

# inyourstore

SELL MORE › SPEND LESS › MANAGE WISELY

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## INBOOKS

ARE THESE BUSINESS BOOKS FOR YOU?

### *The Little Red Book of Selling*

DETAILS: Hardcover, 220 pages, 2004 | AMAZON.COM PRICE: \$13.96

### *The Patterson Principles of Selling*

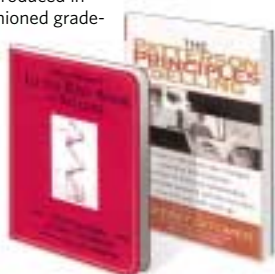
DETAILS: Hardcover, 140 pages, 2004 | AMAZON.COM PRICE: \$13.57

BOTH BY JEFFREY GITOMER

**IN A NUTSHELL:** One of our favorite business writers had himself a very busy year — releasing two books, one great and useful, the other not so much of either.

**THE KNOWLEDGE:** Good news first. Author, consultant, trainer, and one-man sales tornado, Jeffrey Gitomer's latest book *The Little Red Book of Selling* is the purest, most concentrated blast of concentrated sales knowledge from Gitomer yet. Beautifully produced in the fashion of an old-fashioned grade-school primer, the book is packed with important lessons (including absolutely priceless sections on creating an answering-machine message for your phone, as well as leaving voicemails that always get returned. Not to mention other great sections on networking, qualifying decision-makers, and "Power Questions" that lead to the sale.) While many of the techniques shared here are more directly aimed at salespeople in the business-to-business area, the fact is that anybody who sells anything will benefit from this book. As for *The Patterson Principles of Selling*, it's a mixed bag. Half intellectual exercise, half vanity project, the book is Gitomer's analysis of the sales techniques of a turn-of-the-century success story, John Patterson, head of the National Cash Register Company. In the course of the book, Gitomer tries to make connections between the core sales principles espoused by Patterson and Gitomer's own. Unfortunately, it's not as startling a realization as Gitomer thinks it is that these principles haven't changed in 100 years. Fact is, the core principles of most important things haven't changed in the past 100 years — or the past 2,000, if you think about it. (For instance, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is as applicable a formula for productive social interaction today as it was at the moment it was written. But you don't see many authors — or at least, many good ones — trumpeting that as insight.)

**OUR TAKE:** Sales historians might have some fun with *The Patterson Principles of Selling*. But for broad knowledge, specific skills, and a booster shot of enthusiasm, our advice is to go back to school with *The Little Red Book of Selling*.



O N S A L E S

## ALL ALONE



No man is an island on the sales floor, says **Shane Decker**. You need teamwork to seal the deal.

**REMEMBER GILLIGAN**, stranded on a deserted island after that "three-hour tour" went awry? But even Gilligan had friends. Imagine being on that deserted island alone — without a Ginger and Mary Ann for moral support (and va-va-voom), a Professor to help you look smart, or a Skipper to lead you. It wouldn't make for much of a television show ... and neither would it make for a positive jewelry buying experience for your customers.

And yet, I see this phenomenon everywhere I go: salespeople who are "stranded" on the selling floor, by themselves, with a customer. Or worse, there's no one there to greet the customer at all; instead, the entire sales team is congregated at the back of the store, chatting. I used to think that the number-one reason people shopped for jewelry on the Internet was price. It's not! They do it because they're sick and tired of being made to feel inferior by jewelers downtown who are snobby and won't wait on them. And even if they do get waited on, it's often by a "stranded" salesperson who seems disjointed and flighty. *Not* the kind of experience that breeds confidence and loyalty.

A stranded salesperson is

fighting uphill from the get-go. Let's say you need tweezers, or a diamond, or something else for your presentation, and there's no one there to help. You have to "tear down your stage" and lock the jewelry back in the showcase. What does this tell the customer? *That you don't trust her!* She's thinking, "What does he think I am — a crook? Why would I buy from someone who thinks I'm a crook???"

On top of that, you have to turn your back and walk away from the customer, which immediately drops your chance of closing the sale by 50%. When you return, you have to set your whole stage back up, and meanwhile the customer has gotten distracted and is thinking about her son's soccer game. You have to start all over with your presentation.

Good luck steering the Titanic.

Rule of thumb: there must be one extra person on the floor at *all* times. That way, there's always someone available to offer an "assist," and ensure that no one has to interrupt their sales presentation. Next time you or one of your co-workers needs something, you can say, "John, I need your assistance for a moment, please," or "Lisa, would you



Do you think Gilligan would have made it on the island alone? Neither will you without the help of your team on the sales floor.

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DO YOU OR DON'T YOU?

DO YOU SHOP YOUR COMPETITORS?

YES, WE DO

"I've never been a fan of 'fast-food' jewelry stores — however, they are a good source of what is selling. When I'm out shopping at the local mall I stroll through the stores there ... and not just the jewelry stores but places like Banana Republic, where new costume jewelry lines can be a great indicator of coming trends." — CASEY GALLANT, STEPHEN GALLANT JEWELERS

"I've never passed a jewelry store I didn't want to browse in. I look at the good, the bad, the ugly, the high end, and the low. I look at fixtures, displays, lighting systems. I check out the staff. I enjoy jewelry shopping. It's why I'm in the business." — TIMOTHY FLOWERS, CHARLES KOLL JEWELERS

I try to get out and shop four times a year — but if I can't I have someone in my office shop them, looking for different things each

SURVEY

For this month's question our panel answered:

YES, WE DO

23%

NO, WE DON'T

77%

TOTAL RESPONSES: 175

time. I offer them a cash incentive to spend on our merchandise if they fill out a shopping report. I am always interested in core product pricing to make sure that we are in line with every other jeweler. I also like to know about the experience as we are a superior customer service organization. — JIM BRETZEL, KESSLER'S DIAMOND CENTER

NO, WE DON'T

"I try to set the trends in my area, not follow them. My membership in IJO helps me to do this. I do

not discount the presence of my competition, I'm just not driven by them. — ULISES GARCIA, MILANO JEWELERS

"I'd love to shop my competitors but they'd recognize me. I'd love to hear the process of those who do and what it's like shopping your competitors when they know who you are. I'm sure it can be civil but I haven't gotten up the courage to try. I'd also like to hear how others handle it when they know they are being shopped. When I feel I am being shopped by an employee of a competitor I just pull back and get *blab*, (not me at all!) and wait for them to leave with as little information as possible. If they leave with a false sense of security all the better for me." — KRISTY GOODRICH-PARKE, JK JEWELERS

"We don't, but we know we should. It just seems like there aren't enough hours in the day to do everything. We should make it a priority!" — JEFF CLARK, MOLINELLI'S JEWELERS

ALONE

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mind grabbing the pendant that matches these earrings?"

Yes, the assist is a great way to increase add-on sales. If you were stranded, you'd either have to drag the customer across the floor to another showcase to see the add-on item, or interrupt your presentation to go get it ... either way, you lose. With the assist in place, you continue to make the customer comfortable and happy while your associate retrieves the additional item. And don't forget how impressed that customer will be when she sees that multiple people are working together to ensure her satisfaction. Think you might close *that* sale?

Absolutely. Eliminating interruptions during your presentation will exponentially increase your chances of closing more sales. It has been my experience that the number-one sales killer in our industry is pre-judging customers, number two is customers not getting waited on immediately, and a close number three is being waited on by a stranded salesperson. So, don't leave each other out there on that island alone.

Would Gilligan have survived for three full seasons (1964-1967) if the Skipper decided it was "every man for himself"... or would he have been "cancelled" after the first episode? Train your team to assist one another, incentivize that teamwork, and staff for it. Taking the cheap way out and understaffing only ensures your failure. Instead, give everyone a lifeline, and sail the seas of your marketplace with confidence.

Shane Decker has provided much sought-after sales training for more than 3,000 stores worldwide. He can be reached at (866) 424-2472.

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