

By VINCE ALFONSO

A couple of months ago, I told you about the most fantastic salesman I have ever met — except for my Dad, Vince Sr., of course. His name is Tom Tomacello. In that article, I told you how Tom made customers feel acknowledged, valued and appreciated. Well, today you get some details from "The Fundamentals of Salespersonship and Marketing

Time for a refresher course in salesmanship

101" with Tom Tomacello.

"First and foremost, you never, I repeat, never say 'May I help you?' to a customer."

"Why?" I asked.

"It's simple," Tom replied, "They can say no! Then what do you do?"

Tom handled it this way. He always introduced himself and

then complimented the customer either about their hair, tan, eye color, beard, shirt, slacks, skirt, shoes, hat, etc.

He would walk out from behind the counter (something unheard of in golf shops of the 1970s), extend his hand and flash his broad smile. The greeting would go something like this:

"Hi, I'm Tom Tomacello. I don't believe we've met."

The customer always gladly shook Tom's hand and always gave their name to Tom in return. He would repeat their name, obviously seeking their approval of his pronunciation, and often times, he would ask for the spelling. Immediately fol-

lowing the "Name Game" Tom would compliment them.

Now, don't get the wrong idea. Tom never came off like some bogus "flim-flam" man. His compliments were genuine and insightful and, of course, different for each customer.

Lesson No. 1: People love to be acknowledged. They love to hear their name. They love to hear nice things said about them. Don't you?

Tom might say something as simple as, "I love that shirt! What brand is it? Is it new?"

The customer was always glad to take the compliment and answer Tom's questions. This would immediately kick off a conversation about golf shirts or apparel in general and, before long, the customer was buying a shirt. Frequently, the customer bought more than one, especially after Tom had announced his instant 10 percent-off sale on any second shirt and his 20-percent off sales on any third shirt purchased at the same time.

Lesson No. 2: You see, as the customer talks, you learn what motivates them to buy. They tell you whether they like buying sale merchandise, new arrivals, 100-percent cotton, soft collars, etc. Therefore, you are able to guide them to the appropriate place in your shop to meet their needs.

When someone asked for a sleeve of golf balls, Tom would always present them with a dozen at a special price. When I asked him why he did this, he said, "The only reason you don't sell more dozens is the simple fact that you never ask your customer to buy that way. You have got to 'Suggestive Sell' your dozens at competitive prices. That way, your customers will never have to go to a discount store again. Think about it. Why would they do that, if they could buy them at virtually the same price at the first tee?"

Lesson No. 3: The golfer has to come to the first tee via our golf shops not via the discount store.

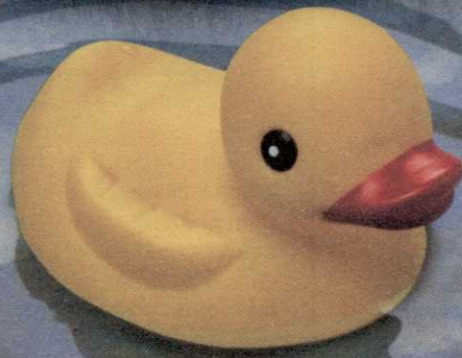
In my earlier article I told you Tom was my Pro-Shu salesman. Shoes were definitely his specialty. This guy could spot worn spikes, cracked leather, bunions and tight-fitting shoes a mile away. He would say, "If we can fit 'em, we can sell 'em."

He advocated few styles but deep size runs. And he always offered 20-percent off on a second pair exactly the same as the first pair. He would explain, "You

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Changing demographics lead owners to redesign restroom facilities

By JOHN STEELE

Every golfer who has desperately needed a restroom while on the course will appreciate Bill McGrath's 50th birthday gift to his wife, Mary Ann.

Bill commissioned the construction of a brand new, fully equipped bathroom situated near the 10th hole at Evanston Golf Club, a private club in Skokie, Ill. Bill decided on the unique gift after hearing his wife complain about the lack of restroom facilities on the venerable club's back nine.

The tudor style, skylighted building includes separate facilities for male and female members, all of whom are welcome to share in Mary Ann's birthday present.

Although unusual, Bill's gift selection calls attention to an increased need for restroom facilities at golf courses throughout the United States. The demand is being fueled by two incontrovertible demographic indicators.

John Steele is a writer with O'Connor Communications Inc., a Northbrook, Ill., public relations firm that represents Service Sanitation Inc.

One is the tremendous increase in the number of women taking up golf. According to the National Golf Foundation, 21 percent of all golfers are women and represent 38 percent of all new golfers. Understandably, a quick trip to the bushes won't do. The growing percentage of women golfers calls for a greater presence of clean, conveniently located restrooms that provide basic amenities such as sinks with running water, mirrors and proper lighting.

The other factor is that Baby Boomers, who are the fastest-growing segment of the golfing public, are, well, getting older. Invariably, one symptom of aging is that nature tends to call more frequently. According to the U. S. Bureau of Census, by the year 2000, 47 percent of the U.S. population will be 45 or older.

The rapidly shifting demographics have had an impact on Indian Lakes Resort, located in Bloomingdale, Ill. The posh resort offers additional amenities, such as restrooms, to satisfy its changing clientele. Gene Thompson, Indian Lakes superintendent, perceived the need for additional facilities as far

back as 1989.

"The majority of our business is corporate outings. Over the past decade, I've seen a dramatic increase of women executives participating in these activities," said Thompson.

During the season, Thompson leases 14 portable restrooms which are dispersed throughout the resort in areas that include both courses, picnic areas, and softball and volleyball fields. Thompson also places several of the units near a large outdoor tent which hosts special events and corporate outings.

"When most people hear 'portable restrooms' they tend to visualize those cramped plastic monoliths that are often found in construction sites," Thompson notes.

"In fact, the restrooms available today are a far cry from the portable potties of the past."

Rich Vegter, vice president of Service Sanitation, Inc., of Gary, Ind., concurs with Thompson. Service Sanitation leases and services portable restrooms to courses throughout the Midwest, including Indian Lakes.

"The portable restrooms have

improved in quality substantially over the years," said Vegter, adding, "Today's units are designed to be more modern and visually less obtrusive, with interior amenities that you would expect to find in someone's home."

The Signature Series units that Service Sanitation provides Indian Lakes boast a modern design with 20 percent more interior space, flushing tanks, sinks with running water, and paper towel and soap dispensers. The unit also includes a mirror, natural translucent lighting and even a coat hook.

Thompson finds that leasing restroom facilities is preferable to constructing permanent sites. "With the Midwestern climate, it doesn't make economic sense to incur the high cost of building permanent restrooms that are only in use for six or seven months out of the year," he said.

Service Sanitation is one of the restroom providers that maintains the washrooms on a regular basis, which saves time and labor.

"The facilities must be kept clean at all times and be serviced regularly," Thompson stated. "The public perception is that portable washrooms are dirty, so we want to be certain that we overcome that misconception."

Vegter advises that, when soliciting bids from companies providing portable restrooms, course superintendents should take the time to inspect the units. He recommends they consider the quality of service as well as the unit cost when soliciting bids.

Vegter's company offers a diverse line of restrooms ranging from the Signature Series all the way up to the Mirage, a mobile trailer that features marble sinks, air conditioning and heat, flushing toilets, large mirrors and stereo music. It is excellent for outdoor parties and events.

Salesmanship

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like 'em, they fit, you'll get more than twice the wear out of two pairs by wearing them alternately. And, besides all that, you're saving money."

They usually bought two pairs of golf shoes.

Lesson No. 4: Hire Tom Tomacello or his clone!

To some people, categorizing these simple lessons as 21st century

salespersonship and marketing would be inappropriate. But, to fail to identify these lessons for what they are — fundamental tenets of good salespersonship and marketing — would be equally inappropriate.

The fundamentals of grip, stance and posture are the bedrocks of the game of golf. Try to play the game well without them. You just can't do it.

Sales and marketing are no different. That's why I'm sure you enjoyed taking our refresher course, "The Fundamentals of Salespersonship and Marketing 101."

ACKERMAN NAMED GOLF DIRECTOR AT OHIO'S QUAIL HOLLOW

PAINESVILLE, Ohio — Danny Ackerman has been named Quail Hollow Resort & Country Club's director of golf. Ackerman will direct operations for Quail Hollow's Devlin/von Hagge Course and the newly-opened Weiskopf/Morrish Course. Prior to coming to Quail Hollow, Ackerman served 12 years with the Pinehurst Resort & Country Club in North Carolina.

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