

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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## Editor's Message



### What Are You Selling? by Daniel Holland

*"The human body has two ears and one mouth. To be good at persuading or selling, you must learn to use those natural devices in proportion. Listen twice as much as you talk and you'll succeed in persuading others nearly every time." —Tom Hopkins*

How long have you been in sales? Many of you are saying to yourselves "I'm not in sales." Think about it with me as you read the rest of this column and the articles in this issue.

What is selling? I believe that selling is any activity for the purpose of interesting another person in trading with you. All of us trade all day, every day. Sometimes we trade because another person convinces us that the trade would be in our best interest, and sometimes the trade is our idea and we convince the other person that the trade would be in their best interest. When we are the party pushing the trade, we are selling.

Let's look at why a person would want to trade with us and some of the factors that might influence their desire to trade. People trade for reasons that I place into three categories as follows:

1. They want what you have and believe you will trade more fairly than any other alternative.
2. They cannot get what you have from any other source.
3. They are in the habit of trading with you and believe that seeking out another source is not worth their time or effort.

If your customer fits into category two or category three, look out! They may be prime candidates for your competition to take away from you. You need to focus your effort on moving them into category number one.

Let me bring you back into the subject if you are not convinced you are in sales. If you work for someone, they are your customer. What category are they in? Make certain your boss is happy in trading with you. If they are not completely satisfied, they might find an alternative.

How do you go about getting and keeping trading partners in category one? I believe two things must be accomplished:

1. Make certain the customer needs what you have and educate them about their need.

2. Get them to trust that you will provide what they need fairly.

I suppose the first task could be called “marketing” and the latter task “sales.” However, note that while marketing can sometimes be accomplished by the sales department alone, getting and keeping the customers’ trust requires the work of everybody!

If you weren’t “in sales” before you read this, I hope you are now.

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