

Cultivating Retailers that

VENDORS TRACK

Must Have.....You!



**Presented
by
Tom Shay**



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How to become The *Preferred* vendor!

Being the preferred vendor...

- Is more than having a low price
 - Means there is always a budget for your products
 - Causes more of your products to be advertised by the retailer
 - Indicates you are a bottom-line resource
 - Means you are a partner whom the retailer calls for advice
 - Says your greatest assets are your ideas and your experience as shown by your ability to:
1. **Show** your retailers how to promote their businesses to their existing customers

 2. **Share** a success story from another retailer

 3. **Teach** retailers how better displays can sell more merchandise

 4. **Tell** retailers about new lines of merchandise they need to add

 5. **Assist** retailers in creating and responding to a customer survey

6. **Help** retailers to create an advertising budget

7. **Provide** retailers with help in educating their staffs

8. **Demonstrate** how incentives can increase their sales and profits

9. **Educate** retailers on what financial management (cashflow projection and "open-to-buy" calculation) can do for them



Creating a Partnership

By Tom Shay

SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

When this writer has the opportunity to speak to a group of sales representatives, I always enjoy telling about the representatives who have become like extended family members to me and my family. I tell about Mr. O.C. North, who had called on my grandfather's store as well as my father's store. There were so many times that Mr. North went to great lengths to help the family businesses.

The bond between retailer and salesman was so strong that Mr. North almost left his job to defend his retailer. Back in the 1960s, a part of the store burned down. The insurance company was rather slow to settle, and the credit manager for the company Mr. North represented was concerned about Grandpa's financial stability. At one point Mr. North sent in an order, and the credit manager said he was not going to approve the order for shipment.

Mr. North promptly told his boss that if the order was not approved, he might as well resign. "If you won't ship to Buster Brown, you probably won't ship to anyone. I might as well resign now." (The order was shipped.)

For somewhere in the 1960s, or in the 2000s, you and I both know this was a very unusual situation; but for my family this was not the only example. Grandma has told me the story of how Grandpa would get up early each day and head to the store. She would stay at the house and fix a big breakfast. The breakfast was big because you could always count on one or two sales representatives coming home with Grandpa around 8:30 a.m. to join in the breakfast.

There were many other sales representatives who were very special to us: Ronnie Evans, Dennis Chappel, Joe Perz, Pete Lutman. My dad used to say, "If any of these sales representatives walked into my office in July and said it was snowing outside, I would grab a coat and follow them outside."

In speaking to other dealers, I frequently hear, "You were just lucky to find those reps." No—that is not the case. I was instead lucky to have a father and grandfather who knew they could profit greatly by developing relationships with these people, and no—those are not the "old days." That experience can be the same for you today, if you will give these ideas a try.

Granted, today we deal with more reps at a tradeshow or through a telemarketing department, but we can create this same partnership in almost any set of circumstances. As for the rep who does still call on a store, we always make a point to say "thanks" for the visit; for in this day of mass merchants and chain stores, it is quite easy for a rep to pass by our store. By taking just a few minutes to talk with the rep, we can determine if we have an interest in any of the lines he or she represents.



Creating a Partnership (continued)

By Tom Shay

SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

When talking with the walk-in reps, tradeshow reps, or telemarketing department reps, give them information about what you have stocked and sold in the past. After all, if most of the reps will never see your store, they need to know as much as possible as they help to guide you.

"My competitors are (fill in the blank). What are they stocking? What are they getting for this item? Is there anything I am not ordering that I should? My order cannot exceed (amount of dollars). What should I leave out?"

The experienced rep knows how to answer these questions. Some of the best stores I have seen, in preparing for a tradeshow, have contacted the manufacturer and asked to speak with one of the reps who will be at the show. With a telemarketing rep, the retailer has simply made a request to have the same person call at a predetermined date and time.

Grandfather and Dad both knew the sales representatives saw more stores in a week than my family would see in a couple of months. The rep had seen—by actually visiting or participating in their company sales meetings—a large number of good displays, clean stores, well-run operations, and merchants who had developed great sales staffs.

Of course, be prepared to share *your* success stories with the reps; tell them how you have taken their suggestions and implemented them. Reps often report that retailers who are complaining about the problems of business are the same ones who ask questions and then do not do anything with the information.

One of the tricks of creating a partnership that Dad taught was to be sure to express your appreciation. When you have received even a little bit of help from the sales rep, Dad said a short "thank-you" note to the rep would go a long way. And to go even further, send a note to his boss—the sales manager.

Within a few weeks, the rep will have heard from his boss and will be in touch with the retailer. The rep will be glad and eager to extend the relationship to another level. And the retailer will be just as glad to work in the same direction.

Most retailers cannot afford to hire a consultant. If a business consultant were to volunteer his or her services to help you, you would probably accept. That person may be walking in your front door tomorrow, seeing you at a tradeshow, or calling you on the phone. That person is called a sales rep.

Are you ready to cultivate a partnership?