



SELLING Something You Do for People

If ever there was a person who had the ability to sell iceboxes to Eskimos he no longer is in demand. Successful sales people today are not the high pressure, fast talking kind, able to convince buyers to purchase products they neither want nor need.

Today's successful sales people are listeners, strategists, advisors and problem solvers, according to a study of 12 Fortune 1300 companies. High achievers in sales, the study showed, have a thorough knowledge of the client's business and the ability to offer ways to improve it. They also have excellent listening and questioning skills.

It only stands to reason. None of us like high pressure tactics. In fact, we react negatively to them. That is as true of the person who buys bulls as it is for any other customer. This fact should be good news to many an Angus breeder because most breeders are trained in production, not sales. As a result many shy away from one-on-one selling because they have a nega-

tive impression of those who practice it.

"Selling is not something you do to a person. Selling is something you do for a person. Selling isn't talking people into buying something they don't need. It is persuading them to buy something they do need," says James F. Evered in his book "Disciplines of Selling."

Evered contends that unless a person sincerely believes that the customer will be better off with your product or service you have no moral right to sell it. On the other hand, you wouldn't be ashamed to approach a farmer and sell him fire extinguishers for his shop and machinery if he didn't have any. That would be doing him a favor.

By the same token you shouldn't be hesitant to approach a commercial cattle producer to sell him registered Angus bulls that will increase his calf crop percentage, maintain or improve his pay weights, and give him a polled, black calf that will bring top market prices. That too would be doing the buyer a favor.

AgriMarketing magazine, earlier this year, asked a group of farmers what they considered when making a purchase. The farmers said that number one was the item's quality, performance or effectiveness. Number two was the service they received from the seller, and number three was price.

As one farmer in the AgriMarketing report says, "I am inclined to give my business to a supplier whose employees are sincerely interested in my operation and respect our time when we are especially busy."

So if you know how your cattle will perform in a potential customer's herd, and if you can explain how the buyer will benefit from using them, you can be a very effective sales person.

Angus breeders, from where I set, are good listeners, strategists, advisors, problem solvers, and darn nice people. This means that most every Association member has the important traits needed to be a successful Angus sales person. **AJ**

