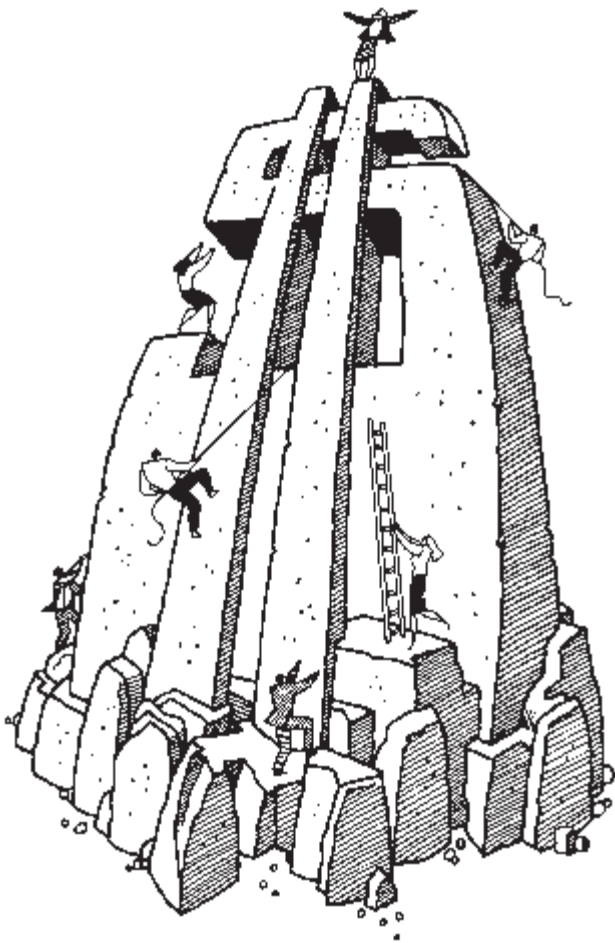

The Sales Process

by B. DEAN BAUM



The process of a sale can be likened to climbing a cliff. There are many levels to traverse and outcroppings to skirt; and occasionally you come to a plateau. Sometimes the customer may toss you a rope and help you along, other times he may toss a rock to see if he can dislodge you. You may even fall and have to try to start over again. If successful, the customer finally gives you a hand and “up you are!” If seen from far off, some of these efforts may seem trivial, some may even go unnoticed, but without sales climbers, no one gets to the top anywhere. The sales process is central to the growth of all dynamic enterprise.

In today’s competitive world, faced with many “outcroppings,” the above analogy is especially appropriate. Sales professionals must keep up their energy and effort, not be content to rest at any level, and must continue to the top. I have noticed that too many have the tendency to stop at the first toss of a rock by the customer, when they might be able to find a way to skirt that obstruction and still climb to the top.

The climber needs proper support. That might be likened to an observer on top of the cliff seeing that the climber has something on his back that he is bringing to the observer. That might cause the

observer to toss the climber a rope and even help his ascent. So, you the provider, the manufacturer, are you the type of observer who supports your vital agents in the field? Do they have first-class technical, advertising and promotional materials to advance your cause? Do you give them quick quotation response? Do you provide them a quality product at a competitive cost? All these things add to the climber’s bag and his appeal to the customer, allowing him to climb to the top and win the sale.

As the manufacturer, you need to keep the lines of supply or communication open and know the situation in the field. Be aware of how long it will be before another order is ready to be placed. Ask yourself if you’ve provided a good proposal and prompt quotation, and if you’ve provided a quality sample of your goods. Is your “climber” fully trained? Make sure you’ve offered your salesperson field support, and perhaps even personal support in the field. Pay attention to the situation on top of the mountain. Are there clouds on the horizon? Is the customer tossing rocks or ropes?

It is essential to a growing enterprise in a competitive world market today to be fully aware of the importance of the sales climber to the growth of his en-

terprise, and to fully support his field of climbers.

Conversely, you the sales professional, are you a climber who possesses all the tools needed to scale the sales cliff? How do you handle the objections and questions you will surely face? How do you get around the blocks thrown up by the account? Have you really prepared for the climb? Do you really know the route that is required for the sale?

It is essential that the climber be fully prepared, supported and motivated if both the sales professional, and the manufacturer, are going to “win the top.” □

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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