



Rajesh Gurule's

17 Ways to Select Sales & Marketing Executives



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Gurule, SellWell Technologies.

RajeshGurule.com
connect@RajeshGurule.com

Ph - +91 9822545922

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METHODS OF SELECTING SALESMEN

METHODS of selecting salesmen can be as varied as the originality and resourcefulness of the Sales Manager himself. He can choose them by well-tried methods, or he can blaze new paths that will enable him to keep his organization supplied with salesmen who have the ability and training to sell his firm's goods. He can go out of his way to find the right kind of salesmen, or he can plan out ways and means of getting good salesmen to apply to him.

It all depends on his ability to advertise his proposition among men who sell things, or who want to sell but have not yet located a proposition that fits their particular temperament and abilities.

In the following pages an endeavour has been made to suggest ways and means by which a Sales Manager can select salesmen.

The methods that apply to your particular line of business can be adopted after you have worked out a plan in which they fit. In few cases, if at all, can a Sales Manager apply all the methods and principles outlined herein. Only those that can be worked into his present plan should be considered.

Even though it is not possible for the Sales Manager who seeks to put his department on a scientific basis to make use of all the methods herein outlined, an understanding of the different methods now in use by Sales Managers is of the utmost importance to him if he is to build his organization on a firm foundation.

From the following list of qualities the Sales Manager should select those that are particularly necessary to salesmen selling his line of goods. Through his own ingenuity he can discover whether an applicant has or lacks the particular qualities so chosen.

What is of the first importance is that he represent a proper combination of qualities.

For example, he may combine endurance, energy and forcefulness, but lack accuracy, carefulness and Judgment. In other words, his physical staying and propelling powers may be sufficient while the mental qualities referred to be very unreliable.

He may be strong on language and weak in logic.

He may have loyalty and obedience as well cultivated qualities, but be utterly deficient in initiative and creative processes.

It will be readily seen that having a certain list of qualities to his credit that may constitute him a desirable man may not qualify him for a desirable salesman. But if he combines with endurance alertness, and with imagination judgment and logic, with enthusiasm, continuity and determination, and with ambition purpose and persistence, such a combination is constructive. The one sustains the other, and all combined contribute to the desired result.

The list of qualities which appears on the following page, by no means can all be found in each individual salesman. They are a compilation of qualities common to positive individuals in every line of work. The absence of any one quality selected as essential by the Sales Manager as necessary to a salesman in his line might be fatal to that salesman's success.

In common justice to the salesmen, as well as to the house, no man should be employed who has not a fair chance to make good; and through this list of qualities it will be possible to determine with reasonable accuracy exactly what qualifications an applicant must have before he can be given consideration by a Sales Manager.

CONSTRUCTIVE QUALITIES

PHYSICAL

MENTAL

Activity

Accuracy

Appearance

Alertness

Cleanliness

Analysis

Charm

Attentiveness

Control

Carefulness

Elasticity

Human Nature

Endurance

Imagination

Energy

Inventiveness

Enunciation

Judgment

Forcefulness

Knowledge

Grace

Language

Health

Logic

Hearing

Memory #

Manners

Observation

Neatness

Order and System

Quickness

Originality

Sight.

Perception

Skill

Planning Ability

Smell

Resourcefulness

Taste

Special Talent

Touch

Teachability

Vitality

Tact

EMOTIONAL

VOLITIONAL

Calmness

Action

Cheerfulness

Aggressiveness

Courtesy

Ambition

Dependability

Capacity

Enthusiasm

Continuity

Fairness

Decision

Fidelity

Deliberation

Friendliness

Determination

Honesty

Discipline

Good Humour

Dispatch

Interest

Economy

Love of Work

Executive Ability

Loyalty

Firmness

Obedience

industry

Optimism

Initiative

Patience

Mastery of Detail

Prudence

Perseverance

Responsiveness

Persistence

Reliability

Punctuality

Sincerity

Purpose

Sobriety

Self-Control

Sympathy

Thoroughness

By Application

There are two forms of application that merit consideration here: first, the letter; second, the personal application.

Advertisements may be inserted in which the Sales Manager has conveyed to the general public his desire for good salesmen.

The answers to such ads are carefully scrutinized by the Sales Manager, or an assistant, and those that look favourable are culled out. Then a letter is written or phone call or email is sent to each of the men that are regarded as possibilities, and a time for interview set; or the salesmen are asked to let the Sales Manager know when they can call, in case they are employed.

When an applicant calls, he is either taken at once to the Sales Manager, or he is given a chance to show his sticking qualities by waiting for the Sales Manager. It is evident that the Sales Manager has not the right to waste a salesman's time, but this is often done when the Sales Manager desires to determine the sticking qualities of the man he contemplates hiring. The best rule, however, is to get the salesman under the attention of the Sales Manager as soon as possible, and if he is not a good possibility, he should be encouraged to look elsewhere.

From the letter of application, the Sales Manager can always tell something about the salesman. He can sometimes determine whether the salesman is a logical thinker, or a word-wizard. He can usually approximate the previous education of the applicant, and determine whether he is capable of meeting the grade of customers with which the firm does business. These and other things should be learned, if possible, before the salesman is permitted to take up the Sales Manager's time.

By Character

In selling many lines of goods, it is absolutely necessary to select men of exceptional character. They must have the connections that prove they are all they claim to be. When a man has a character that is above suspicion, though he possess less ability than his competitor, he will often get the cream of the business; for men like to do business with salesmen of character; they like to feel that they can implicitly rely on the salesman with whom they are dealing.

This is especially true when a man has a large acquaintance in the territory, for then his good qualities are known, and he often makes sales on the strength of his recommendation of goods.

In selecting salesmen for a branch agency, especially if that agency is located in a small city, it is generally best to choose men who are known for their personal integrity and reliability.

Then the confidence of the public is assured, and business comes quite as much because of the faith of the trade in the man who represents you as in the selling qualities of your merchandise.

If both are of a high standard, results are sure to follow commensurate with the amount of time and energy spent.

It is a principle of Scientific Sales Management that reliability is one of the cardinal virtues of a salesman, and the man of character can be depended upon to give his best energy and service to the company that employs him, while his less reliable brother might get as much business, but not of so desirable a character.

In business, as in other life, character stands as the lighthouse of success. In the long run, a business which is composed of men of character is the most successful.

The character standing of some men is so high that it is possible for a customer to rest his future entirely in their hands with supreme confidence that such a salesman will take a personal interest in selling only the amount and quality of goods that customer needs.

Some merchants turn their establishment over to a particular salesman each time he comes through, and say, "Look over my stock, and put down what I need." Such confidence is established only after repeated good service, but it is worth working for, and the salesman who is a man of character can get this confidence from the trade.

By Psychological Test

Psychologists, such as Walter Dill Scott and others, have worked out tests which show the physical and mental qualifications of men and women. These men have made extensive tests in psychological laboratories, and the results obtained have been such as to merit the consideration of employers of salesmen. There is nothing involved about these tests. They are as simple to give as a spelling lesson; yet they reveal habits of thought on the part of the applicant that show his fitness or unfitness for certain kinds of work.

It should be recognized here, however, that an applicant who is found unfit to be a salesman may be the highest possible type of office man, and may be an inside executive of no mean ability.

Men are fitted for different kinds of work, and one purpose of such tests is to reveal the kinds of work in which they will most likely succeed.

As an evidence of the practicality of these tests, a person who is better at hearing than he is at seeing would hardly be employed as a proof-reader in preference to a person who can see better than he can hear.

The noise in the proof-room, and his natural aptitude for hearing what is going on around him, would quite unfit the ear minded person for eye-minded work.

The Sales Manager will do well to learn something concerning the tests that have been made by the leading psychologists, especially those relating to salesmen, and apply such tests in the selection of applicants for selling. If he will do this, he will at least avoid the most serious blunders in choosing salesmen, and when this is done there is every chance that the future will bring him the ripened judgment of men that will enable him to secure the particular types of men who will serve his company best.

By Training

There are three kinds of training that may fit a salesman to handle your line successfully. The first is by training in the use of your product. The second is knowledge of the principles of Salesmanship. The third is technical preparation.

An automobile driver often becomes a successful automobile salesman, especially when he has driven several makes of cars, and knows the points of difference between them so he can present such points in a salesman like manner in favour of the car he is selling.

Few companies, in fact, will hire a salesman who cannot run a machine. It happens, however, that each salesman is trained by the most progressive companies, not only in the science of automobile selling, but also in the mechanical use of the car before he is started out as an order-winner.

A man who has studied the principles of Salesmanship, and has the disposition and temperament to sell, is often given an opportunity to demonstrate his ability, and if he gives promise of making good, he is kept as a permanent acquisition of the house.

At times it becomes so difficult to get good salesmen of training and experience that companies conduct their own training classes, in which they admit the larger number of individuals who apply, and from these applicants are chosen, through observation of their class work, those who are particularly likely to master the Art of Selling.

Many graduates of technical colleges are hired by Sales Managers. A man who has a technical knowledge of particular articles is most likely to make a success in selling them, if, of course, he has salesmanship training. This is especially true when an understanding of underlying mathematical, mechanical or engineering problems is a part of the salesman's equipment.

Then it becomes necessary to hire men who know what they are talking about. Correspondence schools in law usually hire men who have had more or less law experience or training to sell their courses, 1 as it has been found

that such men can explain to prospective students the technical points of the goods.

By Personality

In lines where the personality of the individual makes the sales, where, in fact, little actual salesmanship is required, a man may be employed to sell on the strength of his personality. For instance, a society man, with a large acquaintance, may sell stock to his friends. He has a personality that appeals to this class of people, and they accept his statements as true, and buy what he has to sell, because they like him personally, and feel that he would not willfully misrepresent the product he sells. These customers of his will also recommend him to their friends.

Some firms have even gone so far as to get the cooperation of society women to sell their goods over the counter. Society women have taken up the sale of goods as a lark, and the stores have profited from such sales because the middle class women thought it a splendid idea to buy from well-known women of the upper crust. The success of bazaars is founded on this principle of public curiosity. Well-known social leaders, moving picture stars, and politicians, sell direct from booths, on the strength of personality alone. Individuals cannot well refuse to buy from Mrs. Society Dame or Mr. Big Politician.

In the commercial field, many men are employed because they have personalities that appeal to a particular class of trade. Such men or women are often as well-trained in selling as their less prominent associates, but they often put the selling idea into the background, and win on the strength of personality, instead of on a direct bid for business. When a Sales Manager can get the services of the high-powered personality who has selling ability, he has a diamond that will increase in value as long as he keeps it.

In seeking salesmen, it is important to fit the personality of the man employed to the needs of the business. In dealing with working people, it is disastrous to employ a snobbish type of individual who might successfully appeal to high society. The most important element in selecting the personality of the salesman, then, is that the salesman must fit the position he is to fill, rather than the position fit the salesman.

By Adaptability

Salesmanship is the one profession that lays particular stress on adaptability. A salesman who cannot adapt himself might as well take a perpetual vacation from business life. He will not be able to sell. Individuals who can adapt themselves to new people, to new conditions, to new objections, to new arguments, to anything and everything that comes up in the course of business, have an important quality that makes for complete success in selling. It is true that adaptability alone will not make the successful salesman, but without it no man can succeed. He must be able to cultivate this important quality, should he lack it in the beginning, if he is to make good.

Take the salesman who shows to begin with that he cannot get along with his fellow salesmen, that he antagonizes the customers, that he cannot tolerate the Sales Manager, that he dislikes the Credit Man; that man is not going to make much progress in your business unless he changes his mental attitude. Even though he may have such sentiments, he will fare better if he is adaptable and keeps them to himself. If he wants to make a success with a firm, he must first of all fit into the organization.

If he does not show an inclination to line up with the other members of the sales-force, to cooperate with them, to obey the Sales Manager's orders, to show an interest in the credit department, and to adapt himself to each customer on whom he calls, he is not a safe salesmanship risk.

It is far better to choose a man without selling experience, who is adaptable, than it is to employ a salesman with experience in your line, but who cannot fit himself into the organization for which he works. Scientific Sales Management demands that the individual realize that the firm is doing its best for him, and only that type of men is hired that can get into the boat with the rest of the sales-crew and handle his oar according to the directions of the coach, the Sales Manager. In considering the methods of judging salesmen, careful attention should be paid to judging them by adaptability as well as by the other enumerated methods.

By Expression

In some lines of work salesmen are required who are especially good talkers. All salesmen need to carry on intelligent conversations. Some men, however, who are comparatively poor talkers fill themselves with arguments and suggestions and methods of presenting their goods, and make their actions so effective that they make sales in spite of this deficiency.

A salesman who can talk — and quit when enough has been said— has an advantage over the non-talking salesman. Therefore, in choosing salesmen care must be taken to see that the individual has conversational ability — that he is able to present his sales talk in interesting words that convince the prospect of his need for the merchandise.

Other things being equal, the salesman who can express himself in clear, forceful language, makes the biggest success in selling.

Expressiveness, in fact, is so important a part of the equipment of those who are members of the Salesmanship profession that superficial thinkers and observers often assume that talking ability is the only important factor in a salesman's success.

Such people do not realize that a salesman must be especially trained in the art of selling, and must have practically all the qualifications that are required to make a success in other professions.

Because of this recognition on the part of the public that expressiveness is necessary to a salesman, it will be perceived that it has an importance that should not be underestimated by the Sales Manager who seeks to build up a strong sales department.

Whenever you find a man of good appearance and winning personality, who can express himself logically and forcefully, you have a possible salesman. He may be engaged in inside work. He maybe a technical worker. But, if you have an attractive proposition, and know how to sell your proposition, you can get him on your sales force, to the credit of your judgment of human nature, and for increased profits for your house.

Salesmanship is a line of work that most men are willing to enter, especially if they have the qualifications that will insure success.

It is not routine work. It offers enough adventure and change to appeal especially to the type of man who will make a success of it.

By Casual Talk

Often a Sales Manager has located a good man through a casual talk. Riding home on the street cars, in the elevated and subway trains, on the railroads, salesmen often get into conversation with one another. They are a social class of men. They are seldom exclusive. They are human beings and like to talk with strangers as well as with acquaintances. Much of their general information is the result of such conversations.

Many a salesman locates leads through casual acquaintances.

Travelling through the country at times becomes lonely, and the salesman loses no opportunity to get acquainted with a congenial spirit, to pass the time away. In his travels the Sales Manager often gets into conversation with salesmen, and learns from them who would be likely candidates for a position with his selling organization.

As a Sales Manager, many men call on him for one reason or another and he has a chance to see how they conduct their sales.

If a man is especially good in presenting his proposition, or shows signs that he can be developed into a good salesman, often the Sales Manager will get this man on his force and develop him for his proposition.

There is no more common way of getting salesmen than to connect with your house those who have shown promise of making good in your line through a well-arranged presentation of their own propositions to you. Under such conditions, the salesman cannot "bluff." He must "sell" himself to the Sales Manager; and, if he does, the Sales Manager will see that it has been done with no idea of locating with him, and he can put a proper estimate on what that salesman can do with new merchandise.

While it is not good form to talk business at social affairs, many Sales Managers give their cards to men whom they meet at such affairs. Afterwards these men, if interested, may become members of the sales force. When a man is interested in locating anew position, he will not think any less of the Sales Manager who gave him a card at a social affair. Nothing need be said about the position, in fact, the Sales Manager may give the man his card, and invite him to call in the next week or ten days, as he has a

proposition that might be of interest. This is a method of locating individual salesmen that must be used with discrimination.

By Temperament

You have often looked at a man, and said to yourself, “There is a man who by temperament would make a good salesman.” Each salesman has, of course, his individual temperament; but there is something till bigger than the temperament of the individual —there is a “salesman’s temperament.” ! The characteristics of the temperament that particularly belongs to salesmen can be analysed into the “salesman’s qualities.” If a man has these qualities he is by temperament fitted to make a success in handling men and things, especially in exchanging merchandise for money.

If a man has perseverance, he is positive on one important point that makes a good salesman. Willingness to work and study andthitik and obey is another important quality in the salesman’s character. No salesman can hope for success without a knowledge of human nature — it is a part of his stock in trade, just as much in some cases as his samples or prospectus. The salesman must have health and be energetic.

Lacking these he cannot hope to make good. Reliability is an important part of his equipment, and this must be so evident that the salesman can, on the strength of his sincerity and earnestness alone, convince the customer — and sign him up then and there.

Without adaptability, no salesman can get along with customers. Resourcefulness is a quality that is very evident in the most progressive salesmen. And, then too, the salesman should be able to turn all the above qualities into a melting pot of action and bring about a closed sale.

If a man who is not a salesman has shown evidence that he possesses the above qualities, and is in addition gifted in leading others to do what he wants them to do, he has the salesman’s temperament. The Sales Manager who is seeking men who will make money for his house and be a credit to his department will make no mistake by giving such a man a trial.

The nature of the goods determines the education a salesman should have to be a success in handling them. Without the required amount of education it is next to impossible to succeed in any line, so we do not include education as a part of the salesman’s temperament.

By Reputation

When a salesman has made good with a certain line of merchandise, he gains an established reputation. Sales Managers often find their best men by getting a man's reputation among other salesmen, among merchants, among customers.

As a rule, when a salesman's reputation is good, he takes well with the trade and with his fellows. This does not mean that the man with a poor reputation may not be a good salesman. He maybe a quiet fellow who is so busy getting business from different customers, along a one-call specialty line, that he has no time in which to cultivate the personal friendship of his customers. Such salesmen come in, sell their product on ability and confidence, get out and make other calls. Among these men are the invest selling machines in the business. They get almost automatic results, they work hard and win through planning and working.

In the above sense reputation does not have anything to do with character. It merely signifies the impression a salesman makes on the general public, upon fellow-salesmen, and upon his employers. It may mean, in fact, that he is a "good fellow" type of man, a salesman who would succeed exceptionally well with some lines of goods and with certain classes of customers, and yet fail with a different line of goods, and under different trade conditions.

Along with the other factors reputation is to be considered as a means of judging and selecting salesmen, its importance depends entirely upon the nature and requirements of the business.

Try-Out Method

A most common way of selecting salesmen is to send a man out with samples and see what he can do. This is not a scientific method, but the results it brings are certain and tangible. You know at once whether the man can make good or not. You know whether you can depend on him to sell without further experience or training. But you have not found out whether this same man would not be a success or do better if he had definite training and the right start.

The try-out method, unless taken in connection with other established methods, is likely to lose as many good salesmen for a company as it develops. A salesman may be an A-1 man, and yet fail miserably with your line because he does not know it sufficiently well, or because he does not know the conditions in the field, the competition he must meet, etc. It is not an easy matter for even a capable salesman to take up a new line and sell it on his previous experience with a different line.

Sixty-five to eighty-five per cent of the men sent out under the try-out method fail to make good when they have not had previous experience or special training. Many salesmen who have much natural selling ability, do make good when this method is used. So do a good percentage of the men who have had experience or special training. Yet, the success of but few businesses can be based on “natural selling instinct” salesmen or upon salesmen trained by other concerns.

If a business is to cover much territory, and sell a steady number of articles all the year round, it must cater to the average salesman— it must develop him, and not throw him on his own resources, to fail. The average salesman is as anxious to make good as the experienced salesman, but he does not “know the ropes” so well.

Teach him, and he will bring in the orders.

By Experience

A salesman may have had years of experience in selling merchandise, and yet fail to make good with your line. If, however, he has been selling a line that has in some important respects given him an understanding of what he must contend with when representing you, he is a safer selection than the average pick-up salesman. In your own experience you doubtless know of cases where salesmen were highly successful with a certain line of goods, then changed their lines and did not make more than average success, or proved to be out and out failures.

When these same salesmen change back to the line they understand and are adapted to, they begin to make money for themselves

and their companies. In selecting men, it is not always safe to depend on the length or breadth of a man's experience. His experience may have been a long experience with failure. Some salesmen who have been selling one year can go to an employer and say in truth that they have had ten years' experience — all compressed into one; other salesmen who have been selling several years might be said to have had but one year's experience in actual selling and most of that consisting of experience of the wrong kind.

The success and ability of a man in selling, depend so much on the intangible human element that all the Sales Manager can do is to get a standard of measurement, and then hire salesmen who best meet his particular requirements. He cannot ever hope to come to the point where his judgment will be exact, but he can reduce the likelihood of hiring men who will lose money for his house. He can protect himself against the never-would-be and select the possibilities, often from among men who have had no selling experience, but who have mastered a thorough authoritative text-work on selling.

By Testimonial

Some Sales Managers refuse to look at a man's testimonial letters. It is to be regretted that business men have not, as a class, come to the point where references will be refused the man who does not deserve them. Some of the poorest salesmen on the road sometimes can show a variety of references that would do credit to the most successful salesmen. When such a salesman leaves the company the attitude of the employer seems to be, "I don't want 'so & so' any more. He is no good to me. I don't want to hurt his feelings or his chances of getting another position." So when he is let go, and asks for a reference, the employer sits down and writes him a letter that will assuage the wound of losing his position.

Testimonial letters are valuable, however, in that they give you a bona fide list of the companies and individuals for whom a salesman has worked. When a salesman's references are investigated, the Sales Manager usually gets a good idea of the character, personality and abilities of the salesman that is sufficient for his employment. The modern business way is for a salesman, or any other employee, to give the names of his past employers, and the Sales Manager can write a personal letter asking the employer to give him such information concerning the salesman as would be of advantage in judging that salesman's qualifications for the position he has in mind.

It is a matter of business honour not to reveal the answer that comes back. The salesman is hired or turned down, as the Sales Manager judges best, on the strength of the letter and on the strength of the salesman's personality. It is not to be forgotten in this connection that a firm will often knock a good man because he has left them under conditions which displeased them. The salesman may give the name of an employer for whom he worked some years ago, and now be a greater power in the business world than the past employer; and still the employer may knock him, if there has been any misunderstanding or personal antipathy between them at a past time.

By Recommendation

As a rule, among the Sales Manager's friends are many other Sales Managers, salesmen and executives. These men often hear of a good salesman who for some reason or another desires to make a change, or who is out of employment, and recommend this man for employment. From the man who makes the recommendation, the Sales Manager can find out the qualifications of the salesman in question, and determine whether or not that salesman would be an asset to his firm.

The Sales Manager who recommends a salesman to another Sales Manager will generally be quite specific in telling the strong as well as the weak points of the man recommended, as he knows Sales Managers are not looking for perfection, but for practical men who can get business under reasonably favourable conditions.

From him the Sales Manager who seeks the services of salesmen, and who thus has an interest in the man recommended, can get enough information that will make testimonials unnecessary.

He can hire the man on the strength of what he has learned and a personal interview will settle the matter.

Again, the Sales Manager's own salesmen meet many men on the road who are adepts in selling, and these men for various reasons may be interested in the Sales Manager's line. It is not considered good form, to say the least, for one house to take a salesman away from another; but it is done, and when the salesman himself seeks to make the change, because he would like to work for a firm that has the policies and principles your firm has, no harm is done. It is, of course, necessary that the salesmen be made to understand, either because of personal friendship or a profit incentive, that it is to their advantage to have the best men with the organization; or they will not seek to build up the sales force from the men they meet when on the road.

By Observation

Many salesmen have been selected because the eye of the observing Sales Manager has followed them. Regardless of a man's position, he has an opportunity to show some of the qualities that make a successful salesman. In fact, Salesmanship is nothing more nor less than plain common dealing with folks. When a man can deal with folks, he can sell goods. Whether he can sell the particular line of goods you handle is a different proposition. He may not be successful with them because he lacks education, experience, confidence, etc. Yet, again, he may be that occasional man for whom you are looking, and a personal interview may turn a street car conductor into a local salesman, a railroad engineer into a hardware travelling salesman, or a bookkeeper into a specialty man.

It all depends on how far you can use your powers of observation. If you can get beneath the outer appearance of a man into his human nature, you will be able to get a good salesman from any point of the compass. You can get good men as fast as you need them if you keep your eyes and ears alert to your own interests.

It may be necessary for you to look hundreds of men over before you observe the type of man you want. And, then, when you have had a personal talk with several men, only one of them may have the particular selling virtues you need in your organization. But this one man is worth getting, as it is on the basis of these individual selections that a sales force, which can get the business and keep getting it, is built up.

There is no need that a Sales Manager go about looking for salesmen. He should pay no particular attention to every man who comes along, but he should have his inner nature attuned to his own business, so that his conscious interest will automatically go towards the individual who will fit into his general scheme of things. He should be unconsciously on the lookout for anything and everything that will help his organization to sell more and better goods. Selecting salesmen is so important a part of the Sales Manager's business that he can without compunction give it the attention it deserves, by seeking at all times the services of men he can train to sell his product.

A Clearing House for Salesmen's Ideas

The salesmen on the force, if they have the necessary experience and training, can help the Sales Manager to make a success of his planning. If the Sales Manager is a good reasoner, and has selling experience, he is likely to make a success. But, after all, there is no business in which conditions do not vary from time to time.

The Sales Manager himself may not have been on the road for years past. He may have been chosen because of special managing ability. It is necessary, then, that he keep conversant with road conditions and problems which the salesmen meet in their daily work. True, he may not have the knowledge to figure out the best method of answering certain objections or meeting unusual conditions without actual selling experience in the field, but if he has

a number of capable salesmen from whom to get ideas, he is in a better position than the individual salesman to judge of the value of certain ideas in relation to other ideas.

If the Sales Manager will appoint himself as a "human clearinghouse for salesmen's ideas," he can amass a large amount of information from week to week that will definitely increase his sales.

An ambitious Sales Manager, in fact, can and should know more about general selling plans and methods than any individual salesman on his sales force. He can go outside and learn the methods and appeals used by others and whenever such methods and appeals are more scientific and result bearing than his own, he should adopt them gradually, or all at one time, getting the good-will of his men so he will not lose their suggestions and cooperation, which is often greater value to him than even the best methods of others.

Soliciting Suggestions From Sales Force

When salesmen are shown that they are a part of the business, that their ideas and plans and suggestions help make the business— that although the Sales Manager is the pivot about which everything turns, they are the ones that carry the business upon their shoulders and that the house appreciates their cooperation —even though it cannot use all the suggestions and plans turned in — they will be trying to improve their standing with the executives and Sales Manager by making suggestions that occur to them regarding their work.

The Sales Manager who gets suggestions from his sales force, as well as from his clerical force, has a basis for improvement. No salesman cares to give out even the ideas he thinks are excellent, and which give him his position on the sales force, unless he feels they will receive due consideration, and not be used against him to decrease his earnings. If he offers a suggestion, he wants that suggestion to be considered. He should be urged to “try again and do better next time” if his suggestion is not used.

Every suggestion received should be recognized and taken seriously. Even the best suggestions have been laughed down at times. The improvement of Civilization has rested upon the faith of men who believed in their own ideas. New worlds were opened up by explorers. New trade fields will be the result of getting suggestions from salesmen, for out of the number of suggestions received, a large number (which, by the way, may be a small percent of the total number received) will become the permanent property of the house, and continue to add to its good-will and growth and profits for years to come.

Suggestions from several salesmen are sometimes combined to make a plan that the house can use, and the several salesmen are all given part credit for the new workable plan. It is customary to give prizes or cash payments for suggestions that are used by the house to improve its product or which help to get more business.

When the house has a bulletin or house organ, credit is given there in for suggestions that have been accepted, and mention made of the prizes received by the salesmen or employees making them.

SELF -QUIZ OR SELF-ANALYSIS PERSONAL

EFFICIENCY TESTS

1 . — DO I REALIZE THAT MY SUCCESS IN SELECTING SALESMEN WILL DEPEND UPON MY ABILITY TO ADVERTISE MY FIRM'S PROPOSITION AMONG MEN WHO SELL THINGS, OR AMONG THOSE WHO WANT TO SELL BUT HAVE NOT YET LOCATED A PROPOSITION THAT FITS THEIR PARTICULAR TEMPERAMENTS AND ABILITIES?

2 .— DO I BASE MY SELECTION OF SALESMEN ON AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENT METHODS NOW IN USE BY SALES MANAGERS, TO THE END THAT I CAN BUILD MY SALES FORCE ON A FIRM FOUNDATION?

3 —DO I SELECT THE SALESMEN I DIRECT WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING MEN WHO HAVE THE NECESSARY COMBINATION OR “ BLENDING "OF POSITIVE QUALITIES THAT WILL ENABLE THEM SUCCESSFULLY TO SELL MY FIRM'S GOODS?

4 .—DO I DISTINGUISH BETWEEN “ QUALITIES OF CHARACTER" THAT MAKE A MAN, AND QUALITIES OF “ PERSONALITY " THAT MAKE A SALESMAN, TO THE END THAT I MAY EMPLOY ONLY THOSE WHO WILL BE MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED SELLING MY PROPOSITION?

5 .— IN SELECTING SALESMEN, DO I WATCH FOR THE ONE PARTICULAR TRAIT OF CHARACTER THAT WILL HINDER OR DESTROY A MAN'S USEFULNESS AS A SALESMAN FOR MY FIRM?

6 .—DO I AVOID DEMANDING AN EXCESSIVE LARGE NUMBER OF GOOD QUALITIES FROM THE MEN I AM TO EMPLOY AS SALESMEN, ASKING ONLY THAT A MAN HAS THOSE POSITIVE QUALITIES THAT WILL ENABLE HIM TO SUCCEED WITH MY FIRM'S LINE?

7 .—DO I TAKE PARTICULAR CARE NOT TO EMPLOY A MAN WHO HAS NOT A FAIR CHANCE TO MAKE GOOD, INJUSTICE TO THE SALESMAN AND TO MY HOUSE?

8— DO I CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZE ALL ANSWERS TO ADVERTISEMENTS FOR SALESMEN, TO THE END THAT NO POSSIBILITY WILL ESCAPE ATTENTION

AND WHEN I FIND THAT AN APPLICANT DOES NOT MEASURE UP, DO IMMEDIATELY ENCOURAGE HIM TO LOOK ELSEWHERE— TO SAVE MY TIME AND HIS?

9 —DO I FORM A JUDGMENT OF THE SALESMAN’S WRITTEN APPLICATION AS TO WHETHER HE IS A LOGICAL THINKER OR A WORD WIZARD , APPROXIMATE THE MAN’S PREVIOUS EDUCATION , DETERMINE WHETHER OR NO THE IS CAPABLE OF MEETING THE GRADE OF CUSTOMERS WITH WHICH THE FIRM DOES BUSINESS , AND THOSE OTHER THINGS THAT SHOULD KNOW , BEFORE I SPEND UNNECESSARY TIME IN INTERVIEWING THE POSSIBILITY

10 . — IF THE SALE OF MY GOODS DEMANDS SALESMEN OF EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER, DO I SELECT ONLY THOSE MEN WHO HAVE QUALIFICATIONS THAT PROVE THEY ARE ALL THEY CLAIM TO BE?

11 .—DO I SELECT SALESMEN FOR A BRANCH AGENCY WHO ARE LOCALLY KNOWN FOR PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND RELIABILITY , OR WHO HAVE FRIENDS OR CONNECTIONS IN A COMMUNITY THAT WILL ASSURE THEM THE RIGHT START ?

12 . — IN CASE I USE A PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST , DO I ASCERTAIN WHETHER IT IS BETTER FOR ME TO EMPLOY “SUPERIOR,” “AVERAGE,” ”OR“MEDIocre”SALESMEN FOR THE SALE OF MY FIRM’S GOODS ?

13 .—DO I AVOID SELECTING SALESMEN MERELY BECAUSE THEY HAVE PASSED THE BEST POSSIBLE GRADE , IF MY FIRM’S LINE IS ONE THAT CAN BE SOLD BY MEN OF “AVERAGE” ABILITY

14 —DO I SELECT MY MEN WITH A VIEW TO GETTING EXACTLY THE CALIBRE OF SALESMEN WHO WILL BE SATISFIED WITH THE PROPOSITION OF MY FIRM, WITH THE REMUNERATION THEY WILL RECEIVE, AND THUS HAVE THE MEN I SELECT AS PERMANENT ASSETS

15 .—DO I AVOID UNDERESTIMATING OR OVERESTIMATING MY PROPOSITION ,KNOWING THAT THE RESULT IN EITHER CASE WILL BE LACK OF SUCCESS IN THE SELECTION OF MY SALESMEN, WHICH WILL INEVITABLY RESULT IN A LARGE “TURNOVER”? t

16.— DO I APPRECIATE THAT A “PSYCHOLOGICAL” TEST IS A STRONG MEDICINE THAT CAN BEST BE HANDLED BY THOSE WHO ARE THOROUGHLY

CONVERSANT WITH GIVING SUCH TESTS, AND AVOID GIVING UNDUE EMPHASIS TO SUCH TESTS WHEN USED BY MYSELF AS AN AMATEUR?

17— DO I GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THOSE MEN WHO HAVE TRAINING IN THE USE OF MY PRODUCT, WHO HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF SALESMANSHIP, OR WHO HAVE TECHNICAL PREPARATION THAT WILL TEND TO MAKE THEM CAPABLE OF SELLING MY FIRM'S GOODS

18 . — IF MY LINE IS ONE THAT REQUIRES "PERSONALITY" TO SELL IT, DO I KEEP ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MEN WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF POSITIVE PERSONALITY QUALITIES, WITH A VIEW TO INDUCING THEM TO CONNECT WITH MY FIRM

19— DO I CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE OPINIONS,PREJUDICES AND CONVICTIONS OF THE TRADE, TO THE END THAT I WILL SELECT SALESMEN WHO CAN "MIX" WITH MY FIRM'S CUSTOMERS— ON AN EQUAL BUSINESS AND SOCIAL PLANE?

20 — DO I TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT ADAPTABILITY IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES A SALESMAN SHOULD POSSESS, AND THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN ADAPT THEMSELVES TO NEW PEOPLE,TO NEW CONDITIONS, TO NEW OBJECTIONS, TO NEW ARGUMENTS,TO NEW ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT COMES UP IN THE COURSE OF BUSINESS,HAVE AN IMPORTANT QUALITY THAT MAKES FOR SUCCESS IN SELLING?

21 —DO I GIVE PREFERENCE TO AN ADAPTABLE MAN WITHOUT SELLING EXPERIENCE RATHER THAN TAKE ON A SALESMAN WITH EXPERIENCE WHO IS NOT ADAPTABLE?

22— IF MY LINE SO DEMANDS, DO I TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION A MAN'S CONVERSATIONAL ABILITY, TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT HE IS ABLE TO PRESENT HIS SALES TALK IN INTERESTING WORDS THAT CONVINCED THE PROSPECT OF HIS NEED FOR THE MERCHANDISE ?

23— IN CHOOSING SALESMEN, DO I TAKE CARE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL UNDER CONSIDERATION HAS CONVERSATIONAL ABILITY, SO THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO PRESENT HIS SALES TALK IN INTERESTING WORDS THAT CONVINCED THE PROSPECT OF HIS NEED FOR THE MERCHANDISE?

24 .— WHENEVER I FIND A MAN OF GOOD APPEARANCE AND WINNING PERSONALITY, WHO CAN EXPRESS HIMSELF LOGICALLY AND FORCEFULLY ,DO I MAKE OVERTURES THAT MAY RESULT IN HIS BECOMING A MEMBER OF MY SALES FORCE?

25 . — WHEN RIDING HOME ON buses, IN THE TRAINS, ON THE ROADS, ETC., DO I KEEP IN MIND THE NEEDS OF MY SALES FORCE , TO THE END THAT I MAY LOCATE COMPETENT SALESMEN?

26 . — IN MY TRAVELS, AND FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH SALESMEN, DO I LEARN FROM THEM WHO WOULD BE LIKELY CANDIDATES FOR A POSITION WITH MY SELLING ORGANIZATION?

27.— DO I SEEK AMONG THE SALESMEN WHO CALL ON ME THE MAN WHO IS ESPECIALLY GOOD IN PRESENTING HIS PROPOSITION OR WHO SHOWS SIGNS THAT HE CAN BE DEVELOPED INTO A GOOD SALESMAN?

22 . — WHEN I FIND A MAN WHO IS INTERESTED IN LOCATING A NEW POSITION AT A SOCIAL AFFAIR, DO I GIVE HIM MY CARD, SAYING NOTHING ABOUT A POSITION, BUT INVITING HIM TO CALL AT HIS EARLY CONVENIENCE

29 .— DO I REALIZE THAT IF A MAN HAS “SALESMAN'S QUALITIES HE IS BY TEMPERAMENT FITTED TO MAKE A SUCCESS IN HANDLING MEN AND THINGS, ESPECIALLY IN EXCHANGING MERCHANDISE FOR MONEY?

30 .—DO I RECOGNIZE THAT AN IMPORTANT PART OF A SALESMAN'S EQUIPMENT IS HIS RELIABILITY, AND THAT THIS QUALITY MUST BE SO EVIDENT THAT THE SALESMAN CAN, ON THE STRENGTH OF HIS SINCERITY AND EARNESTNESS ALONE, CONVINCED THE CUSTOMER— AND SIGN HIM UP?

31 .— DO I RECOGNIZE THAT WITHOUT THE REQUIRED AMOUNT OF EDUCATION, IT IS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE FOR A SALESMAN TO SUCCEED IN ANY LINE, AND CHOOSE MEN WHO HAVE SUFFICIENT EDUCATION TO HANDLE MY FIRM'S MERCHANDISE?

32.— DO I TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION AN APPLICANT'S REPUTATION, DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT THE REPUTATION HE HAS MADE IN THE PAST WILL HELP HIM SELL MY LINE TO A PARTICULAR CLASS OF TRADE?

33 — DO I MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SALESMEN REPUTATION AND SALESMEN OF CHARACTER, TO THE END THAT I MAY NOT TURN DOWN A FIRST-CLASS SALESMAN, BECAUSE HE IS NOT A MAN OF KNOWN REPUTATION?

34 .— DO I TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE NATURE AND REQUIREMENTS OF MY MERCHANDISE AND THE TERRITORY, BEFORE EMPLOYING A MAN TO SELL MY FIRM'S PRODUCT?

35.— DO I USE GREAT CARE WHEN MAKING TRY-OUTS OF SALESMEN TO THE END THAT I DO NOT LOSE MORE GOOD SALESMEN THAN DEVELOP?

36.— DO I SEE THAT A SALESMAN MAY BE A HIGH-GRADE MAN AND YET FAIL MISERABLY WITH MY FIRM'S LINE, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT KNOW IT SUFFICIENTLY WELL OR BECAUSE HE DOES NOT KNOW CONDITIONS IN THE FIELD, THE COMPETITION HE MUST MEET, ETC.?

87 .— DO I KEEP IN MIND THAT THE SUCCESS OF BUT FEW FIRMS CAN BE TRACED TO “ NATURAL SELLING INSTINCT" SALESMEN OR UPON SALESMEN TRAINED BY OTHER FIRMS ?

38. — IF MY FIRM'S MERCHANDISE IS SOLD OVER A LARGE TERRITORY , WITH THE DEMAND BEING STEADY FROM MONTH TO MONTH , DO I SEE THAT I MUST UATER TO THE AVERAGE SALESMAN, THAT HE BE DEVELOPED,AND NOT THROWN WHOLLY ON HIS OWN RESOURCES

39.— IF A SALESMAN HAS BEEN SELLING A LINE THAT IS IN SOME IMPORTANT RESPECTS SIMILAR TO MINE, DO I PREFER HIM TO THE AVERAGE PICKUP SALESMAN t

40 . — WHEN ASKING FOR A SALESMAN'S “ EXPERIENCE DO I MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN EXPERIENCE WITH FAILURE AND EXPERIENCE WITH SUCCESS ?

41 . — DO I WORK OUT A STANDARD FOR HIRING SALESMEN ,TO THE END THAT I CAN PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST THE NEVER-WOULD-BE AND SELECT POSSIBILITIES, OFTEN FROM AMONG MEN WITHOUT SELLING EXPERIENCE, WHO HAVE MADE A THOROUGH STUDY OF SALESMANSHIP?

42.— DO I ASK FOR TESTIMONIAL LETTERS AND REFERENCES, SO THAT I CAN CHECK UP ON THE CHARACTER, PERSONALITY, AND ABILITIES OF APPLICANTS WHO LOOK GOOD?

43. — DO I KEEP IN TOUCH WITH MY SALES MANAGER, EXECUTIVE, AND SALESMAN FRIENDS, TO THE END THAT THEY MAY RECOMMEND GOOD MEN FOR A SELLING POSITION THAT MAY BE OPEN ON MY SALES FORCE

44.— DO I KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE SALESMEN I DIRECT, TO THE END THAT THEY MAY RECOMMEND, FROM AMONG THE MEN THEY MEET ON THE ROAD, THOSE WHO ARE OR WOULD LIKELY BECOME ADEPTS IN SELLING MY FIRM'S LINE T

45.— DO I KEEP CONVERSANT WITH ROAD CONDITIONS AND PROBLEMS WHICH THE SALESMEN MEET IN THEIR DAILY WORK, OBTAIN IDEAS FROM THE SALESMEN I DIRECT, TO THE END THAT I MAY BETTER JUDGE OF THAT VALUE OF THE IDEAS AND FACTS I MUST USE IN MY SELLING WORK?

46.— DO I GO OUTSIDE AND LEARN THE METHODS AND APPEALS USED BY OTHERS AND ADOPT SUCH AS ARE MORE SCIENTIFIC AND RESULT BRINGING THAN MY OWN

47 . — DO I OBTAIN SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SALESMEN I DIRECT , AS WELL A, FROM THE SALES OFFICE CLERICAL FORCE , SO THAT I WILL HAVE A THOROUGH BASIS FOR SUCH IMPROVEMENTS AS SHOULD BE INITIATED

48— DO I REALIZE THAT SALESMEN WILL NOT GIVE UP GOOD IDEAS, IF SUICIDE AS ARE TO BE USED TO DECREASE THEIR EARNINGS, AND THAT I MISTAKE ESPECIAL PAINS TO THANK THOSE WHO HAVE MADE SUGGESTION WHETHER USABLE OR NOT

Contact

Rajesh Gurule
Consultant. Coach. Trainer.

www.RajeshGurule.com

Ph - +91 98225 45922

connect@RajeshGurule.com

Office

1, 2nd Floor, Raunak Arcade,
Rameshwar Nagar, Gangapur Road,
Nashik - 13