

BECOMING AN ANGEL

Laura is from St. Louis and she's not vain, but she just feels that the Southern girl skin that covers her body is just too light (well, white) during summer months.

So in order to appear fit and healthy on all her sales calls, she would use some of that fake suntan lotion. You know the stuff: Your friends get a kick out of it when you show up one day with 2 weeks worth of sun on your face.

Laura's trip to the drug store had led her to believe that this lotion must be really valuable because it was really expensive. At least most of it was. So Laura selected the cheapest tube on the shelf and began wearing it. And she felt great. That mental boost can really change your attitude on sales calls, and it was completely enhanced by Laura's magic lotion. She was confident, looking and acting like a successful professional when in front of prospects.

And then, like the weather, her luck changed.

She started the summer day with a tan blouse, white skirt and white pumps – a new outfit that showed off her new skin color quite well. The appointment was downtown and she had to walk a couple blocks from her parking space, just as a rare summer shower started.

Briefcase over her head, Laura sprinted into the building and walked to the elevator, her big smile countering the big smiles that greeted her.

“Are you okay?” the receptionist asked as Laura found the office. She said she was just a bit rained on, but ready to go. Laura was led into a full board room.

As she strode up to the President he also said, “Are you okay?” That was strange. Then he pulled a linen handkerchief out of his pocket and handed it to the rep. She’s thinking, “who uses these anymore?” as she wipes the rain from her face...

And stares at a hanky, brown with fake suntan lotion. Her eyes move south as she looks down at a blouse and skirt and shoes, all streaked brown with her wonder gel. So she now realizes how silly her face must appear since she just smeared her tan all over a gentleman’s handkerchief.

In an instant that mental boost blew out of the room, leaving Laura feeling silly and incompetent. That presentation was pretty bad. Okay, it was horrible. It was no sale. Who would want to work with a brown clown like Laura?

POSTMORTEM: Laura later observed that she “Needed to love the real me and be happy with color of the covering I’d been given.” You might realize from her trouble that an investment in yourself should be a quality purchase. If she’d bought a better brand of suntan cream, she would still today be confident, happier and darker. If you begin to see personal purchases as investments (just as your customers should see their purchases from you!), you’ll change how you buy. What you wear and drive are considered reflections of you. Choose quality over cheap, you’ll never regret it.

In the world of entrepreneurs, venture capital, money and investments one solution to growth is to call on an angel. This is someone who provides individuals and organizations the resources to skyrocket their performance. Angels help companies grow, expand and provide upside in terms of great potential in earnings for those involved.

I’d like to point you to the ultimate angel who can send your earnings heavenward. That angel is you.

World class sales professionals invest in themselves on a continual basis throughout their selling careers.

Aside from our personal care, the tools we use are reflections of who we are and how we present quality to our prospect and customers.

As my sales horror story collection grew, I began to notice a trend toward the wisdom in investing in one's business, and therefore one's future. So I started to stop paying the least I could for everything and instead went for quality and its twin brother longevity.

A funny incident branded my final moment to see how much I could save money. I was at Circuit City buying a mouse for my laptop computer. Wow! \$9.95 was a deal! I got it home and opened the package. A slip of paper fell out. It read; "*Lead was used to produce this mouse. Please wash hands after using.*"

Are you kidding me? My mouse is built with a toxic substance and I should wash my hands every time I walked away from my computer?

Back I went to the store where I showed a shocked manager what he was selling. The guy pulled all the product from the shelves and called corporate right there.

Who knows how many lives I saved?

After buying a better mouse I continued my personal quality campaign upgrading what I wear and what I drive. For example, quality shoes are a big deal when you spend lots of time on trade show floors. I started buying Johnson & Murphy . And my car? I decided to upgrade the vehicle I'm seen in and use to entertain. And I'm not one to buy brand new cars, so I bought a three-year old Lexus. It's GREAT ride and should easily run for 200,000 miles. Buying it used was smart from a cost standpoint, but as a sales

coach and trainer, it serves my readers and students with the idea that you don't have to be outrageously successful or rich right now - to be in the best possible vehicle.

Managing your image is something you will find worth attending to. Doesn't everyone want to buy from and work with and hang out with the best of the best?

But as an angel, there are really three ways to invest in yourself. These are...

1- PERSONAL APPEARANCE; your image sends a message. Can your clothing use an upgrade? How about your hairstyle or physical condition? If prospects have to live with looking at you, give them a pleasant and professional experience by way of your image.

2- TOOLS; this includes your car and computer, PDA, etc. Do you have any problems communicating with your office, prospects, clients? Can you get information instantly, which is just how quickly it's expected today? Are you backing up your computer systems? Spend the money to avoid any aggravation that slows down your selling process as well as your ability to function smoothly throughout the rest of your day. Buy the best. Just as you want to be the safest bet for prospects to buy from, you want your tool investments to be your safest selections in operating your business.

3 – EDUCATION; no more worthless classes to complain about. Now you can go to school for exactly what you know is most worthwhile to accelerate your career, your earnings. And school doesn't always mean a formal class setting. Read a book. Listen to audio tapes or files. View videos. Find a mentor. Need better closing skills? How about sales management and coaching help? Would you like to be a better guerrilla marketing and do lead generation like never before? Go back to school. Here's one warning (and a sad comment on many company's attitude toward education): If your firm won't pay for

you to “go to class,” you have to ask yourself what kind of return you’d get from getting better? Don’t be discouraged if your company won’t pay for training or support products. I’m shocked at the number of companies that refuse to invest in training, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that it pays off. If you want proof visit The American Society for Training and Development, ASTD, at www.astd.org. Either way, NO EXCUSES! You are responsible for your own success and cannot blame your organization for not supporting you. Go invest in education.

Late Reggae legend Bob Marley sang a line we can all take to heart, “Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.” This is too true for salespeople. We’d love to get better without any effort. But it’s going to take some improvement, some investment to get to selling heaven.

Don’t be CASUALLY COMMITTED to your profession. This is not about the company or product you represent, but your profession – SELLING! If your best is 70%, you’re 30% short. And your earnings reflect that shortcoming.

Here’s an exercise to identify right now what you intend to do under each category;

- 1) *Yourself*; what’ll it be? Clothing, haircut, image. What needs work?
- 2) *Your tools*; don’t wait for prices to come down or spend too much time shopping.

Pick up the tool now and use it to build your business. List here what needs upgrading or purchasing.

- 3) *Your education*; where are you weakest? What associations can help you?

Training companies? Books or resources? You’ll succeed more quickly in an environment where you have accountability with others. So include who will join

you on this journey. Maybe it's person who needs help, perhaps it's just someone to kick you in the tail and make sure you're putting your learning into play.

Look at your answers now and see what a difference your investment can make for you and how you're perceived by peers, clients and yourself!

Be an angel.