

## A RESUME OF THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONALISM

1. A professional seeks knowledge all his life. He has to keep up-to-date on his reading and training. Many avenues are open to him: formal education, seminars, training courses, trade shows, business publications, procedure manuals, lectures, demonstrations, sales meetings, etc.
2. A professional has served his full apprenticeship. He has a firm grasp of the basics and has grown through experience. In business as in babyhood, you have to crawl before you can walk, learn to walk before you can run.
3. A professional has specialized capabilities. He recognizes the things he does well, the skills he has developed, the particular tasks that challenge him and use what he has to offer. He is an authority on his own industry—and the expert on every phase of his own products.
4. A professional sets his standards through his fellow professionals. He associates with others engaged in the same field, talks shop, exchanges ideas. If he has one idea and someone has another, by swapping they will each have two ideas.
5. A professional contributes to the welfare of mankind. What he accomplishes is bigger than his own ambitions, contributes to the scheme of life, and does something to make this world a little bit better.

## THE NEED TO INTERN



No one is a born salesman. He becomes a professional, as does a doctor, only after a period of internship. He learns by training, by leadership, by clinical experience, how to open a sales presentation, how to overcome objections, how to ask for the order—all the procedures that lead to good sales results are learned only by a period of internship.

Make the most of this, the second key to the principles of professionalism in sales. Remind your audience that what they may have thought of as instinctive or simply experience, is in truth internship, and can be described by no other word.

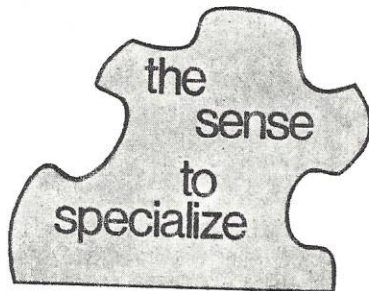
When a beginner salesman, or even a veteran who is changing jobs and product line, goes out on sales calls with the district manager or sales team leader, he is interning, just as the young medical intern follows the staff physician on his hospital rounds.

A salesman interns when he hears a company's sales presentation; and practices it in role-playing training sessions, or at home on his long-suffering family.

A senior physician may renew his intern's role when he takes part in a clinic demonstration of a new treatment or a new surgical technique. Similarly, a salesman resumes his internship whenever his company introduces a new product or a new sales program.

Thus, internship for the professional salesman is, like that of the medical intern, a structured experience. It is more a responsibility of the medical college and the hospital to provide internship for the young doctor, the same way that a company is responsible for the original training and retraining of its salesmen. Nevertheless, the need to intern is a sound and necessary principle of salesmanship. Without this step, professionalism cannot be achieved.

## THE SENSE TO SPECIALIZE



On this principle, the meeting leader gets a chance to emphasize something which most salesmen—while they may be aware of it—at least do not carry at the top levels of their awareness. Yet it is a most important principle of professionalism.

The vast majority of salesmen today are specialists—whether they are aware of it or not. Every product is different, and every service is conducted and merchandised in a different way. Companies are different, too; even in the most conservative and old-line industries, one company differs from another in appreciable ways—ways which make a difference to their salesmen. As Tom Lockwood puts it in the movie, at the moment when he becomes aware of the principle:

“Of course! Every salesman gets specialized training in his company, in his industry, and in the products he sells. If you change jobs, no matter how good a salesman you are, you have to become a specialist in that company.”

But the salesman in search of true professionalism must pursue specialization down many byways. There are, as you know, specialties within specialties. A salesman for a commercial film product or service must not only know his company and its products, but he must also know something about electronic videotape as a competitor in some markets. He must know it more than casually, so that he is aware of what it can and cannot do in relation to his product or service.

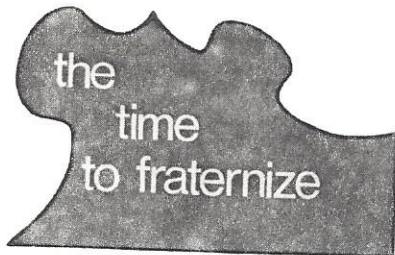
The sense to specialize becomes an ever more important principle of professionalism as our industrial society becomes increasingly complex. The sales field eventually feels the impact of change—of new systems and materials and the adaptation and intertwining of old and new systems and materials. Technological changes come to entire industries with bewildering speed these days, and only the salesman who keeps abreast or perhaps just a little ahead of these changes will be able to take full advantage of the situation.

There are many analogies from other professions. A lawyer is a professional the moment he passes a state bar examination. He may have been laying the foundation of his specialization, however, in law school, where he majored in corporate law. Further specialization of his knowledge and talents may occur when he joins the legal staff of a railroad. At that point, according to the needs of his employer, he may begin to specialize further into such inner specialties as property law, zoning ordinances, real estate, or workmen's compensation.

The meeting leader, from his own experience and his contact knowledge of other fields, can find many ways to illustrate this principle of professionalism—“the sense to specialize.”



## THE TIME TO FRATERNIZE



The meeting leader should spend some time with that scene in the movie which Tom Lockwood and Ed Clark visit the Salesmen's Club and talk to Harry, pioneer salesman who founded the club.

This is the point being emphasized: Time to fraternize is not the same thing as attending training sessions and sales meetings; it is an entirely different aspect of professionalism.

As Harry the Pioneer put it: "You know, salesmen need to get together. Professional people seem to prefer to associate with others who share a common interest. Just as doctors fraternize with doctors, and lawyers with other lawyers, so salesmen should keep in steady contact with other salesmen.

"Selling has changed a lot in my day. But there are some things that remain the same. In my day the men who amounted to something were the ones who cared more about their customers than themselves. They knew they were helping to build a better country. You know, in many ways salesmen were the real pioneers. They've done a lot for this country."

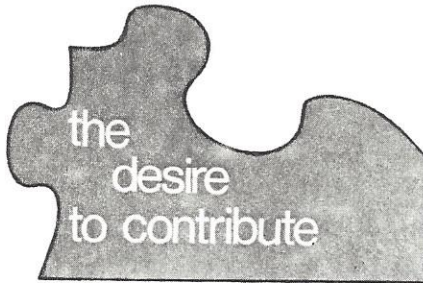
He recalled that in the early days of salesmen, before sales training was the sophisticated program it now is for most companies, fraternizing was the only way in which salesmen could learn techniques, the state of the market, and information about new products and new materials. Even before there were formal sales conventions, salesmen would stay at the same hotels on their travels, meet in the same dining rooms, and share much of their nonselling time together.

True, in this informal fraternizing they had to be as careful as they are today not to reveal competitive secrets which would be harmful to their company or their own sales performance. But within the informal give-and-take there was much to be learned—and it was noticeable that those salesmen who fraternized regularly with their peers were the most successful.

Today's salesman also sets his standards and his goals by finding the time to fraternize. He talks shop and exchanges ideas. If he has one idea and another salesman has another idea, the act of swapping ideas will leave each with two ideas.

Yes, taking the time to fraternize is a necessary and particular step on the road to professionalism in selling.

## THE DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE



This final principal—one that unifies all the others—will be a real challenge to the meeting leader, as it was to the talented professionals who made this fine film.

Make no bones about it—we all perform better when we really feel that we contribute to the betterment of others in this world.

Dedication is another word expressing the desire to contribute; and dedication is the mark of the professional in other fields. We talk about the dedication of most clergymen and doctors—the word describes their desire to contribute to the betterment of mankind. The conscientious attorney has a desire to contribute justice and fair treatment for his client.

The professional salesman also has a desire to contribute. And most of us are in a position to do so IF we practice the principles of professionalism.

In one of the most poignant scenes in *The Professional*, Tom Lockwood's small son Mike raises the question in the direct way that young kids do in real life when he asks:

"Dad, being a salesman is a good thing, isn't it? I mean, you really help people. You really help them, don't you? And it's because you like them." And Tom replies:

"Let's say it's because I think they need me. That's very important, son, to be needed."

Mike raised the question about his father's work, but Tom didn't really answer it until several scenes later when he concludes:

"That's it. That's it. A professional is someone who knows he is doing some good in the world. What he accomplishes has to be bigger than his own ambitions. He has to feel that his life counts for something."

Again, the meeting leader can, with a little thought, come up with some good examples of how the desire to contribute has helped a salesman's customers and his company. Again, it can be said that with the increasing complexity of the business world, opportunities to be of service to the company, to customers, and to fellow salesmen increase. Given the desire to contribute, the professional salesmen will find the opportunities to be of service without too much difficulty.

The professional salesman is a proud man. He is proud of his profession, proud of his company and its products, and proud because he knows he is contributing to make ours a better world.

There can be no truer mark of the professional salesman than the practice of this fifth and final principle.