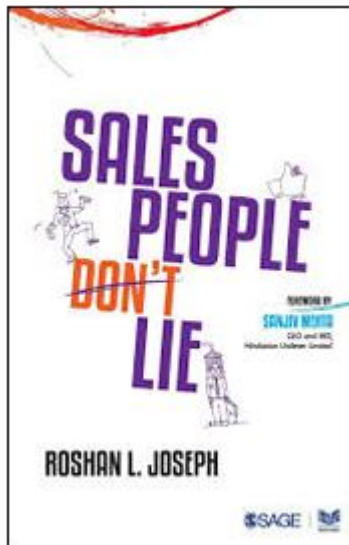
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We Recommend

Sales People Don't Lie

Roshan L. Joseph

- Reviewed by Prasad Deshpande



Roshan Joseph has written a very readable book on sales that touches all the important points that salespersons and sales managers need to be aware of.

Through examples and stories, he has covered important points inimitably and at the heart of this book is a fundamental premise - salespeople need to build trust and add value. Sales managers need to invest time in building their teams.

This is a practical handbook that everyone who has been in sales will relate to. He analyses the sales process and best practices and at the same time brings in the flavour of selling in rural areas, small towns as well as in metro towns.

He covers all the 'sins' in selling, the shortcuts, the dumping of stocks, the unethical over promising and under delivering just to achieve the numbers and emphasises that what matters more is a professional approach to sales. Salespeople who are sincere, authentic and follow a structured process are certain to achieve their targets consistently in the long run.

The author includes the five fundamentals of ethical selling as well as some abiding principles of selling, a set of rules that would be very useful to someone entering the profession or to an experienced salesperson as a timely reminder.

He also explains the important aspects in selling such as being in your customer's shoes, handling objections and irate customers. He talks about understanding the customer and especially the importance of listening.

Finally, he raises important questions regarding the role of senior management to create a favourable environment for meeting targets and developing the team.

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THROUGH THE LENS



Avid bird photographer, **Rupesh Balsara** spots the Indian Roller which is found widely across tropical Asia from Iraq to the Indian subcontinent. They are commonly seen along roadside trees and in open grasslands. These are not migratory, but they do undertake some seasonal movements. The name finds inspiration from the startling aerobatic display during the breeding season.

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