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THE MOTOR DEALER REPORT FROM AUSWILD & CO
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IMPORTANT SALES LESSONS FROM THE PAST

In the past 50 years of working with both sales and service professionals to build customer satisfaction and maximise automotive dealership profits, **Richard F Libin** says that there are several lessons that keep re-surfacing. These are the foundation of good sales and good business – yet many lose sight of these lessons as they race to find the proverbial silver bullet.

The 14 important lessons are:

1. The red-carpet treatment. This means you treat a customer exactly like you would treat a guest in your home. You'd greet them, invite them in, offer refreshments, develop your relationship and engage in conversation. When you treat customers right, it makes your job easier. And, it helps you make sure customers get what they are looking for, including someone they trust.

2. Cultivate clients, not customers. It's not enough to provide good service only when you have the time. It must be delivered consistently and over time. Customers can go anywhere; loyal clients come back to you.

3. A salesperson's job is not to sell. Many salespeople may take exception to this statement. Yet, it's a core truth of the sales profession. So, what is a salesperson's job? It is to help customers find the exact product or service that meets their needs, wants and desires, and, in doing so, make sure their experience is positive. To achieve this, three things must happen. Sales and service people must be 100% present with a single-minded focus on each customer. They must ask the right questions, actively listen, learn, and understand problems from their customers' points of view so they can guide their selection. Finally, they must help customers fall in love with the product or service by showing how it improves their lives – either personally or professionally.

4. "Now." In sales, there is only one true definition of "now." It's when the customer is ready to buy, not when you are ready to sell. For most consumers, no matter how hard the push is to buy now, they won't if it is not the right product. If customers are planning to buy, they will – when they are ready.

They'll purchase when they've been given enough time to consider options and given enough information to determine the best choice. Respect their desire to decide on their timeline. When they are ready, it's "now" time.

5. Change your vocabulary. There are words that need to be eliminated. These include "no," "don't," "won't," "can't" and "would you, if I?"

6. The customer is more informed. Fifty years ago, car shoppers were limited in how much information they could get about a product. The internet has changed all that. Customers are more informed than ever. They research not only a product or service, but the company they plan to do business with.

Before they even arrive, their knowledge includes your inventory, costs, what manufacturers will build, what's in and what's obsolete. Salespeople need to know the product. They must embrace this and focus on creating an exceptional customer experience.

7. Change. It's going to happen. Keep up with it. Otherwise you risk becoming a dinosaur – out of touch and more importantly, outdated.

8. Be accountable. Accountability is powerful in both work and personal life. When you are accountable, your self-esteem grows and you find greater success. You earn the respect, gratitude and loyalty of your customers, colleagues and employers. Would you rather work with someone who is accountable or someone who is always blaming others?

9. Communicate. There are two important parts to communication: listening and conveying information. A salesperson should do both, attentively and effectively. This applies to both customers and colleagues.

10. Ensure comprehension. Comprehension occurs when there is full and accurate understanding of what is being communicated and why it matters. Salespeople must communicate the benefit to their customers and demonstrate how a product meets their needs, wants and desires. Do not assume customers understand. Ask questions to make sure they do. If they don't, adjust the way you communicate.

11. Be consistent. When salespeople are educated on processes and apply them with every customer, they deliver excellence.

12. Train, educate and learn. Commit to developing yourself. No one is going to do it for you. Never stop learning. Every time you get the opportunity, take it, no matter how big or small, if it's free or costs money, if you earn certification credits or not. You may hear the same things over and over, but even if you learn one thing, it's worth it. Don't discount experience. It is the best teacher. That said, the person who stops training to save money, is like the person who stops the clock to save time.

13. You are a product adviser. In the past 50 years, the salesperson's role has evolved. Customers turn to salespeople for accurate and instant information and rely on their expertise. As such, it is imperative for salespeople to have an in-depth knowledge about what they sell.

14. Embrace Change. If you don't, someone else will.

Richard F Libin is the president of Automotive Profit Builders, a firm working with sales and service professionals to build customer satisfaction and maximise gross profits through personnel development and technology. He has authored two books, "Who Knew?" and "Who Stopped the Sale?" He can be reached at rlibin@apb.cc or www.apb.cc.

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CONGRATULATIONS go to **Peter Roberts** of OG Roberts & Co, Mount Gambier who was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the recent AADA Chairman's Dinner in Sydney. The award was presented to Peter in recognition of his 50+ years of service to the automotive retail industry. We at **Auswild** are delighted and proud to have been associated with Peter on this remarkable journey. Well done and well deserved, Peter!

For additional information, please contact your
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