



## ***The Top 15 Sales Horror Stories of All Time!***

Dan Seidman of SalesAutopsy.com has collected over 500 most embarrassing sales moments during his 15 years in sales management, speaking and training. He was recently selected as one of the "top 12 sales coaches in America" (Ultimate Selling Power). Dan's website,

[www.SalesAutopsy.com](http://www.SalesAutopsy.com) has been called "...a cult hit among salesfolks!" by *Sales & Marketing Management Magazine*. Check out his wild, new ***Sales Comic Book*** at [www.SalesComics.com](http://www.SalesComics.com).



### **FOOT IN MOUTH KILLS SALESMAN IN FRONT OF CLIENT**

Rick chokes on his chance for a big sale

I sell printing services in Chicago. And I'm probably not as good as I am persistent. It took six months of phone calls and mailed literature to finally get into the President's office of a company that I wanted to sell very badly. It took less than thirty seconds to undo half a year of time and effort:

"I'd finally nailed this guy down to an appointment and wanted to make a really good first impression. I figured that this President would look at me as either a strong, persistent salesman or a pest. He would dispose of a pest as quickly as he could. So as I walked into his office, I looked for something on the wall or on his desk that I could use for a little opening small talk.

"John Madden!" I cried, pointing at an 8x10 photograph on his credenza. Every football fan knows the 300-plus pound football commentator. He's probably the best announcer around, in spite of an

ugly mug that could stop a bus. "How did you get a photograph of yourself with your arm around John Madden?"

My rapport-building efforts crashed in flames as the shocked company President slowly answered, "that's not Madden, that's... my... wife."

POSTMORTEM: Rick has fallen into the trap of using an old technique to bond with the prospect. Today, a better attitude would be to respect the buyer's time and simply thank him or her for the invitation to talk, ask how much time was available and then say something like, "You must have thought a bit about some of the issues we discussed on the phone. Which one in particular (that is really bothering you) would you like to address?" This is professional and respects his or her time. If the buyer wants to wander into personal territory, then you go with him or her on their direction, not yours.

### **THREE-RING-CIRCUS SELLING**

Scott admits he's the ringmaster of this disaster:

It was a hot August day and we were about forty-five minutes early to demonstrate our data technology services. My partner and I decided to get a cold drink at the closest convenience store. I bought a super-large frozen cherry thing, and my partner got a lime-flavored one.

We drove back to the prospect's building and sat in the visitor's spot, mentally preparing, and drinking frozen pop. When we were ready to go, I looked over, and my partner's mouth, lips, teeth, and tongue were *bright green*—I mean really bright, like a clown's.

I grabbed the rearview mirror and flipped it toward my face. My features were *glowing red*

We couldn't wash it off, wipe it off, or anything, so we went into the sales call looking like a couple of circus clowns. People actually laughed when we came in; we were never asked back.

POSTMORTEM: Obviously, thinking more carefully about one's actions just before a sales call is important. However, the psychological reason a call like this fails is that you can't gain rapport with a prospect if he or she is uncomfortable being sold by circus clowns. There's no hope for a rep who makes an unprofessional first impression on a prospect. I told this tale while speaking to the Chicago Chapter of Sales & Marketing Executives International, and received a smart suggestion

for Scott: Bring some frozen drinks for the prospect, too—it might just save the sale.



### ***THE SALES COMIC BOOK***

Nothing like it on the planet (possibly any planet)!

Buy this unique, beautiful product for your sales team. Visit

<http://www.salescomics.com>

### **RADIO DAZE**

Josh runs from his prospect to live and sell another day

It was my first job in sales and I was about to have the worst experience of my life. I was selling radio advertising space in Colorado. It was about a month after the Columbine school shooting tragedy had occurred.

Howard Stern, famous "shock jock" was the morning DJ on our station. He made some insensitive comments about the shooting and this enraged the Denver community.

On a sunny Denver day I was selling to an auto glass shop, a \$36,000 contract. The woman owner said yes (!) and signed the agreement. I requested her first installment check and she pulled out her checkbook, asking what company name to write in. For some, stupid reason I said the call letters rather than radio station's corporate name.

She froze, then asked "Isn't that the station with Howard Stern?" Yes, I said and she went absolutely berserk. She leapt to her feet and began screaming. Spit flew out of her mouth and her foul language was amazing.

I stared in shock until she threw a stapler and hit me in the head.

With blood streaming down my face I ran for the door, mad woman at my heels. I jumped in my car and she continued ranting, now kicking my door. This was selling?

I drove one mile down the road, pulled over and bawled like a baby.

I heard you were supposed to have tough skin to sell, but this was beyond any expectations of mine.

POSTMORTEM: Wow, Josh even has sales scars to show for his time on the selling battlefield. When you sell for some time, you will eventually run into angry clients. Josh just got lucky and learned his lesson early. Our earth is full of people and personalities of great variety. Appreciate the wonder of creation (or be in awe of the genius of evolution, if you have the faith to believe in it) and expect the unexpected. Remember you're unique, just like everybody else.

### **NO PETS ALLOWED**

David's animal sacrifice almost costs him the sale

As we waited in the cool morning air, the owner's pit-bull dog walked up to us and, from his bloody jowls, dropped a half-dead chicken he had stolen from his owner's coop. He'd obviously been chewing it for some time. Well, the chicken was mortally wounded, and was making a horrific groaning noise.

What were we waiting for? I had just made a significant sale to install a heating and air conditioning system for an upscale home that sat nicely on several acres of farmland just outside the city limits.

On the day our work was to begin I was to meet the homeowner at the job site - along with my installation crew. We were to go over the proposed plans and get the contracts signed. My crew and I arrived at the house that morning a little early, and the man of the house (a very, very large man I might add) had not yet arrived at the home from his place of business a few minutes away.

So this chicken is gurgling away and it's become very apparent that I had to put this poor creature out of its misery--and quickly! Grabbing a 2x4 wooden board from our work truck, I took the chicken and began ramming his head into the ground with the board as hard as I could. I don't know if the ground was too soft or that chickens are incredibly resilient, but this chicken would not die!

The harder I hit it with the board, the louder the chicken groaned. This went on for some time and was quite amusing to my crew who was laughing as I pounded the bird into the ground again and again. In all the commotion what we did not notice was the homeowner pull

up behind us in his truck. There we were, in his driveway, laughing and carrying-on, and beating one of his chickens to death with a 2x4!

After the guy's initial shock and my heartfelt explanation of the unfortunate circumstances, the homeowner eventually let us begin the job. Looking back, I'm not sure I would have done things any differently. The only lessons learned that day were 1) Don't kill another man's chicken and 2) Don't try and kill another man's chicken with a 2x4--it doesn't work!

POSTMORTEM: This is too funny! David's story paints a vivid picture and points out something we do too often to undermine our selling efforts. We usually talk too much when we sell and in the same way we can act too much as well. David didn't have to do anything with the chicken and he would have been fine. But I'll bet he wouldn't have missed making that memory for anything. Also, we don't endorse animal sacrifice to appease the sales gods.

#### WANT MORE STORIES LIKE THIS?

Speaker with Great, Gruesome Tales to Tell... at YOUR national sales conference! Along with the funny sales blunders, you'll acquire a new selling strategy that will differentiate you from those saleshounds howling at buyers all day long. Listen, laugh and learn (oh, you'll confess too). What are the incredibly unique things that top sales pros do and say today to distinguish themselves from the mediocre? Call 1-847-359-7860 or email Dan Seidman at [dan@salesautopsy.com](mailto:dan@salesautopsy.com).

#### **EXCAVATING CLIENTS**

Mark attempts to construct a big sale

First thing in the morning and we had a last minute pitch to make. The President of our Chicago agency heard that a Milwaukee-based crane association was reviewing their programs and he told me to call and ask for an appointment today - before they finalized any decisions. I called and practically begged for the meeting. I drove the two hours up I-94 completely confident that we still had a great shot at landing the business.

We'd handled loads of construction companies. I brought custom flyers and tons of testimonials with impressive pictures of earth-moving equipment. Cruise control set at 70, I smiled as I passed from Illinois into Wisconsin. There must have been six or eight crane rental companies along the highway. If you believed in omens, you'd feel

pretty good about this sales call.

I pulled up to the front door to discover the association logo was a crane, the bird with the long neck. Cool idea. Some non-profit organizations really market themselves well.

The reception area was quiet and beautifully decorated. The walls were covered with cranes, hundreds and hundreds of them, that is, the birds! This association was for the preservation of, well, the other cranes.

I met the decision-maker and presented our company's offerings, but I was really rattled by our mistake. Most of my mental attention was just anger at my President. The executive director sat through the most uninspired sales conversation she'd ever encountered. I just felt stupid being there.

I left the association empty-handed with my tail feathers between my legs. I had the special pleasure of being the butt of office jokes for several months. Now, even if I'm in a hurry, I do some homework on all my prospects.

POSTMORTEM: Mark's mistake is pretty funny. But there is an outstanding lesson in his situation. He was well-niched in the construction business. Great marketers find a niche and saturate it. Their name becomes the brand of that mini-marketplace. And therein do they own the mindshare of clients and potential clients. Where are your best customers entrenched? Build on existing successes and you'll spend less time and money marketing to an audience that is too broad.

### **BAAAD LUCK AT THE FARM**

John will be counting sheep, instead of money, in his sleep tonight

It suddenly didn't even matter that I had to spend another \$5 to wash my dust-covered car after leaving this prospect's property.

My partner and I had finished a tough series of sales calls on a large corporate farm. The owner was taking on a complete insurance package - we were covering everything. I was looking at almost \$50,000 staring me in the, well - the bank account.

It didn't even matter that I had to thoroughly scrape the bottom of my

shoes before soiling the carpet of my car again. A Chicago city boy like me could make good money in the country - even with minimal selling skills.

So there sat four of us; the owner with hands folded on his desk and his accountant with hands folded atop a large leather book - the company check book. My partner and I beamed at each other and pulled out one last form.

"In order for us to see that you're completely covered, we need your livestock totals." I began to call out the animal names and receive the numbers of each herd, with babies listed separately - Beef cattle, milk cows, horses and pigs, then...

"Sheep?" 120 was the reply

"E-wees?"

"Huh?" grunted the owner.

"E-wees." I said, clearly mispronouncing the word again. "How many e-wees you got?"

"Let me see that form." The farmer said.

I pointed and he yelled. "That's ewes, you idiot! Have you ever been on a farm? How are you supposed to help me with my business if you know nothing about farming? You know what? Don't even answer that, just get out, get out of my office!"

We walked quickly to my car, not even stopping to clean our shoes, hopped in and drove away, \$50,000 poorer.

POSTMORTEM: Okay, so John was a bit short in his product knowledge training, but let's focus on something else. What to do you do when you blow it on a call? Here's what I suggest at all the speaking and training programs I do: Be very, very remorseful. Say something like this, "Oh Lord. You must think I'm my company's village idiot. I'm so sorry. If you don't want to do business with me, I completely understand." Don't be surprised if the prospect says "Hey, that's okay. I've done some dumb things, too. Let's keep going." If you feel bad, you'll make most people want to help you to not be so hard on yourself - and you could save a sale.



What do coyotes and leads have in common? Do you need high quality leads generated? For answers to both, check out the new website, <http://www.leadgenius.com>

## **SMOLDERING CUSTOMER FIRES SALESWOMAN**

Marie Loses her Baby Customer Before it Grows into a Big One

I sell a line of welding products and alloys, and part of my job entails doing demonstrations to show the customers how well the product works. I was working on a relatively new customer and had just done a Seminar on Cutting and Torch Safety.

I was back again, trying to move the company from a couple small, test orders to a real client. Today's demonstration was for a new type of oxygen cutting lance. I had all the key guys around for the demo, and they chose a huge piece of steel for me to cut through. I took out one rod and started blasting through the material. The demo was going great. As I showed off our hot, new equipment, the maintenance man got a phone call. I heard him say "We're just doing some cutting in the maintenance department." I finished the demo, and besides the smoldering metallic debris on the floor and some burning saw dust, I had done just fine. I wrote up the quote for the Supervisor and left the plant.

As I was checking out with the security guard, he advised me that I had "caused quite a commotion in there." I asked him specifically what he meant. He said that the smoke from the maintenance department had come up through the mail room and into the office, evacuating the entire building!

This would not have been too bad, but there was a big corporate meeting that day, and my fiasco demonstration had evacuated the President, Chairman/CEO, Treasurer, VP and the entire office staff.

At the time the guard was telling me this, he was laughing, and frankly I thought it was quite funny too, so both my district manager and I



laughed about it hysterically as we walked to the parking lot.

The Maintenance Supervisor still has not returned my calls, so needless to say, I didn't get the order! I've had no business since then. You might say I was "fired" for burning my customer.

POSTMORTEM: Marie was doing all the right things, right up to the END. I like how she nurtured this client by gaining a few small orders, hoping to land that big sale. Are you struggling with prospects who could be huge customers? Find a way to offer them some small sale. This changes your status from hard-pitching salesperson to strategic partner and vendor. This switch in perception gives you ongoing access to your buyer. You will find them less likely to hide behind voicemail. Even the buyer's assistant will treat you differently. Land that little sale and begin building a foundation for success with your big potential clients.

### **TRANSLATION TRAVESTY**

Fred Fumbles South of the Border

I was doing training for one of the big national firms that has hundreds of events around the country. Each speaker/trainer was paid based on how well they performed in two ways: How well the attendees rated him or her. And how much product was sold in back of the room after the session. In fact, selling in the back made up a large portion of our income. I was great at this. I was a hustler and sold loads of product. In fact, I did so well that I soon left to start my own speaking and training business - but not before I had the pleasure of one royal disaster.

My boss called me into his office one day because a client in Mexico City wanted one of our classes taught. He wanted to know if I went, whether I would need an interpreter. I spoke passable Spanish, so I said no, I could handle the training. I wasn't sharing my money with anyone.

Do you know the difference between using passable Spanish and being able to communicate, to carry a native Mexican audience for an eight hour seminar?

At the first break ½ of the attendees never returned.

At the second break ½ of those left never returned.

I was down to 25% of my original audience to whom I hoped to sell product. But worst of all, was the most unforgettable end of the day. Before selling product, I opened the floor for questions. Only one gentleman raised his hand and in most beautiful Spanish asked, "How do we get our money back?"

I sold nothing. People actually left handouts, flyers, even their workbooks on the tables. I was a complete bust.

I vowed never to put myself in an embarrassing business situation again.

POSTMORTEM: Fred almost figured out his mistake. Actually, he needs to learn when to turn down business. Every client is not worth our time. We might spend too much time and energy with little return (Fred's experience). We might also chase business for so long that we waste time better spent on more highly qualified candidates for our product or service. Set standards for your ideal customer and pursue that person or organization relentlessly. Don't burn yourself out on bad prospects. You'll be happy to ignore buyers who won't put good money in your bank account.



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## **NEW SALES MANAGER ENCOUNTERS OLD REP**

Bill's meeting ends up literally, nowhere,

I was a new sales manager for a well-known U.S. beer (whose name I dare not mention) and was making the rounds on the east coast to meet my reps.

Mike was my upstate New York rep and he was ancient. Everyone joked that he had sold the company's first produced bottle of beer in 1847. He'd actually been selling beer for 50 years and at 72 years old

still acted like a kid in college.

Our corporate employee motto was "Drink what you can, sell the rest."  
And Mike was a company man.

I flew into town and was picked up by Mike in his old beater automobile. I stared in shock and amazement at the dash of his car. He had removed the round louvers from his heating/ air conditioning vents and fit a can of beer into each. This was why he'd never upgraded his car, the beer wouldn't fit into the dash of newer vehicles.

And it was winter. And the air conditioning was on - to keep his beer cold.

It's freezing cold outside and I'm riding with a professional alcoholic in a car with the air on. We begin driving out into the middle of nowhere New York to visit a client. My face is freezing and my blood is boiling so I finally confront my rep.

"Mike you've got to straighten yourself out. You can't keep living and selling like this. Everyone thinks you're nuts, including your customers. How can I help you out?"

He becomes quite angry and animated and tells me to mind my own business. He is selling loads of beer and doesn't need my help. In fact, he knows every single customer in upstate NY and the company needs him.

"C'mon Mike, your image is bad for the company."

He pulls the car to the side of the road and tells me that my image is bad for the company. I'm a butt-kissing, young punk who has no right to be a sales manager and a good butt-kicking would do me some good.

I stare at this 72 year old guy who is wanting to fight me.

"Get out of the car." He shouts. "Let's go!"

I'm thinking he really wants to fight and I open the door, getting a blast of air almost as "warm" as the space I was leaving.

Mike didn't get out to fight. He just flung my briefcase out the window, it opened like a bird in flight, papers flying. Then he hit the gas and

disappeared down the highway. My last image of Mike was an arm reaching to pluck a can out of the dashboard and a gravelly voice screaming, "I quit!"

I was 30 miles from the nearest town or gas station. Cell phones weren't yet in use, so I began to walk.

POSTMORTEM: Remember the old negotiating adage that your position of strength is reinforced when you're in your office, on your own grounds, with the home court advantage? It's the same issue when you have to coach another person. If you need to criticize, play at home. If you want to praise, do it anywhere and often. And dress in layers.

### **PERFECT PITCH**

Jill's Presentation is Music, Except to Her Prospect's Ears

As a rookie I once was so terrified of a prospect yelling at me, I passed out from sheer fear and intimidation. One moment I'm cowering, next the lights go out. But that was nothing compared to my first days in selling for Xerox.

The big copier company has always had the best sales training in their industry. I was excited to start my career with an organization that gave great support to its reps.

There was this one particular rule that my manager enforced: Nobody goes on a sales call alone until they have MEMORIZED their presentation, word for word.

I stayed up late at night and read my script over and over and over. During the day I would ride with other reps or my manager to experience the selling skills of Xerox pros.

I stood before my sales manager and practiced my pitch. I'd blow it and be told, "Keep working on it. See you later." One day I finally nailed it. My manager smiled and said, "Looks like you're ready to solo!"

I was as nervous today as if on a blind date (which seems to be a perfect description of most first sales calls). Standing before a businessman I began to speak. The memorized script was perfectly inscribed on my brain.

So throughout my presentation I called him "Mr. Prospect."

I felt both humiliated and stupid when I realized what I'd done.

POSTMORTEM: Jill's blunder should help you think about how you look at, and treat, your prospects. Do you respect them as individuals? You show respect by working to discover their exact needs and to address those specific needs before switching on your autopilot pitch. By contrast, do prospects view you as an individual? How do you strive to be memorable, standing out from thousands of sales animals badgering buyers each day? Your actions and attitude should be a beautiful reflection of the uniqueness of the looks and personalities on this planet.



Sick of beastly buyers and pathetic prospects? Zap 'em in a FREE video game for sales pros and entrepreneurs: *Revenge of the Reps!* <http://www.revengeofthereps.com>.

### **COLD WIND, COPS & A CAR**

John is caught rushing to a call

Welcome to winter I thought as I stood inside the Quebec airport terminal. Outside the snow was sideways from a furious wind.

My partner and I had flown in for a sales call - from the sunny south - Alabama, USA. The French gal at the Hertz counter pegged us immediately and began speaking in beautifully accented English.

I gestured over my shoulder to the weather. "Do we have to walk to the shuttle, walk to the Hertz lot, then walk outside again to our car?"

She smiled and shook her head. "Sir, we will deliver your auto right outside that door. It's a blue Ford Crown Victoria."

Five minutes later, a big blue Ford pulled up and a man jumped out and ran into the terminal. We looked at him and he nodded to us as he walked by. My partner and I looked at one another and dashed into the snow.

Thank goodness the car was running and warm. We drove out of the airport and I told my colleague to pull the map out of the glove compartment where the counter woman had said it awaited us.

Paper trash and other garbage spilled out of the glove box as it was popped open.

"This car is a dump!" I couldn't believe Hertz would give us a vehicle without cleaning it first. And then that little light went off overhead. We looked at each other and said together, "It's not our car."

I glanced into the rear view mirror and realized that someone else had come to the same conclusion. Another light was going off, a flashing light from a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) vehicle right behind us.

Well, of course we had taken that poor guy's car who nodded to us, thinking he was giving us the go ahead and get in signal while rushing in from the cold.

The RCMP were very professional throughout, doing their best to suppress their grins at our stupid mistake. And Hertz apologized for the confusion, telling us we wouldn't be charged for driving the car they intended for us - once we got it.

My lesson was that impatience can have lots of unexpected consequences.

POSTMORTEM: John, a wanted man north of the border! He's right, though. Life is getting too fast. We're always in a hurry. We cram cell phone conversations into our down time during the day. We can't even relax and enjoy television commercials anymore. Our clients and prospects want us to get quickly to the point as well. BUT, if you learn to slow down and calm down - it will increase your energy when you need it most. Be wise about managing your time, take time for yourself. You body, your mind and most importantly, your family will love you for those slowing down times.

## **PLAYING FOR PROSPECTS**

## Dan's Presentation Ignites the Attention of 3,000 People

It was the industry's biggest trade show and I was a rookie working the booth for my company.

I wanted to make a good first impression and had recommended a unique strategy to build booth traffic. Visitors received a pin with a flashing light and a number was printed on the back. Anyone who found the matching person's badge would return to the booth and both would be eligible for a selection of electronic gifts and prizes.

The idea created incredible buzz. Every speaker mentioned it during sessions. Many joked that they felt hypnotized by all the flashing red lights in the audience.

At the event's big dinner 3,000 people filled the ball room of the Hyatt Crown Center in Kansas City. A jazz band was playing and two incredible buffet tables ran wall to wall on either side of the room. Food covered the white table cloths and decorations included festive streamers, candles and brightly polished musical instruments.

As a trumpet player who had to choose between basketball or band in college, I had long ago set aside my horn. But the temptation was too great and I grabbed a trumpet off the buffet, knelt down next to a table of my colleagues and started to play. 50 feet away, the band's drummer saw me and started to call me up on the stage. That was a bit more attention than I wanted, so I grinned, shook my head and turned back to return the horn.

I had pulled the trumpet out of a display and dragged the streamers across some of the candles. The spectacular centerpiece of brass instruments on the buffet table was now in flames. In the darkened room, the fire was actually quite beautiful. But I began beating on it with the table cloths themselves, finally extinguishing it and leaving a mass of blackened, smoking centerpiece.

And the band played on. The evening continued without interruption. Waiters rushed to the table and began cleaning up the mess. People along the buffet table began laughing and I was relieved that nothing bad had really happened. That is, until my VP of sales heard about my artistic performance.

POSTMORTEM: Yes, that was me, your Sales Horror Story speaker and trainer that pulled this stunt. What is a salesperson? Someone crying for attention? Look at me, love me, buy from me! We do have a tendency to talk too much, to take action when silence is okay. Sometimes you need to sell and shut up. We did gain clients, prospects and great exposure from that trade show. I didn't need to go beyond the call of duty and try to be the show's shining star. By the way, my VP was furious later, but I bailed myself out with plenty of business from the event. How well do you use silence to sell? Do you work hard to say nothing, at the proper times, during your presentation? State your case, get out of the way and you'll help your buyer buy better than before.

*The #1 reason sales organizations are bringing Dan Seidman in to speak: He teaches a strategy that when used brings immediate increases in sales performance. Take two recent clients for example: One achieved triple productivity during the week the strategy was employed. The other landed 500 sales and commitments to buy during that week. In other words, you get an ROI on bringing Dan in to speak to your team. Call today at 1-847-359-7860 or email [dan@salesautopsy.com](mailto:dan@salesautopsy.com).*



## **BUYER WITH BIG EARS ENDS A SALE**

Nicole's Rep Relives a Tormented Sales Childhood

I was managing a sales rep who had a serious aversion to asking for referrals. He was deathly afraid to use this strategy - the easiest way to gather new business. Even after a successful sale he would actually start to sweat if he just thought about asking.

Since a great deal of coaching is actually counseling, we dug into his past to find out what was going on here. One day something triggered a memory of this story and he wondered if this experience had anything to do with the problem...

In Tom's rookie days as a life insurance salesperson with a large firm, he had to be accompanied by his boss on all sales calls.

The very first client meeting Tom and his manager went to was with a successful female attorney. Tom watched as his boss smoothly convinced her of the need for not only personal coverage but buy/sell policies for the law firm as well. On their way out Tom's manager



asked the female attorney for some referrals and was rewarded with several highly qualified names.

The two agents didn't realize how well sound carried as they waited for the elevator in the historic, stone and marble office building. Tom's manager turned to his new agent and said, "You see Tommy, this business is so easy, it's like shootin' fish in a barrel."

Moments later the words "I heard that" echoed down the hall from the female attorney.

"Get back here!" She barked.

Tom and his manager walked into a cold room to a very heated client. The angry attorney waved their literature at them and asked for her life insurance applications and the list of referrals.

She slowly tore everything in half, then tore it again and dramatically walked to the shredder and fed their paperwork into the machine.

POSTMORTEM: What a plot: Drama with great dialogue on a sales call! And revenge to top it off! Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the ocean, new clients are reversing course and killing sales. There are lots of lessons here. Let's focus on one. How well (and often) do you ask for referrals? Your clients brag about other things they buy; cars, clothing, digital cameras. Get them to brag about the great decision they made to buy from you. Ask for referrals. It's like asking for a raise, and getting a resounding yes!

### **TRADE SHOW TRAUMA**

Bill's booth traffic comes and goes (whoa!)

Software? Not that big of a deal at a computer event. So how do we make a big splash at a trade show? We had to tie in our product - an Apple Computer based program to get the attention of the attendees.

Our company came up with a great idea to draw traffic to the booth. We decided to offer apple cider as a come on for the booth visitors.

Great tie-in to our product. Great traffic to our booth.

The first day of the show, we were all that folks talked about - no exhibitor had a busier booth than us. And the people really enjoyed the "hot" apple cider!

Apple cider is really wonderful and this was a terrific idea for many people. However, cider, especially "hot" cider, can cause some interesting gastrointestinal effects. It seemed the "evidence" settled into the carpet and cloth surfaces of our display - and refused to leave. The stink was, uh, quite distinct.

Our popularity reversed itself during the second and third days of the show. No one would go near our booth, including some of our own sales force!

What we thought was a great idea actually drove away prospects in the end.

POSTMORTEM: Bill makes a great case study in testing an idea before going public with it. But it's unlikely that you could anticipate the "explosive" results that occurred in this simple scenario. Just chalk it up to experience, buy the attendee list from the trade show, and work it hard when you get back to the office. Memorable moments, even (especially!) embarrassing ones, can help prospects realize you're a real person, too. Keep selling, eye on the prize!

## **HOW TO UNSELL A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION**

Linda Laments her Liberal Lifestyle

I was walking into a big singles party and was greeted by the host gesturing to a giant bowl of colorful condoms, "Grab a handful." That fistful of rubber was to lead to my most embarrassing moment in sales.

Senior seminars were proving so profitable no financial services pro could ignore the potential. So I began to heavily promote myself in my community. I set up, publicized and presented to seniors of all ages. My personal strategy was to go through churches. Many of them had ministries or services that focused on their growing elderly population.

The Catholic retirement home was, therefore, a great fit for a group that needed my help. A few phone calls got me to the manager and he accepted my offer to discuss this over lunch.

I selected the best restaurant in town. He showed up with his assistant for our meal. As we ate I gave my presentation to do his senior presentation.

Conversation went great, high level of interest and the meal ends in a flourish as I go to pay for it all.

I reach into my wallet, whip out my American Express Gold card and a condom flies across the table and lands in my prospect's plate of food!

The instant replay of that scene continues to video across my mind. How memorable is that impression for a conservative Catholic? Young single gal wants to help his community. Hopefully it's okay that she carries condoms with her to lunch. Oops!

POSTMORTEM: Wow, did Linda learn a lesson. Spring cleaning is not just a seasonal job. Her personal items now have a place away from the professional ones. Like a sales call, a fine meal sells itself first in its presentation on the plate. You should focus on doing the same.

## *DON'T FORGET TO VISIT THESE UNIQUE & USEFUL SITES...*



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