

check the specifications of the engineering department. All the results accomplished by sharp practice in other purchasing departments are achieved by the open policy. There is a solitary clerk who files catalogues, price lists and every other scrap and information bearing on prices and deliveries, and these records are consulted in placing orders. The company's reputation for square dealing and progressiveness, on the other hand, brings to the supply department from outside everything in the shape of improved material, unusual discounts and favorable rates of delivery. If a manufacturer is pressed for money and willing to offer favorable concessions to keep his plant running, this company is naturally his first resource. He comes to its supply department in frankness, knowing that its head will not take petty advantages of him while he is working under difficulties.

No amount of sharp practice in screwing down prices or manoeuvring for discounts could ever have effected for this company the economies that have been brought about by the one item of intelligent interchange of information between its own departments.

This exchange of information is now reduced to a routine system taken care of to a large extent by forms and reports. But it originally grew out of the supply man's prime qualities as a "mixer." The engineers, the construction men, the clerical and financial departments, the men who operate the plant, formerly worked in blind disregard of one another. Some ran on stocks of supplies that were too slender, while others were overstocked. Some failed to anticipate important improvements in apparatus, and were caught one fine morning with a lot of obsolete stuff. Others put too firm faith in some new device that lacked permanent worth, and built too much of it into the plant. All purchased supplies on their own account, from time to time, because they assumed that they could do it to better advantage than the supply man. These purchases were fairly certain to be made with the idea that a low price is the chief thing, and so the quality was inferior or the delivery slow. But the supply man has changed all that. Practically every purchase, large or small, is to-day made through his department, because he has impressed upon other departments the value of co-operation; and, finding co-operation excellent inside his own organization, he saw no reason why it should not also be beneficial outside as well.

Selling is all positive and affirmative, and because it is so many purchasers assume that buying should be just the opposite. Because one is aggressive, it is supposed that the other must be negative and defensive. Never a salesman walked in shoe leather, however, who was more affirmative than this purchasing agent, and he holds that it is contrary to the principles of true buying to think for a moment that the purchaser must ever resort to smallness or trickery or secrecy. Frankness of speech, liberality of spirit, truthfulness of utterance are the only weapons needed in a successful purchase, he maintains. Press price too hard here, and it is certain as Fate that the seller will find compensation in some more vital essential.

### Reading Him the Riot Act

Although a soft tongue may often turn away wrath, smooth words do not always win for a salesman a large order. In fact, efforts to conciliate a grouchy buyer by smiles and pleasantries are not always crowned with success as the experience of numerous salesmen proves. Sometimes it is necessary to read the riot act to the buyer to force him out of his shell. This method of gaining a profitable audience is effectual at times when dealing with the periodical grouch, as the following incident will show.

While on one of my recent trips I called upon one of these grouchy specimens, who was the head of a medium-sized firm. He had never bought a dollar's worth of goods from our house and I had come this time determined to find out definitely the reason for his refusal to turn a trial order my way.

By the sheerest good luck I managed to break into his private office, and there we had our pitched battle of words after I had bowed a good morning and asked him point blank for an order to bring the matter quickly to a head.

"I am not looking at goods this morning," he growled, "and furthermore, your concern never seems to carry anything we want, so don't trouble yourself to take out your samples."

He was not the kind to be smoothed over with a soft answer and I resolved to read him a few rules.

"Now, Mr. Scott," I came back, "what kind of consideration is this to accord to the salesman of a reputable firm? You are the employer of a large force of salesmen who go out into the business world daily to meet men whose time is just as valuable as yours."

"How would you relish having one of them treated in this fashion? Even a live salesman does not mind being turned down occasionally for good and sufficient reasons, but he does resent discourtesy as you have shown this morning. I can see no excuse for it whatever."

"You want your representatives to be treated with common decency at least. Put yourself in the salesman's place. Then ask yourself how you would like to be out on the road and meet such a frost as was just visited on me."

Instead of going into a rage, the man changed front entirely after this volley. He smiled rather sheepishly, admitted he was at fault and pleaded ill-health as an excuse. He ended by giving me a \$200 order, and on all my visits since has received me very cordially, never once refusing to listen to my selling talk.—System.

### Anxious to Understand

Ironmonger (to customer, just entering): "Good morning, sir."

Customer: "I want one of those things that you fasten on a door to make it shut itself."

Ironmonger: "Oh, yes; an automatic door-closer?"

Customer: "That's it; and not too high-priced."

Ironmonger: "Yes, sir; a cheap automatic door-closer."

Customer: "And not too complicated, either."

Ironmonger: "I understand. You want an automatic door-closer of simple design and small cost?"

Customer: "Exactly. But not one of those confounded things that slam the doors to with a bang."

Ironmonger: "That would be a nuisance, of course. You want an automatic door-closer of simple design, small cost, and with an easy spring?"

Customer: "That's right. But I don't want it to close the door too slowly, either."

Ironmonger: "Briefly, what you are looking for is an automatic door-closer of simple design and small cost, that is neither too slow nor too fast?"

Customer: "That's all right. And, besides, it mustn't be like some I have seen, where a man needs the strength of an ox to open the door."

Ironmonger: "Now, let us understand each other. You want to buy an automatic door-closer, simple, cheap, neither too slow nor too fast, and easily operated?"

Customer: "Correct. Show me one."

Ironmonger: "I'm very sorry, sir, but I don't deal in automatic door-closers."