

salesman knew what coffees were necessary to produce the various blends the store sold.

#### VALUED SERVICE CASUALLY RENDERED

The advice he gave the buyer was absolutely sound—based on a much superior knowledge of blending than that possessed by the buyer, who, without admitting it, had implicit faith in the salesman's ability and integrity inasmuch as he had never misrepresented anything to make a sale. The salesman would even go so far as to suggest how the coffees were to be blended to produce the four retail grades, the blend tickets being generally jotted down on a piece of wrapping paper torn from the roll on the counter as the salesman was describing the different lots he was offering at time of sales presentation—apparently without thought of their future use, but with care not to destroy the lists because he knew that the buyer would copy them exactly as outlined and later give them to his roaster as the result of his own cupping. The truth of the matter was that the buyer—while he was a high class gentleman—knew very little about cupping coffee. It must be taken into consideration that the buying for the entire store was under his supervision, his early training being in a dry goods store that did not sell foods. He was too proud to ask questions, but he did listen attentively to all that the salesman told him about coffee, realizing its value and, in turn, speaking less than any man on that salesman's territory. The salesman knew—even though the buyer tried to make him believe that he used more coffee than what he bought from him—that Mr. Blank bought practically all his green coffee from his firm.

Before the salesman hit on the method of handling this account he used to show him his entire line which only served to confuse the buyer. Although he looked at every sample shown, he rarely bought anything. Once the salesman found a way to make it easy for the prospect to get the coffees he needed by the helpful advice given without any appearance of possessing superior knowledge and also without any persuasion visible on the surface, he developed this buyer into one of the most satisfactory accounts he called on.

#### FUNDAMENTAL COFFEE SELLING FACT

There is a fundamental fact that every coffee salesman should keep in mind at all times and it is that every store that sells coffee is a possible outlet for his coffee. If he is not selling any to that store somebody else is. In other words, the order is there and it is up to him to get it. If he fails he should feel that the fault lies with him. This is said in all seriousness and if any salesman will sell himself this idea fully his batting average is bound to increase. He should feel that his prospect's mind is a safe that he is called on to open but the combination of it is not in his possession. So how will he open it? To begin with he will have to do what Jimmy Valentine did—concentrate on the job before him. Study your man, try to read his mind, analyze his objections and by close observation note his reactions to your sales appeal. Try to discern which of your statements "click" and which "go over his head" and pursue your attack accordingly.

Be quick to take advantage of openings that present themselves in your favor. Remember what it is you said that turned the tide in your favor and try to hold the advantage, because, once the buyer "takes the reins," it becomes increasingly

difficult to get them back. I am not more specific because I do not believe that set sales talks are sure-fire order getters in every instance. I do not believe that any two men can be handled alike, but I believe that anyone with a reasonable amount of common sense can become a careful judge of human nature and size up his prospects correctly.

#### UNNECESSARY TALKING

And don't forget to know when to stop talking. For instance: If you happen to be showing a man a sample of bulk coffee and he is sufficiently interested to pick up the sample and look at it carefully, stop talking. Do not continue to prattle even if in the middle of your memorized presentation—he is not listening. He is studying your sample and you will annoy him and take his mind off of it. If, instead, it happens to be canned coffee and he picks up the can to read the label, instantly stop talking and allow him to concentrate on what he is reading. When he sets the can down it will be soon enough to renew your attack. Continual talking just to finish your story or in an endeavor to impress the buyer is frequently very irritating to the buyer. It not only applies to coffee but to anything that you may be selling. If salesmen only realized that properly timed silence can be and usually is more potent than idle words, they would think more, talk less and get more orders.

Some years ago a friend of mine went into the business of selling stocks and bonds and I was one of the first calls he made. He came into my office full of pep and told me all about a new issue he wanted me to buy and in addition to his talk he handed me a prospectus to read, but while I tried to go through it, he continued talking, believing that he was helping his cause along. The result was that I found it impossible to digest the figures, so I stopped and listened to what he was saying. Soon I realized that he knew very little about what he was trying to sell me so I said, "All right, let me read this" and started to re-read the paper he had given me. My second attempt to concentrate on that data was as unsuccessful as the first had been, as the talking never stopped. In fact it annoyed me so that I finally asked him to stop. I could see from the look of resentment on his face that he thought that I must be getting the swell-head, because this particular salesman had known me since childhood and was considerably older than I was.

#### BECOMES A NUISANCE

As much as I disliked offending him I found it utterly impossible to judge the merit of his offering while he delivered his carefully studied sales talk word for word as his sales manager told him to do. Even after this episode, during which I tried to point out his error in selling, he persisted in his method with the result that I dredged his frequent visits to my office. Many life insurance men make the same mistake with the result that they can only interest the smaller and lesser informed buyer who—not understanding insurance—believes everything that the salesman says, whilst the executive who is in the market for a large annuity that would pay a commission equal to dozens of small policies, would not be annoyed listening to prattle. It is not the number of words uttered that carry conviction; it is a few well chosen sentences properly timed that put the sale over. Do not appear over anxious. It denotes lack of poise.