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A Blueprint for Sales Success

Non-Manipulative Selling, by Tony Alessandra, Phil Wexler, and Rick Barrera

For many of us, the word *salesperson* conjures up images of Willie Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* or Herb Tarlick of TV's "WKRP in Cincinnati." Yet the sales techniques of the traditional, back-slapping, "look what I can do for you" salesperson are heading for obsolescence, claim the authors of *Non-Manipulative Selling*. No longer will razzle-dazzle sales pitches, 101 ways to close a sale, and umpteen never-say-no techniques for overcoming objections cut it with today's sophisticated buyers and markets.

This hardbound volume explores the philosophy of nonmanipulative selling (NMS, as the authors call it), including strategies for building customer relationships, managing accounts, and developing greater professionalism.

Intended to be a catalyst for self-improvement for people in sales, sales management, and consulting, it is—yes—another quick read on paving the road to personal success. Yet this book is effective in that salespeople will identify readily with the concepts the three authors, who are sales professionals themselves, present through comparisons, analogies, and self-assessment techniques.

In the preface Alessandra writes that before developing the NMS approach and the first edition of the book in the mid 1970s, "Our selling techniques were fraught with tricks, innuendos, shades of gray, and psychological manipulation of our customers. . . . We decided to create another way to sell that was more consistent with our personal philosophies. . . . of treating [people] with openness, integrity, and respect."

The NMS approach differs from the traditional approach to sales in

that it is more customer service oriented. The six steps that form the basis of NMS—planning, meeting, studying, proposing, confirming, and assuring—complement the renewed focus in HRD to value and serve the needs of the customer first.

This second, revised edition has been expanded to include suggestions by salespeople "out in the trenches." Information on specific selling skills and techniques gathered from readers, programs, and seminars promoting the approach are presented here in a way that, Alessandra says, have reenergized the initial concept.

The authors present the nonmanipulative approach in an easy-to-read style, interspersing it with humor and "we've been there" insights. Conversational anecdotes, examples, and exercises make the concepts readily identifiable and transferable to real-life situations.

The authors explore the art of knowing and asking the right questions at the right time and then being able to use effective listening, observing, and feedback skills. Another important, yet often neglected, secret to sales success, they claim, is effective planning. "As a non-manipulative salesperson, you are in business for yourself. You are your immediate boss and favorite employee. Therefore, you must take an active role in planning every facet of your business, from targeting markets to promoting yourself. Planning is the only way you will achieve that success."

Non-Manipulative Selling covers a lot of ground without touching too deeply on any one subject. For all intents and purposes, however, the treatment of issues is sufficient. In the authors' own words, "the best way to tackle the information is to break it down into bite-size pieces and digest them one at a time."

Increasing sales professionalism is a key theme throughout the book. "A professional is defined not by the business he is in, but by the way he does business." The authors ask, "Of

all the salespeople you have met—from the door-to-door vacuum-cleaner peddler to the multimillion-dollar mainframe computer salesperson—what percent. . . would you classify as 'professional'?" The most typical response is less than 5 percent, the authors claim, with the remaining 95 percent only in the "mediocre" category. *Non-Manipulative Selling* illustrates how to become part of that small percentile by distinguishing the characteristics between the professional and the schmoozer and practicing behavioral change.

The chapter on "The Image of Excellence" identifies 12 specific skills that reinforce professional excellence. Although the conversational tone reads a bit like the *Dress for Success* handbook, the advice is nonetheless appropriate for the salesperson, whose success or failure so often hinges on first impressions and exterior images.

A section on developing self-management skills gives hints on avoiding procrastination, handling paperwork, and using the telephone more productively. Salespeople can achieve greater depth and breadth of knowledge for greater sales success, this book says, by heeding tips ranging from studying the policies and procedures of your company and competitors, to conscientiously reading a major city newspaper, to keeping up with the local culture, sports teams, and bestselling books.

The authors conclude with three keys to sales success: knowledge, courage, and practice. "The first will give you what you need to know in order to do what you want to do. The second will enable you to take the risks necessary to do what you want to do. The third will turn fear into familiarity, hone your skills, and increase your knowledge and courage."

If you're a "good 'ole boy" who grew up believing in hardball sales pitches, sign-on-the-line closes, and the practiced ability of turning any objection into a sales opportunity,

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Non-Manipulative Selling probably will rattle your cage. This book does not promote selling with gimmicks or false sincerity. It does promote a new way of looking at and treating customers, employees, and employers, or potential all-of-the-aboves.

Alessandra is a former marketing professor at Georgia State University; Wexler is a former vice president of marketing and sales for a burglar-alarm company in Atlanta; and Barrera is a professional speaker and sales trainer.

Training and Development is Big Business

Training and Development: A Guide for Professionals, by George S. Odiorne and Geary A. Rummler

This recently released hardcover book gives an overview of the training and development field and serves as a reference guide for HRD professionals. Its 450 pages offer extensive information on determining training needs and designing and implementing programs to serve those needs.

Novices seeking a general background of training theories and approaches as well as experienced training professionals looking to explore particular methodologies likely will refer to this book often. Although readers aren't likely to peruse these pages for leisure, they'll no doubt value the book as a complement to other HRD and training references, such as Robert Craig's *Training and Development Handbook*. The *Guide* summarizes research findings, lists advantages and disadvantages of various approaches, and gives numerous references for additional reading. It helps define the training and development field and gives a perspective on today's in-flux environment and where the field is heading.

The *Guide* is divided into five outlined sections:

- understanding the training and

development field;

- planning and designing training programs;
- learning to make classroom training sessions more effective;
- using visual and technological aids in training and development;
- evaluating and managing the HRD function.

Each section has several well-organized chapters with a number of subcategories.

In Part I, Odiorne and Rummler trace the history and development of the training field and take a look at training and development career options, the skills required, and the personal characteristics best suited for particular paths.

In Chapter 2, cost-effectiveness models, flow charts, and tables augment a discussion of the economics, accounting, and marketing of training and development. Some of the examples are cursory and may leave questions unanswered, but the authors acknowledge this possibility in their efforts to simplify complex and extensive material.

Chapter 3 explores the divergent theories of learning behavior, from classical to connective to cognitive thinking, and why it's important for trainers to have a basic knowledge. "Not all learning theorists believe that the same reasons cause behavior, and thus, when it comes time to train people (change their behavior), different theorists adhere to different kinds of explanations."

Part II of the *Guide* focuses on defining training needs, planning curriculum via a systems approach, and developing training performance goals that align with organizational goals. "High quality calls for a rigid sequence in the entire process of training. First you decide what are the right things to be doing, and then do your best to do them right. Nothing could be more fruitless, if not downright damaging, than doing with great precision and accuracy things which shouldn't have been done at all. This sequence. . . is the heart of cost effective training."

Also in this section the authors outline the steps of a performance audit, from preliminary screening to evaluation, and compare four approaches for determining training needs: performance analysis, task analysis, competency studies, and training needs studies.

The third major section of the book takes trainers from lesson planning to hands-on training sessions and shows how to turn experiences into real learning. Beginning with a quote from the Talmud—"It's better to know nothing than to learn nothing"—the authors discuss topics that can increase learning abilities, such as negotiation, communication, job enrichment, action training, and team building. Chapter 11 illustrates the use of case studies and management games for more effective training as well as the vital role of feedback.

Part IV gives a general overview of the old-fashioned kind of visual aids—handouts, overhead projectors, chalkboards, and so on. This section won't be too helpful for high-tech trainers, but it may serve the purposes of small training departments and budgets. Chapter 12 includes a valuable list of visual-aids suppliers and their addresses. Chapters 13 and 14 touch on training and development in the electronic age, including the development of video- and computer-based training, but, again, the chapter is too general to be of much assistance to the high-tech trainer.

The final section deals with evaluating training programs, managing the training function, and developing a management career. This section will be valuable for the novice looking to develop a management career—from discussions on the kind of person who pursues a management career, to the value of mentoring relationships, to the best higher education programs at U.S. companies and universities. Chapter 18 probes "new frontiers" in training and development, such as learning through adventure and wilderness experiences, "New Wave" and

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"brain" training, and Ayn Rand-like subjectivist approaches to training.

The two authors bring extensive experience and knowledge to the subjects covered in *Training and Development: A Guide for Professionals*. Odiorne is a professor of management at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. He also has held positions as professor and dean of the School of Business Administration at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and professor and dean of the College of Business at the University of Utah. He directed the Bureau of Industrial Relations at the University of Michigan and taught management and economics at Rutgers and New York universities. He is the author of 23 books and more than 300 articles on HRD

issues and holds an MBA and a PhD from New York University.

Rummler is a partner in The Rummler-Brache Group, a research and consulting group specializing in the design and development of organization performance systems. Prior to founding his firm, Rummler served as president of the Kepner-Tregoe Strategy Group, cofounder of Praxis Corporation, and director of the University of Michigan's Center for Programmed Learning for Business. Rummler is a well-published author on labor relations and instructional and performance technologies. He earned his MBA and PhD from the University of Michigan.

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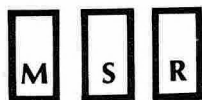


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