

Why Fly Paper Works!

VENDORS TRACK

Attracting Buyers to Your Tradeshow Exhibit!

**Presented
by
Tom Shay**



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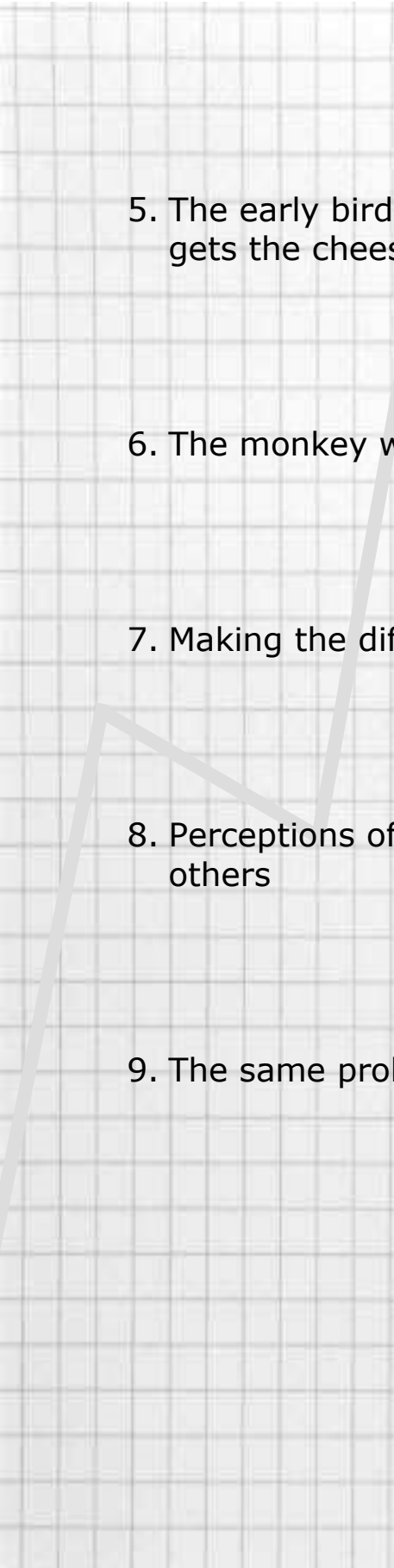
Why Fly Paper Works! Attracting buyers to your tradeshow exhibit!

1. Creating the bug light

2. Using red to attract hummingbirds

3. String in motion attracts a kitten

4. "Chumming" works great for fishing for the big ones



5. The early bird catches the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese

6. The monkey will always go for the banana in the cage

7. Making the different attraction

8. Perceptions of items invented by Mr. Nypkow, Mr. Bell and others

9. The same problem the retailer faces

10 things you can do to enhance the experience for those attending the show

1. Have a contest for displays
2. Follow-up call and note
3. Have a special appearance or book signing
4. Have a "mini-seminar" at your booth at schedule times
5. Make a donation to a charity based upon business cards left at your booth
6. Give them an order form score card
7. Have an "after-the-show" reception at your booth
8. Take a written survey on business trends
9. Have something for kids
10. Follow up on the top sellers at the show



Tools of the trade

By Tom Shay

SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

Small businesses do not need to be reminded of the many changes this industry has experienced since the 1970s. Before that decade, a store could settle for being open 8 or 9 hours a day, run an occasional newspaper ad, offer a fair selection of merchandise, maintain a good margin on all items, and all would be well—including a decent profit for the owner. However, in today's market, having been able to stay in business for these past 30-plus years is an accomplishment to be proud of.

Most know of at least several businesses in their areas that have closed their doors in that time period. Most often, a large part of the blame for the demise of that closed business has been the mass merchant, the Internet, mail-order dealers, or another business opening a new location near the store.

Whether or not that is the case, many of the failed businesses had a tendency to react with too little, too late. For the vast majority of businesses, it takes all of their resources, efforts and available tools of the trade to continue to make a success of their store.

From our experience, we have found there is a tool of the trade that that needs more recognition for its potential. That "tool" is the manufacturer's or wholesaler's representative.

Most businesses gladly receive any sales representative making a cold sales call—well, most sales representatives anyway. It seems that most businesses get their fair share of insurance, investment, and security-system sales calls.

These sales representatives can best be utilized if we tell them what we need, as well as establish for them the ground rules that we use in our store. Here are some of the guidelines that we would suggest.

After the initial cold call, many stores prefer to work by appointment. After all, we have already made our daily schedules. If we are to include time for a sales call, we need to know what to plan for. It is also a big help to the sales representative and to our store for inventory counts to be prepared in advance of the salesperson's visit. For seasonal product lines, we prefer to read information sheets outlining the new products and dating programs so that we can begin to formulate our plans.

We try to gauge a sales representative by his knowledge of the company's products, of our sales area, and of our competition. We expect the sales representative to be able to let us know what models of his product line are being sold by the mass merchants and the catalog showroom retailers. Sometimes we'll pick a different model to avoid head-to-head competition.

We want to have the sales representative assist in tailoring his line to our store. We all know that purchasing the entire product line is not the answer to all of our needs. We want a sales representative who wants to write more than one big order and be a part of our success story for a long time.

We would like to see pictures of displays from other successful stores. We would like to hear about successful promotions that other stores have used. Perhaps the sales representative can show us a copy of his sales flyer or newspaper ad featuring these products. Perhaps he has suggestions for complementary product lines.



Tools of the trade

(continued)

By Tom Shay

SOUND ADVICE FOR BUSINESS

We realize that these sales representatives call on many accounts in a large territory and that they attend many trade shows. We need to have the opportunity to capitalize on this stockage of knowledge and experience.

We expect to hear a sales representative's ideas regarding profit. Since the majority of dealers do not have professional marketing departments, we welcome additional input regarding the pricing of sensitive items, as well as suggestions for stretching margins on the balance of the product line.

From the other side of the coin, our writing a purchase order or signing up for a new program is not enough—nor should it be enough—to gain the rep's assistance. Our store will write a letter of appreciation to the sales representative (with a copy being sent to his boss) for the extra effort that he gave.

Remember—sales representatives are not usually paid for any clinics or demonstrations they perform in a store.

We also suggest sending the sales representative a photo of that great end cap to share with other businesses. By all means, let him know that his efforts are appreciated. You will reap many rewards for this. One of the rewards we experienced was the phone call from the salesman giving our store the first offering to order closeout merchandise.

Granted, there are a number of sales representatives who are trying only to write orders, and there are representatives who do not have the store's best interest at the top of their lists. Sometimes we feel the need to test the sales representative to be assured that he is able to provide what he promises to deliver.

We have performed this test by requesting printed materials be sent to our store, or asking the sales representative to have someone from the factory call us regarding availability of certain products.

It can sometimes help to ask the sales representative to give us the names of several stores that have dealt with them or carried the product line for the past several seasons. Using these techniques to interview prospective sales representatives, we have been able to weed out a few bad ones. Fortunately, our industry also has a tradition of slowly working these types of individuals out of the business. Granted, there are a number of sales representatives who are trying only to write orders, and there are representatives who do not have the store's best interests at the top of their lists. Sometimes we feel the need to test the sales representative to be assured that he is able to provide what he promises to deliver. We perform this test by requesting printed materials be sent to our store, or asking the sales representative to have someone from the factory call us regarding availability of certain products.

You may have heard a salesperson tell a customer that a task is always easier when you use the right "tools." We, too, want to make better use of the tools available to our store to make our job easier and our store more profitable.

We think this is good advice, and we try to use it.