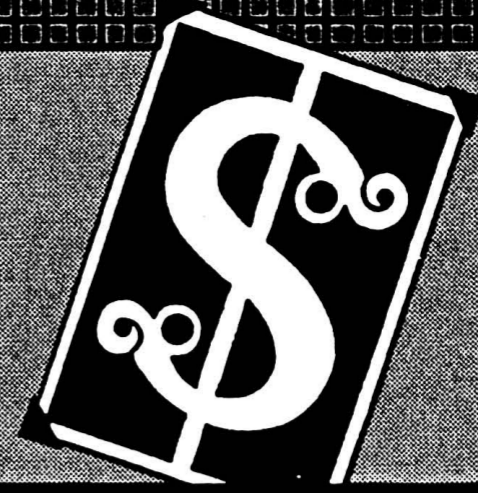


# MERCHANDISING



## If you want to sell— Then you have to see the people

"Gentlemen, after all, this business of selling narrows down to one thing—just one thing—seeing the people." So says insurance executive Walter LeMar Talbot.

"Show me any man of ordinary ability who will go out and tell his story to four or five people every day and I will show you a man who just can't help making good," Talbot believes.

And who would know more about selling than an insurance sale executive? There's probably less difference in the policies of various insurance companies than anything I know. As a result the people who do well selling insurance are the people who make sales calls, who tell their story effectively, and provide top-notch service to their clients. In fact, I know people who wouldn't switch insurance agents even if someone else gave them a lower price.

We Angus breeders can take a cue from insurance sales people to improve our own businesses. Obviously, registered Angus breeders can't spend full-time making sales calls. But it is possible through good salesmanship to develop new customers as you have the time. All it takes is the resolve to do it, and a plan.

To begin with, you need a list of good prospective customers. They can be peo-

ple who have bought Angus bulls (but not from you) or people who could use Angus bulls to improve their commercial operation. Or they can be people who might be prospective registered cattle breeders—adults or juniors. We've talked about developing lists before. But if you don't have one, that's where you start.

Second, you need a sales story. One that explains how your product will fill the needs of the prospect—how to make them more money, make their life simpler or more enjoyable, or whatever. The story must include a benefit or several benefits that will accrue to the potential customer if he buys your cattle.

A story should vary depending upon the prospect. The cattle producer who has never used Angus bulls may need more background on the benefits of Angus than the one who uses Angus bulls, but not yours. That person will need to know how your cattle, or your service, or your location can benefit him or her. And, of course, your story will be very different for the person who might be ready to buy a few Angus cows to start a registered herd.

Finally, you need a schedule. Like every good sales person call ahead and

make an appointment. When you arrive, introduce yourself, explain what your business is, and find out as much about the prospect as you can before you attempt to explain how your cattle can fill needs or provide benefits.

A writer in Agri-Marketing Magazine advised recently that as a seller you must begin where the farmer is—not where you are. "This leads to an important realization—the farmer is buying-oriented; he is not thinking of being sold. As a matter of fact the farmer does not react favorably to being sold. He wants to feel that he made the decision to buy."

So don't worry about high-pressure tactics. They wouldn't work even if you applied them. The key is to go out and tell your story, regularly, to new prospects. Experience has shown that sales are almost sure to follow. AJ

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