

TWO REPS, TWO TALES, ONE LESSON...

Scott's Sales Call

It is hot out. And it seems even hotter because Scott and his manager are running a half hour late to do a presentation to large company's corporate headquarters.

The rep and manager swing into the parking lot and grab a close visitor's spot, right in front of the stylish mirrored building.

As the men scramble out of the car, Scott's already agitated sales manager notices that his pen has leaked on his shirt. He loses it right there. Sweating, swearing and angrily gesturing toward heaven, he whips off his suit coat and quite literally rips off his shirt. Fabric tearing and buttons flying, he wads it up and fires it in the nearby bushes.

Bare-chested, he tears through the trunk. Pulls another shirt from his luggage. Puts it on. Adjusts his tie in the mirrored office window, and into the building they go.

They call at first-floor reception where the CEO's assistant is waiting to lead them down the hall and into an already filled conference room.

As Scott walks into the room he looks beyond the waiting board members and there out the window is their car. The sales manager's shirt is stuck in the bushes.

Fifteen people important to their financial futures had had a ringside view of a terrific temper tantrum. There was no happy ending here.

To this day, Scott is very cautious in and around parking areas—no speeding, stealing parking spaces, illegal parking, etc. He considers himself "on" from the moment he drives into the customer's lot.

POSTMORTEM: A manager should mentor a rep, not just in strategies, but also in attitude and behavior. Scott's boss proved he was unworthy to serve as a model for his

sales team. Often, others are observing our actions when we least suspect it. Act like a pro, from the moment you get in the car to begin your day, until you get home at night. Remember that you're always sending a message to somebody, including yourself.

Next is not just about a bad, but an evil mentor. Here Keith's recollection of his manager reveals how rough it would be to work for someone with poor judgment who also blames you for his mistakes!

Gary's Sales Tactic

Gary is a poor rep. He's poor because he is new at selling and today it really shows.

Gary can't afford a classy briefcase so he bought one of those really cheap vinyl ones. This is what really cheap means: The wood frame was, like, balsa wood - the stuff kite frames are constructed with.

It's one of those days when you have to travel with your sales manager. He either doesn't trust you or he's training you or he's in your car, hiding from his boss.

So Gary is poor and cheaply outfitted and nervous as well.

The two men are getting ready to go out on calls and Gary is re-arranging all the junk in the back of his car. He removes a smelly gym bag, that briefcase and company brochures and re-loads it all into a somewhat organized pile.

As the rep pulls from the curve a small thump and a crunch sound stop him. He looks at his manager whose eyebrows are raised in interest.

Around the back of the car Gary bolts and picks up what was formerly a flimsy briefcase. It is now a splintered mess. Cheap wood sticks out of cheap, shredded vinyl and it's flat - like one of those cartoon characters after a steamroller crushes him.

"I can't believe this!" Gary cries, and dives back into the car with the ex-briefcase.

The manager grins and says, "Don't throw it out! We can use it. You're taking this into every prospect's office today. IT'S THE SYMPATHY CLOSE!"

So now Gary is poor and cheap and nervous and stupid.

But the day took a turn in the right direction. Everyone the two men met had a great laugh over Gary's misfortune. The dead case served its purpose - it gained them rapport and a shot at future business. Who would think that a dumb blunder could pay off so well?

POSTMORTEM: Gary, there's a great lesson here. The wisdom of your manager should inspire every sales pro out there to find a mentor. Look for someone who has been there, been beat up, and become successful in sales. Ask them to advise you. The mentor will be flattered and you'll be enriched by their wisdom and experience. We need experienced experts in our lives.

As I collected sales tales related to managers and mentoring for my writing and speaking business an old vaudeville skit came to mind. This man comes crying to his physician....

"Doctor, I don't know what's wrong with me, but I hurt all over. If I touch my shoulder here, it hurts; and if I touch my leg here, it hurts; and if I touch my head here, it hurts; and if I touch my foot here it hurts."

"I believe you've broken your finger."

We need doctors for the same reason we need sales coaches and business mentors - because their vast experience gives them the ability to diagnose trouble, then offer a solution or healing remedy. We are too often clueless as to root cause of our shortcomings because we too close to the situation to clearly see that trouble. And we are too close too find the path away from it.

(USE THIS CONTENT FOR A TEXTBOX IN THE MAG COPY) "Doctor, I don't know what's wrong with me, but I hurt all over. If I touch my shoulder here, it hurts; and if I touch my leg here, it hurts; and if I touch my head here, it hurts; and if I touch my foot here it hurts."

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Here is how you can center on your mentor. To find the perfect match that can push you into a world-class level of selling ask yourself, ask your colleagues, who would be a dream coach and counselor. Humbly call and request a few minutes of their time. Explain your passion for your common interests and ask if he or she would be open to filling the role of an advisor, guide

or guru. Limit your time to what they can share or spare, unless it's a paid relationship (that's fine, too) where you'll have scheduled appointments.

Be prepared with some specific goals you can share that can help your mentor form a vision for how they support and teach you. Most great businesspeople are great vision-casters, so this is key to showing that you are a serious student. Don't forget to pick their brains beyond specific advice, with questions like;

- What books most influenced them?
- What magazines do they read now?
- What associations are worth joining or ignoring?

Make sure that you take action on their suggestions and give them feedback as to the impact of their wisdom, on yourself and your marketplace. From the mentor's perspective you then become part of their success story as you follow their lead and reinforce the value they contribute to their world, their industry and you, their student.

Say thank you often and in diverse ways. Send notes and gifts. Offer to serve them in some fashion. Volunteer where they do. You might be surprised at how helping your coach can further accelerate your education.

GET MENTOR MANIA

I encourage you right now to list three potential and potent mentors. Send a letter or call them to initiate the relationship. You can accelerate your career when you center on your mentor.

- 1.

2.

3.

Find a mentor today - you will pay yourself handsomely tomorrow.