



Giving Some Back

When I first started in this business, I was employed as as Territory Manager for Olympic Stain, which at that point was owned by the Clorox Company. They trained me well on technical knowledge, on salesmanship, time management, and of course closing the sale. This was not my first sales job and my previous employer in the pharmaceutical industry was equally as big on training and put a large amount of time and effort into, frankly speaking, turning those of us who worked for them into 'selling machines.'

I and my peers were set free on you unsuspecting retailers with secret weapons of mass persuasion. Our job was to thrust upon you products and services that our employers wanted you to possess in your stores. Some of us hot shot salesmen and women were better than others. I was (and hopefully still am) pretty good at our assigned tasks.

I was most fortunate to call on some of the most special retailers on this earth. My customers taught me lessons in life that far outperformed the products that I sold them. I quickly learned the most important sales lesson, which is that the needs of my customer far exceed anything else. Keeping that in mind, I always tried to place myself in their shoes when 'selling' something. That is the only way to get a sense of what your customers' needs are when you are making

your presentation to them.

My customers, or should I say my company's customers gave me back a great gift . I am sure that not all of my customers loved or even liked me, but trusted and respected me and understood that I was there to help them make more money and to succeed. That was and still is my ultimate goal in making a sale. For their success yielded my success and the success of my company.

Let me tell you about one of men that I was lucky enough to meet and over the years, was able to call a friend.

Joe Rossi, the founder of Rossi Decorating Centers passed away last year. He started his business after serving our country in World War II. His dad, Louis Rossi was an artistic high-end painter who started his career in the early 1900s. You could say it is in the Rossi's' blood, for two of his sons, Louis and Bernard, carry on the proud name and tradition. Louis's two sons, Matt and Mike, work in the business as well, another generation of gentlemen.

Joe Rossi is in Orange, New Jersey, a working class area with a lot of ethnic flair. I have stood in his store and heard Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, maybe some Greek, and heaven only knows what other languages were going back and forth over

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that paint counter. I have to believe that if some people came into their store and needed help and all they spoke was Mandarin, Louis would have had that under control.

Talk about giving back. The Rossis live it. For me personally, when I found myself being caught up in a cutback in my employment, Joe made a call and I found myself getting an interview with another company which led to an offer. Granted, I got the job with my experience and skills, but it was Joe Rossi who opened an opportunity for me. Over the years, he and his family have always given me and many other people an open door to do business with them. But Joe and his family have also given back to the community with which they have done business for over 60 years.

They've helped with time and money for local projects, such as turning lots into beautiful gardens that help elevate their neighborhood into a place that people could take pride in. They've helped fund scholarships through an organization that they help run for kids who don't have enough money to go to college. They've donated paint and supplies to local charities. They've spent time with a mother who is concerned about lead paint in her home.

I could go on and on, but at the risk of embarrassing the Rossi family. I will say that all of them are great assets to the communities they work in as well as to the members of the paint industry.

Anybody who has called on the Rossi's knows that it is not a quick stop. Louis and Bernie always seem to have a story or a joke or some fascinating event to relate. I have learned a lot about wine, dogs, artistic painting techniques, foreign countries, sports and much more from these men.

If you are ever in Central New Jersey, and are lucky enough to stop into one of their stores, just by standing around for a few minutes, you will learn a lot about paint. But you will also learn a lot about giving back. Customers want to buy from them and not just because they carry Rock Miracle products. It is because they give back to the people who buy paint from them.

Take a lesson from the Rossis; give back to your customers, to your community, to your neighborhood. You will get back much more than a sale. You will get a customer for life

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