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Training wholesale small electric appliance salesmen in the Greater Boston area

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

College of Business Administration

THESIS

TRAINING WHOLESALE SMALL ELECTRIC APPLIANCE SALESMEN IN THE GREATER BOSTON AREA

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is a study of wholesale appliance salesmen selling small electrical appliances in the greater Boston area. Many books have been written on the training of salesmen. Much attention has been given to the subject in various trade journals and magazines. Nevertheless, there appears to be a lack of well-rounded training programs among wholesale appliance distributors in the Boston area.

This study will show that in most distributor organizations, salesmen's training consists primarily of instruction on product knowledge and on demonstration methods. As this report unfolds, it will become apparent that, if salesmen are to be effective in their work, a basic well-rounded training program is needed.

A. The Importance of Wholesale Appliance Salesmen

During the past three years sales of small electrical appliances have exceeded one billion dollars annually. This merchandise was sold primarily through wholesale distributor salesmen. Exhibit A on page two illustrates the significance of small electrical appliance sales at the retail level. "This mass selling has made possible mass production - the assembly line"*.

In the year 1959 the American consumer is expected to have more spendable income than at any time in past history.

*18, p. 34

EXHIBIT A

SALES OF ELECTRICAL HOUSEWARES

RETAIL VALUE

	1956	1957	1958
Bed Coverings	$ 58,380,000	$ 57,200,000	$ 60,129,000
Blenders	16,776,000	17,267,000	15,888,000
Broilers	29,962,000	*	*
Can Openers	*	*	6,013,000
Clocks	65,812,000	54,600,000	53,000,000
Coffeemakers	98,685,000	85,100,000	79,590,000
Cooker-Fryers	22,475,000	16,445,000	7,576,000
Corn Poppers	3,168,000	2,887,000	3,421,000
Fans	245,374,000	178,362,000	144,033,000
Floor Polishers	23,862,500	29,720,000	35,525,000
Frypan-Skillets	109,495,000	98,500,000	71,062,000
Heaters	56,425,000	54,224,000	56,830,000
Heating Pads	13,179,000	12,535,000	11,994,000
Hotplates	6,042,000	5,247,000	4,850,000
Irons	110,074,500	112,739,000	86,072,000
Mixers, Food	119,332,500	97,200,000	67,322,500
Roasters	9,000,000	6,075,000	*
Sharpeners, Knife	*	3,859,000	5,591,000
Shavers	138,600,000	132,667,000	124,800,000
Toasters, Automatic	69,641,000	71,062,000	60,640,000
Vacuum Cleaners	304,377,000	269,140,000	283,520,000
Waffle Irons - Sand. Grills	19,551,000	17,855,000	15,460,000
Total Housewares	$1,529,211,500	$1,322,684,000	$1,193,316,500

*Insignificant - not reported

Source: Electrical Merchandising - January, 1959

Market analysts point out, "in the year ahead the nation's disposable personal income is expected to reach $327 billion, and the latest figures show Americans have $260 billion in currency, bank deposits, saving and loan shares and U. S. Savings Bonds"*.

The wholesale appliance salesman enters into this economic picture because through him the American consumer can be stimulated to buy quantities of electrical appliances. Through intensive merchandising and top-caliber salesmanship the appliance salesman can help in getting some of this money back into circulation. The effect on the economy and general standard of living is obvious.

In addition, the wholesale appliance salesman plays an important part in the introduction and sale of new products, so important to our standard of living. It is through him that new and improved appliances find their way into dealers' stores and into American homes. In these days of technical and scientific advance new products are becoming increasingly important. During the past six years new products introduced by wholesale appliance salesmen have been responsible for over thirty per cent of total small electrical appliance sales at the retail level. Exhibit B on page four lists the new products introduced during the years 1951 - 1958 and graphically illustrates their significance.

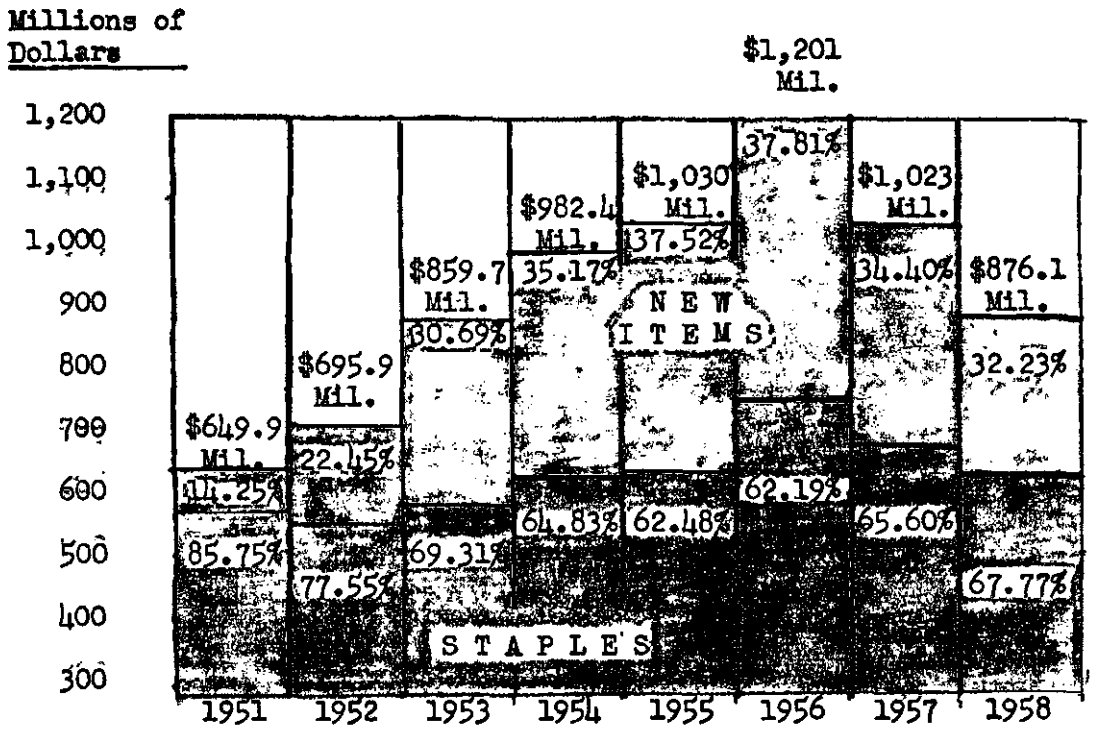
The wholesale appliance salesman plays an important part in the American economy. His importance will grow with our economy. It is through his efforts that merchandise moves into our homes. His

* 28, p. 28

EXHIBIT B

SHARE OF ELECTRIC HOUSEWARES SALES

NEW ITEMS VS STAPLES: 1951 - 1958



New Items:	Staples
Broiler-Rotisseries	Bed Coverings
Can Openers	Blenders
Cooker-Fryers	Coffee Makers
Corn Poppers	Heaters and Heating Pads
Fryer-Skillets	Hotplates
Portable Mixers	Travel and Automatic Irons
Steam Irons	Standard Mixers
Window Fans	Roasters
Hassock Fans	Shavers
Portable Fans	Toasters and Waffle Irons
Roll-About Fans	Clocks
Knife Sharpeners	Standard Type Fans

Source: Electrical Merchandising - January, 1959

salesmanship and merchandising ability are "the biggest man-made force to keep the American economy going"*. It would seem logical that anyone involved in such an important undertaking should be adequately trained for the task.

B. Contents of Training Programs

A common management error is to consider the success or failure of a salesman a reflection solely of that salesman's ability and effort. Performance is viewed, therefore, as an entirely personal contribution by the individual. The assumption is made that with untiring effort a salesman will succeed.

A growing body of evidence indicates that training plays a vital role in the salesman's success or failure. In discussing the role of the salesman at the recent New England Sales Management Conference, Donald H. McGannon, president of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, asserted**:

> One of the most important factors in successful sales is the preparedness of the salesman. The salesman who will be most successful in his organization has also learned something of marketing, advertising, public relations, research, financing, labor relations, and all the other techniques of administration.

According to a sales training specialist***:

> On-the-job training is built around the development of the four essentials which make a salesman successful: his attitude, his skills, his knowledge, and his work habits.

* 12, p. 3
** 28, p. 28
*** 22, p. 213

Each of these essential elements of training and development is vitally important. To build up a training program which ignores one or more of these essentials is to leave a weak link in the chain of good training.

Sales training alone is merely a segment of a complete training program. Each of the essential elements of a salesman's job must be studied. The training program must be built around these elements. It must be a program to increase the salesman's knowledge of many subjects. It must be a program to encourage good work habits. It is a program of personality adjustment for an important task. Sales training is only a part of a well-rounded training program.

B. Why Training Is Important Now

The importance of the wholesaler of consumer goods in the present day economy is two-fold. When his business is efficiently operated he serves not only the manufacturer, whose goods he distributes, but the retailer, the shopping place for Mr. and Mrs. Consumer. Today, however, some manufacturers have attempted to weaken or even eliminate the wholesaler by going direct to dealers. They attempt to justify this by accusing the wholesaler of failure to render essential services to retail outlets and of being unduly costly for those services rendered*. In general, it may be said that today, more than ever before in marketing history, the wholesale distributor is on trial for

* 4, p. 146

his very existence. He must justify his existence by rendering those services to manufacturers and retailers alike in such a way as to justify his place in the economic order.

Every student of marketing knows that today the entire marketing structure from the factory to the retail outlet is undergoing a drastic change. Many factories, which formerly sold through wholesale distributors, are going direct. Wholesale distributors have been forced to offer outstanding service along with competitive pricing. The result has been increased costs with decreased gross margins. In the past year one of the outstanding distributors in the Boston area closed its doors. Another leading distributor in the Boston area, interviewed in January 1959, reported gross margins at 9.6 per cent of sales in 1958 compared with 13.8 per cent of sales in 1957, a drop of almost one-third*.

The appliance salesman plays an important part in the distributor's struggle for survival. He is the wholesale distributor in the eyes of the retailer. He represents his company at every call. The success or failure of a distributor could result from the efforts of distributor salesmen. The failure to develop and train salesmen has always been costly. Poor training today could mean the success or failure of a distributor organization.

*34

D. Why the Delay

An analysis of the returns from eighteen wholesale appliance salesmen in the greater Boston area indicates that only three out of eighteen are satisfied with the training received*. The salesmen are aware of this need. Why is there a lack of basic training programs?

One factor contributing to the relative neglect of salesmen's training is the small size of the average distributor sales organization. In the survey covering wholesale appliance distributors the number of salesmen is as follows**:

Bigelow and Dowse Company	30
Milhender Distributors, Inc.	30
Allied Appliance Company	17
I. Alberts Sons	15
John S. Regal & Son, Inc.	10
G. E. Supply Company	8
Graybar Electric Company	6
George H. Wahn Company	5
Westinghouse Supply Company	4

Although wholesale distributors are an essential part of the marketing structure, when compared with factory work the sales organization is small. Because of the smallness, most sales managers are unaware of the training problem. They know their men intimately. They spend time with their salesmen in the field. They arrange for factory representatives to work with the salesmen. These trips, together with sales meetings, appear adequate for a small organization.

Another factor contributing to the relative neglect of training is the reduced profit margins. Every expense is being examined. It is difficult for a sales manager under these conditions

* 36
** 35

to obtain funds for a basic training program.

Still another factor is lack of available time. Sales managers and salesmen are both extremely busy in today's competitive market. It is not considered good business to take salesmen off the road during selling time. The sales manager finds it difficult to formulate and execute a complete training program.

Lastly, with some distributors the factor contributing to the neglect of a training program is that they are not convinced of the need for such a program. They are not convinced that the cost will be offset by increased sales and profits. Management is not convinced that training will "pay its way".

E. Procedures Used

The sample of distributors used in this project is not intended to be representative of all wholesale electric distributors in the country. Rather, this research deals with wholesale electric distributors in the greater Boston area because of the author's familiarity with these companies. Their proximity makes it convenient to contact them for interviews. In addition, in this project material and information is discussed from the standpoint of small electric household appliances because of the author's experiences in that field.

Although the listed bibliography was helpful in the preparation of this report, the primary source of material was obtained from interviews with sales managers and salesmen of distributors.

In addition, the author has spent the last twelve years as a wholesale salesman and merchandise manager with the General Electric Supply Company, a national wholesale appliance distributor with New England headquarters in Boston. In fact, it was because of the author's experiences in this field that the subject of this report seemed so important to him. His own lack of training, together with his observations of other salesmen, some successful, some not, has more than once indicated to him the importance of the entire subject of training.

In one wholesale house alone he has seen five salesmen dropped due to the change in business conditions during the past two years. Why were these five men dropped and eight others retained? Were these men less enthusiastic or less capable? Surely there was some basic reason why these particular men were removed from the payroll and eight others retained. It is possible that lack of training contributed to their dismissal.

II. DUTIES OF WHOLESALE SALESMEN

In the old days a salesman was supposed to be able to sell anything. He used the same selling tactics for all commodities. He was a famed story teller, and talked in glittering generalities. He bribed buyers with cigars, dinners and free goods. Sales training was unheard of.

According to Laird in Practical Sales Psychology*:

> It was in 1880 that business in general began to awake to the fact that salesmanship could make the difference between success, mediocrity, and failure. A new occupation began to grow - the customer-centered American salesmaker. The day of the high-pressure salesman was dying. He was being replaced by the customer-centered salesmaker who marks the birth of a new day in business.

Today high pressure selling has all but disappeared among distributor salesmen. To be successful a salesman must know his goods thoroughly and must know the services they will perform. He must know his company, its sales and service policies, and he must be their living embodiment. He must be able to inspire confidence and secure respect. He cannot sell according to the old standards and be successful. As Laird stated*:

> Selling is still in the midst of great changes. The new style is growing out of the awkward age and into full stature as a result of market research, consumer analysis, and modern sales training. It is wise today to use discretion in choosing a salesman to imitate, and also in choosing what you read about selling.

* 12, p. 34

Because of the importance of the role of the salesman in today's economy, his duties have multiplied. Although his prime purpose is to make sales for the distributor, he must know more than salesmanship to be successful. He must serve his own company and the retailer in a variety of ways.

Fred J. Borch, vice president for marketing, General Electric Company, in a recent issue of Home Furnishings Daily, called for the re-evaluation of the role of the wholesale salesman*:

> Persuading a prospect to buy is not the sole function of a salesman. An alert salesman can and must make important contributions in the areas of marketing research, product planning, service, advertising and sales promotion, sales forecasting and inventory control.

The American Management Association, in its recent Research Report Number 24, outlined the basic duties of a salesman as follows**:

1. Direct Selling Activity
2. Customer Relations - maintaining and improving the company's position with all customers
3. Product Knowledge
4. General Administration - records, credit information
5. Relations with Headquarters - reports

This report outlined in detail the many varied tasks, and revealed the complexity of the salesman's job. It pointed out that each task named involves numerous individual actions. It concluded with the statement, "Hence the need for a thorough selection and training program and for efficient supervision if the sales force is to live up to the demands made upon it**".

* 26
** 20, pp. 15-16

Robert A. Gopel, in his recent book Managing Salesmen, gave an excellent outline of what he considered to be the duties of an efficient wholesale salesman*:

1. Sales:
   Make regular calls
   Make sales presentations
   Handle questions and objections
   Check stock or inventories
   Interpret sales points of products to customers
   Estimate customers potential needs
   Emphasize quality
   Explain company policies on price, delivery, and credit
   Get the order

2. Service:
   Report product weaknesses, complaints
   Handle adjustments, returns and allowances
   Handle requests for credit
   Handle specific orders for customers
   Analyze local conditions for customer

3. Territory Management:
   Arrange route for best coverage
   Balance effort with customer against potential
   Maintain sales portfolio, samples, kits
   Execute contracts and trade acceptances

4. Sales Promotion:
   Develop new prospects and new accounts
   Distribute home office literature, catalogs, price sheets
   Make calls with customers' salesmen
   Train customer and personnel
   Present survey reports
   Take part in conventions, fairs, and meetings

5. Administrative:
   Prepare daily or weekly itineraries
   Organize field activity for minimum travel and maximum calls
   Prepare and submit special reports on trends, competition

* 10, pp. 25-26

5. Administrative: (Continued)
   Prepare and submit daily reports to home office
   Collect and submit statistical data requested by home office
   Investigate lost sales and reason for loss
   Attend sales meetings
   Build a prospect list
   Collect overdue accounts; report faulty accounts
   Collect credit information

6. Good Will:
   Counsel customers on their problems
   Maintain loyalty and respect for firm represented
   Attend local sales meetings held by customers
   Give talks to business groups

"After considering the many duties outlined, it becomes clear that few, if any, occupations offer a greater diversity"*. Modern selling requires modern training programs. As Robert S. Wilson, the former schoolteacher who became sales vice-president of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, observed**:

> The professional salesman is a man who is constantly studying to improve his efficiency. He is a man who serves both the company and the customer— his is a two-way relationship. The professional knows more about his field than the average person. That is why the recognized professions require long periods of training before one is allowed to practice. The recognized professions also require continuous and never-ending learning and studying. Modern sales training is heading salesmanship toward a professional status.

Because of the many duties of today's wholesale salesman, it appears that a salesman, to be successful, must be trained in more than salesmanship.

* 12, p. 55
** 28, p. 28

III. PERSONALITY REQUIREMENTS OF WHOLESALE SALESMEN

Any analysis of wholesale appliance salesmen would most likely take into account personality requirements or character traits necessary for successful selling. Many texts outline personality requirements or character traits necessary for successful salesmen. According to Laird in Practical Sales Psychology, certain character traits are necessary for all salesmen*:

1. Liking for people
2. Love of selling (sales drive)
3. Aggressiveness with people, but not too much
4. Average or better emotional control

Mandell, in a survey of one hundred eighty companies on the use of tests in selecting salesmen, reported the following set of basic characteristics that companies seek in salesmen**:

1. Health and energy - the man who will not become irritable or undependable because he is fatigued or in poor health.

2. Motivation - satisfaction he can obtain from the job and what kinds of achievement will meet his needs for fulfillment of his and his family's wants.

3. Tempo - characteristic pace at which he lives and works must be appropriate to the company's needs.

4. Emotional Maturity - must be dependable and free from extreme sensitivity - among others - to handle the salesman's job because of its frustrations and the frequent absence of close supervision.

* 12, pp. 70-71
** 20, pp. 21-30

5. Persuasiveness - must be able to get people, through discussion, to agree to do something or change their opinions or behavior.

6. Flexibility - must be able to change his behavior when the situation so requires - change in pace, change in points emphasized in sales talk, adaptability to a change in the product or customer.

7. Empathy - must understand the other person's emotional make-up - goes hand-in-hand with flexibility.

8. Appearance, Dress, and Bearing - must give impression of maturity, self-confidence and sincerity.

9. Mental Abilities - must have intelligence requirements of the job based on customers called on and decisions to be made.

10. Speaking Ability - must be able to state what he has to say in terms that are clear to the listener and in a way that facilitates rather than hampers listening.

11. Creativeness and Imagination - must be able to overcome successfully the many kinds of sales situations that he will meet.

12. Loyalty - must be loyal to his company.

13. Independence - must be a 'lone wolf' rather than 'team player', by nature.

This study concluded with the suggestion that since it is hopeless to look for applicants who rank high on all requirements, it is best to look at the whole man, with his strengths and weaknesses, and accept or reject on that basis. It pointed out that it is extremely dangerous to insist that a person meet minimum standards on all the qualifications named because this may lead to the hiring of mediocrities who barely squeeze through on all points but are outstanding on none.

Based on recent studies made by the author, through interviews of distributor sales managers, it is evident that distributors in the greater Boston area rely primarily upon personal interviews for the selection of wholesale salesmen. Current texts on selection of salesmen question the advisability of using personal interviews exclusively in the selection process. Studies have been made in an attempt to determine the accuracy of such interviews. It was found that interviewers varied greatly in their estimate of applicants. One such study was made in 1928 by H. L. Hollingworth. The results of this study, relative to the reliability of interviews in the selection of salesmen, are reported by Bellows in Psychology of Personnel In Business and Industry*:

> In one study, Hollingworth was interested in checking the extent of agreement between judgments of independent interviewers. After the interviewers had interviewed a number of applicants for sales positions, by their usual techniques, the applicants were ranked according to the combined judgments of the interviewers. The results are summarized as follows:

Twelve Interviewers' Rankings of Applicants For Sales Positions

Applicant	INTERVIEWERS											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	33	46	6	56	26	32	12	38	23	22	22	9
B	36	50	43	17	51	47	38	20	38	55	39	9
C	53	10	6	21	16	9	20	2	57	28	1	28

> It was found that one applicant, rated best by one interviewer, was rated by the other interviewers up to fifty-seventh place out of fifty-seven. Another was adjudged sixth, with several placing him twentieth to thirtieth position, and even one judgment for fifty-sixth position. Evidently, the agreement of the interviewers on the same applicants was none too good.

* 5, pp. 119-120

With so much disagreement among interviewers, it would seem to follow that it is unlikely there is much accuracy in selecting employees who will succeed on the job, based upon this method. It may be that there are weaknesses in the policy of hiring salesmen based primarily upon the judgment of individuals. The personal interview, although of primary importance in personnel hiring, must be supplemented by other methods of evaluation.

The use of psychological tests in selecting, developing, and evaluating sales personnel has become increasingly important in industry since World War II. Lawshe, in Principles of Personnel Testing stated*, "The recent war years have clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of personnel tests both in industry and in the military services". Current texts on psychology in industry emphasize the importance of psychological studies of individual differences. Human beings differ. They differ in their physical attributes, their abilities, their temperaments, their interests, and their attitudes. Because they differ in these personality characteristics, they naturally differ in the ways in which they perform their jobs. Psychological studies emphasize the nature and importance of these differences.

It is not the author's intention to report in detail on the use of psychological tests in the selection of salesmen. This field is so broad that a complete thesis could be written on the subject. However, the author would like briefly to describe and evaluate the types of tests in use today, since it appears that such tests are

* 14, p. 1

becoming increasingly important in the field of selection of salesmen. For those who desire to go into this subject more thoroughly, it is recommended that the bibliography at the end of this thesis be consulted for current texts on the subject of the use of psychological tests in the selection of salesmen.

One outstanding text, Principles of Personnel Testing, by Lawshe, recommended the following general types of tests for use in personnel work*:

1. Mental Ability Tests - there is a desirable mental ability range for each job classification.

2. Temperament and Personality Tests - while the term temperament is not universally defined, it is used here to denote behavior tendency, that is, the tendency of an individual to behave in characteristic ways.

3. Interest and Preference Tests - interests and preferences are factors in vocational adjustment and job success along with mental ability and temperament. Interest tests or scales are usually of one or two types: Either they are scored several times for different occupations, or the scale is scored by interest areas or components and each individual is given a profile.

One most certainly will ask, "are tests absolutely accurate?" It appears that from the standpoint of comparison with traditional employment methods of interviews, they most probably are more accurate. Any increase over the inaccuracy of traditional methods is desirable. Laird, in his book The Psychology of Selecting Men, discussed the

* 14, pp. 54-95

question of how much dependence can be placed on these tests*:

> How much dependence should be placed upon a test in employing workers? That depends to a large extent upon how valid the measure of success used in validating the test was. It depends, too, upon how high the test correlated with the criteria of success. The higher the correlation with success the more dependence can be placed upon the test scores in placing workers.

Psychological tests do not predict job success with complete accuracy. The reason for this was pointed out by Dennis in his text, Current Trends In Industrial Psychology**:

> Tests are not yet available for such traits as honesty, loyalty, integrity, ambition, initiative, motivation, and a host of other qualities which seem to characterize the successful man at any level. These must still be estimated from other evidence. We must also remind ourselves repeatedly that we can judge from the test scores what the man can do under appropriate circumstances, but we are much less confident of what he will do under the circumstances we have at hand.

The use of psychological tests in sales work is faced with a difficult problem because of the many types of sales jobs. This problem was emphasized by Lawshe in Principles of Personnel Testing***:

> The fact that there appears to be no universal general sales type is a significant one in the personnel testing field. While it is quite likely that there are job families among sales jobs as there are in other occupational areas, the practice of validating jobs on each sales situation is just as essential as is the application of the principle elsewhere. Mental ability tests may or may not be useful in a particular sales battery, and tests of the temperament and interest variety on the whole are most useful.

* 13, p. 269
** 6, p. 76
*** 14, pp. 169-170

The various quotations from recent texts on the subject of psychological tests, as indicated on preceeding pages, indicates the importance of this subject in personnel work. Tests have, in recent years, become increasingly important in all phases of personnel work, more particularly in the selection of employees.

In addition to tests, there are other factors that are important in the selection of salesmen. Bellows, in Psychology of Personnel In Business and Industry, called these "non-test predictors"*. He pointed out that there are other important factors of job success that are not covered by tests, and are often overlooked: age, years of education, number of dependents, and expressed preference for a job, are some of these factors. These sometimes can be used with profit by themselves, or in conjunction with tests, to increase the effectiveness of a selection system.

It appears that psychological tests, therefore, are merely a part of a complete program for the scientific selection of salesmen. Other measurements, as outlined above, should be considered in such a program.

A program for the scientific selection of salesmen, based on the various psychological factors involved, was summed up in The Handbook of Applied Psychology, and concluded with the following recommendations**:

* 5, p. 159
** 9, p. 215

1. A fairly complete application blank which can be definitely scored for predictive value of success and failure.

2. An interest analysis which, not only can predict better than chance success or failure, but also may prove an opening wedge to an intensive interview.

3. An interview which is outlined, directed, and recorded, and which forms a reference for future consideration and sells the job to the individual.

4. A combination of all of these factors into a composite whole from which the selection is made.

It is apparent, from the preceeding quotations, that much work is being done at present in the broad field of industrial psychology. Yet, the field is still in its pioneering stage. Dr. Verne Steward, personnel psychologist of South Gate, California, stated*:

> I am sure you will agree that much progress has been made in improving sales personnel selection and related jobs in recent years. Perhaps we can agree also that we are still in the pioneering stage of a new field of work and that there are good grounds for differences of opinion on many issues.

"Industrial psychology today is an emerging rather than a firmly established field". "Yet, in view of the recent developments we believe the time has come when we can expect striking and substantial advances in industrial psychology"**.

How can these psychological studies be applied to the selection of distributor salesmen? First, it is important to remember that

* 24, pp. 70-71
** 6, p. 1

each distributor will most likely require certain personality traits of its own for its salesmen. These will be based on such factors as product differences, customer differences, and company differences. "These differences will determine.....the importance of technical know-how, the need for a personality which wears well compared with one which makes a good first impression, the applicability of high-pressure versus low-pressure methods, and the need for planning time and strategy"*.

The problem of proper selection of salesmen is not an easy one to solve. Perhaps the logical step would be to try to determine the most essential personality requirements for the sales job. After that, the use of psychological tests, as outlined in this Chapter, should be investigated. There should be an attempt to "look at the whole man" as Mandell's study suggests. This should help in deciding which individual meets the requirements for the job.

Scientific selection of salesmen should form the basis for a well-founded training program. Proper selection of salesmen means a training program will not likely be wasted on individuals unfit for the job because of the lack of basic personality requirements.

* 20, pp. 17-18

IV. STUDY AND EVALUATION OF TRAINING IN THE GREATER BOSTON AREA

This study is concerned with small electrical appliance distributors in the greater Boston area. In this Chapter, specific studies are made of information received from sales managers and salesmen of nine distributors in this area.

The author personally visited six distributors in the greater Boston area. Information from the remaining four distributors was received through answers to the Questionnaire for Distributors, Exhibit D, page twenty-six. A complete list of distributors surveyed is indicated in Exhibit C, page twenty-five.

Eighteen distributor salesmen were personally interviewed by the author. Data were recorded on the Questionnaire for Distributor Salesmen, Exhibit E, page twenty-seven.

In this Chapter a three-step approach will be used. First, there will be a summary and appraisal of information received from the Questionnaire for Distributors. Second, there will be a similar summary and appraisal of information received from the Questionnaire for Distributor Salesmen. Third, a summary and evaluation of the answers to both Questionnaires will be made, and conclusions drawn.

From this data, it should be possible to evaluate the distributor training programs now in effect in the greater Boston area.

EXHIBIT C

DISTRIBUTORS SURVEYED

Distributor	Principal
I. Alberts Sons, 373 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.	I. Alberts
Allied Appliance, 111 Berkley Street, Boston, Mass.	A. G. Vigneau
Bigelow and Dowse Company, 254 Second Avenue, Needham Heights, Mass.	D. Sloane
General Electric Supply Company, 145 North Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.	D. M. Roun
Graybar Electric Company, Inc., 287 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass.	E. Flaherty
Milhender Distributors, Inc., 297 Dorchester Avenue, Boston, Mass.	E. L. Milhender
Northeastern Distributors, 304 Vassar Street, Cambridge, Mass.	George Cohen
John S. Regal and Son, 26 Landsdown Street, Cambridge, Mass.	H. F. Regal
George H. Wahn, 101 High Street, Boston, Mass.	(no name)
Westinghouse Electric Supply, 95 Brookline Avenue, Boston, Mass.	P. H. Healey

EXHIBIT D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DISTRIBUTORS

NAME _____ TITLE _____

DISTRIBUTOR _____ DATE _____

1. Do you sell small electrical appliances? ____Yes ____No

2. How many wholesale salesmen do you employ? _____

3. Do you require certain educational background for salesmen? High School ____ College ____

4. Do you require any previous experience? If so, what type and length of time?

_____

_____

5. When placed in a sales position, how are these men trained?

On the job training ____ By whom? _____
Sales meetings ____
Factory visits ____
Training courses ____
Sales manuals ____
Others (explain) ____

_____

_____

_____

6. Do all salesmen receive the same basis training? ____Yes ____No

7. Are factory representatives helpful in sales training ____Yes ____No

8. Please check the subjects in which your salesmen receive training;

Salesmanship	____	Sales promotion	____
Product Knowledge	____	Advertising	____
Demonstration methods	____	Effective displays	____
Knowledge of Company	____	Training of others	____
Knowledge of Buyers	____	Route planning	____
Securing new accounts	____	Basic business procedure	____
Conducting sales meetings	____		
Consumer buying motives	____		

9. Do you encourage formal training through local schools, colleges? ____Yes ____No

10. Do you offer financial aid for such schooling? ____Yes ____No

11. Do you have a sales manual for your salesmen? ____Yes ____No

12. Have you in the last year revised your training program? ____Yes ____No

13. Are there any comments you wish to make about sales training programs?

_____

_____

(Use other side of questionnaire if necessary)

EXHIBIT E

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DISTRIBUTOR SALESMEN

NAME _____ DATE _____

DISTRIBUTOR _____

1. Do you sell small electrical appliances? ___Yes ___No

2. Approximately how many retail outlets do you call on? _____

3. What percentage do you feel you are successful with _____%

4. Types) (please check):

Hardware	___	Appliance	___	Variety Store	___	Others	___
Drug	___	Dept. Store	___	Furniture	___		
Jewelry	___	Chain Store	___	Utility	___		

5. When you started on your present job, what training did you receive:

Sales Meetings _____
On the Job Training _____
Formal training program _____
Others (explain)

_____

_____

6. Have your received training in (check)

Salesmanship	___	Sales promotion	___
Product Knowledge	___	Advertising	___
Demonstration methods	___	Effective displays	___
Knowledge of Company	___	Training of others	___
Knowledge of Buyers	___	Route planning	___
Securing new accounts	___	Basic business procedure	___
Conducting sales meetings	___		
Consumer buying motives	___		

7. Did you have any previous sales experience when you started on your present job? ___Yes ___No How many years? ___Years.

8. Do you receive training now? ___Yes ___No How? (Explain)

_____

_____

9. Are you satisfied with the training you have received? ___Yes ___No

Explain _____

_____

10. How in your opinion can the training program be improved? _____

_____

_____

(Use other side of questionnaire if necessary)

A. Summary of Data From Questionnaire for Distributors

The following is a summary of replies received from ten electrical appliance distributors in the greater Boston area:

1. Do You Sell Small Electrical Appliances

Before obtaining information relative to training programs, it was necessary that an affirmative answer be obtained to this question.

Of the ten distributors replying to the questionnaire, nine reported that they sell small electrical appliances. One distributor reported in the negative. Therefore, in the following summary the nine distributors selling small electrical appliances are included.

2. Number of Wholesale Salesmen Employed

The number of salesmen in the distributor organizations in this survey range from a high of thirty down to four:

Bigelow and Dowse Company	30
Milhender Distributors, Inc.	30
Allied Appliance Company	17
I. Alberts Sons	15
John S. Regal & Son, Inc.	10
G. E. Supply Company	8
Graybar Electric Company	6
George H. Wahn	5
Westinghouse Supply Company	4

The number of salesmen employed by a distributor organization is an important consideration in the formulation and execution

of a training program. It is reasonable to assume that a distributor with four salesmen cannot plan as extensive a training program as a distributor with thirty salesmen. This subject was mentioned on page eight of this report.

3. Educational Background Required

Eight distributors indicated that a high school education was a necessary requirement for a salesman's job. One distributor indicated no specific educational needs for its salesmen.

It is revealing to note that not one distributor required a college education for its salesmen. Yet, this is typical, not only of electrical appliance distributors, but of many other companies. In a recent study of one hundred eighty companies conducted for the American Management Association by Milton M. Mandell, the following educational requirements were reported*:

Educational Requirements for Sales Applicants	Number of Companies Reporting
Complete college education required	52
Partial college education required	31
No college education required	81
College education preferred but not required	16
Total companies surveyed	180

Almost forty-five per cent of the companies reporting in the American Management Association survey did not require a college education for sales applicants.

* 20, p. 19

Laird, in Practical Sales Psychology, pointed out the advantages of a college education for a sales trainee, however*:

> Although an uneducated person may be able to sell, experience has shown that it is easier to train a college graduate to act like a salesman than it is to train an old-style salesman to act like an educated person.

Scholastic requirements need not be rigid. College grades, according to Laird, are not indicative of the future success of sales trainees. He stated*:

> Records show that graduates who received poor grades in college become as good salesmen as those who had high grades. Apparently the significant thing for success is not how good a student the salesman was, but how long he has been exposed to education.

Distributors in the greater Boston area do not require a college education for their salesmen. This subject is treated in this report in Chapter VIII - "Training Aids".

4. Previous Experience Required

The replies to this question indicated considerable diversification in experience requirements for sales applicants among distributors. The distributors reporting listed their requirements thusly:

No previous experience required. . . .	3
Previous experience helpful but not required	2
One to three years office and warehouse training required.	2
One to two years sales experience in related field.	2
Replies	9

*12, p. 12

Mandell pointed out in his survey on the educational requirements for salesmen that "some companies will accept experience as a substitute for education"*. We previously learned that not one distributor required a college education for his salesmen. We now learn that five of these distributors do not require any previous experience. Two distributors give one to three years of office and warehouse training. Two other distributors require only two years of sales experience in related fields.

It might be safely assumed from this information, that the requirements of distributors in the greater Boston area for their salesmen with regard to education and previous experience are not rigid. It is evident that this fact places emphasis on the need for distributor training programs.

5. How Are These Men Trained

The replies to this question indicated that distributor salesmen are being trained in the following manner:

Sales meetings	7
On-the-job training	6
Sales manuals	5
Factory visits	3
Training courses	3
Warehouse training	1
Office training	1

It is clear that most training is accomplished through sales meetings and on-the-job training. In interviews with distributor sales managers

* 20, p. 19

and salesmen, the author learned that sales meetings are used primarily for the presentation of product information. On-the-job training is carried on by factory representatives, sales managers, and other experienced salesmen. This training is principally in the field of salesmanship.

A variety of answers were received to the question, "who does the actual training". The following individuals were involved in distributor training work:

Sales manager	4
Factory personnel	2
Other salesmen	2
Ass't. sales manager	1
Sales training manager	1
Warehouse foreman	1
Merchandise manager	1
Sales specialists	1

The advantages of using these various individuals in a broad training program are discussed in this report in Chapter VIII - "Who Should Do The Training".

6. Basic Training Received

Question six asks, "Do all salesmen receive the same basic training?" All distributors, with the exception of one, replied that they gave the same training to all salesmen, regardless of experience, education, age, or job requirements.

The replies to this question appear to indicate a serious weakness in distributor training programs. If the training program

is based on salesmen's needs, all salesmen will not be subjected to the same training. This subject is treated in Chapter VI - "Basis for a Training Program".

7. Factory Representatives

Distributors were asked if they consider factory representatives helpful in sales training. Eight of nine sales managers replied that factory representatives were helpful in sales training.

The author, in personal interviews with six distributor sales managers, inquired regarding their use of factory representatives in sales training work. Distributor sales managers were cognizant of the fact that one of the principal duties of factory representatives is the training of sales personnel in the merchandising of their products.

The attitude of sales managers, on the whole, appeared to be that factory representatives are helpful in training work, but that there are certain drawbacks to their use in the field. First, factory representatives have a tendency to refer to their own merchandise on dealer calls, weakening the salesman's presentation. Second, since they encourage salesmen to call upon accounts interested only in their particular product, they upset the distributor salesman's regular itinerary. Third, some dealers, because of their friendship for the distributor salesman, will not give an order to a factory representative in spite of the fact that the distributor salesman is along with him.

Fourth, no factory representative, said the sales managers, is interested in calling on accounts that do not handle his product. This means that distributor salesmen waste time when calling with factory representatives because they skip important accounts. One distributor sales manager went so far as to call factory representatives a "necessary evil".

The subject of the use of factory representatives in sales training work is covered in Chapter VIII - "Methods of Training".

8. Subjects in Which Salesmen Receive Training

The replies to this question, in their order of importance, are as follows:

Product knowledge	9
Demonstration methods	6
Knowledge of company	5
Sales promotion	5
Business proceedure	5
Salesmanship	4
Knowledge of buyers	4
Securing new accounts	4
Advertising	4
Training of others	4
Route planning	4
Effective displays	3
Conducting sales meetings	2
Consumer buying motives	2

Only five of the above subjects are covered by more than half of the distributors questioned. This reveals that distributors have not included some important subjects in their training programs. The importance of these subjects is brought out in Chapter VII - "Contents of the Training Program".

9. Encouragement of Formal Training

More than half of the distributors contacted do not encourage formal training through local schools and colleges. This is not surprising when one recalls the results of the American Management Association survey of one hundred eighty companies (referred to in this report on page twenty-nine) in which only fifty-two companies required a college education for their sales applicants.

The author questioned distributor sales managers who answered in the negative on this question. He learned that some sales managers believed that salesmen had no time for studies if they were doing their jobs well. Some sales managers went on to discourage formal training by asking, "what good is all that theory - experience is what they need".

Four distributors, however, do encourage their salesmen to continue with their studies. From interviews, it appears that the sales manager has a great deal to do with the amount of encouragement the formal training receives. The size of the distributor organization has little to do with the subject. This fact is indicated in the following tabulation of the replies:

	Answer	Salesmen Employed
Bigelow and Dowse Company	No	30
I. Alberts Sons	No	15
John S. Regal & Son, Inc.	No	10
George H. Wahn	No	5
Milhender Distributors, Inc.	Yes	30
Allied Appliance Company	Yes	17
G. E. Supply Company	Yes	8
Graybar Electric Co., Inc.	Yes	6
Westinghouse Supply Company	Yes	4

Note that distributors with only a few salesmen encourage further scholastic training in schools and colleges.

The subject of further training outside the company is discussed in Chapter VIII - "Installation of The Training Program".

10. Financial Aid

Only General Electric Supply Company and Allied Appliance Company replied that financial aid is offered to salesmen for further schooling.

In both cases, financial aid is offered if prior approval is received for a course judged to be helpful in the salesman's work in the company. Both distributors require that the salesman receive a passing grade in the course before the tuition is refunded. Cost of books is borne by the student.

11. Sales Manual

In the answers to this question seven of the nine distributors replying reported the use of a sales manual. Unfortunately, there was some confusion on this question. The meaning of the word "sales manual" was not clear.

Sales manuals are discussed in detail in this report in Chapter VIII - "Installation of the Training Program". Sales manuals are defined as "a grouping of all information which the salesman should

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possess in order to sell his products". No distributor sales manager interviewed had such a manual for his salesmen. There were sales catalogs, of course, since these might be considered a necessity for any salesman. These contained product illustrations and price sheets. In no case did the author see a complete sales manual.

It may be said that no complete sales manuals are in use by distributors in the greater Boston area.

12. Revision of Training Programs

Six of the nine distributors questioned reported that they had not revised their training program in the last year.

This report brings out the necessity for a continual evaluation and revision of the training program in Chapter IX - "Evaluation of the Training Program". It highlights the fact that marketing conditions are changing rapidly - that new and improved methods of distributing products are being planned. In addition, the importance of new products in the total sales volume of electric appliances is illustrated in Exhibit B, page four.

With these current changes in methods and products, there would appear to be a need for at least an annual revision of any training program. Only two distributors interviewed, currently review their training program at least once a year for necessary changes.

13. Comments About Sales Training Programs

The last question gave the sales manager an opportunity to offer any comments he might wish to make about sales training programs in general. Only one comment was received. Douglas Sloane, general sales manager of Bigelow and Dowse Company, commented as follows:

> Most companies in our field do not give sufficient training in the items listed under question eight. We find few men today who will complete an adequate training program prior to placing them in a territory.

This distributor organization employs men for the purpose of training them for future sales jobs. Although a high school education is required, there is no standard requirement regarding previous experience. As Mr. Sloane reported to the author:

> We employ men as sales trainees who work for a period of one to three years in our warehouse, office, and inside sales.

The problem would seem to be one of covering all of the subjects under question eight, in addition to training these high school graduates in a period of one to three years. Can this be done? Laird, in his recent book, answered the question*:

> A salesman never graduates. To keep from slipping back, he must keep on studying his field, learning about new products, keeping tabs on consumer needs and tastes, and polishing his technique for getting along with customers.

* 12, p. 49

It is unfortunate that other distributor sales managers did not offer written comments regarding sales training. However, the personal interviews did bring out some of their thoughts on the subject, and these are reported throughout the thesis.

B. Summary of Data From Questionnaire For Distributor Salesmen

The following is a summary of replies received from eighteen electrical appliance distributor salesmen in the greater Boston area:

1. Do You Sell Small Electrical Appliances

Before obtaining information relative to training programs, it was necessary that affirmative answers be obtained to this question. All eighteen distributor salesmen reported in the affirmative.

2. Number of Retail Outlets

The answers to this question ranged from one hundred to two hundred accounts. The greatest number of salesmen, however, called on approximately one hundred twenty-five accounts:

Number of Accounts	Number of Salesmen
100-124	4
125-149	8
150-174	4
175-200	2

With most distributor salesmen reporting an average of one hundred twenty-five accounts, the necessity for a salesman to plan his calls is evident. For example, a salesman with this number of accounts, averaging ten calls a day, five days a week, will take almost three weeks to cover his assigned accounts. Some accounts will need more frequent calls. It is only through proper planning of sales calls that the salesmen will become proficient in the handling of these accounts.

This subject is discussed in Chapter VII - "Contents of The Training Program". Special reference is made to Exhibit G, which illustrates how the average salesman's time is spent.

3. Percentage of Success

Salesmen were asked, "what per cent of accounts do you feel you are successful with?" The answers to this question ranged from forty per cent to seventy-five per cent of accounts called on, in which the salesman believed he had met with success.

The most confident salesman of the group reported he was successful, on the average, with only three out of four accounts. This realization on the part of salesmen of their shortcomings, would seem to indicate their desire for assistance in their sales work. This assumption is further indicated by salesmen's comments on training programs in general, as reported under questionsnine and ten of this section of the report.

4. Types of Dealers

The answers to this question indicate the wide diversification of accounts for which distributor salesmen are responsible. Eighteen replies are summarized herewith:

Type of Store	Salesmen
Appliance	18
Furniture	18
Jewelry	18
Department Store	15
Hardware	15
Drug	12
Utility	9
Chain Store	8
Discount House	8
Variety Store	5

The need for flexibility and empathy with customers on the part of distributor salesmen is indicated by the replies to this question. Studies of buying motives and sales appeals, based on the needs of the various types of retail outlets, should be considered in the training program. The replies appear to point out the need for training of salesmen in many subjects if they are to be responsible for such a variety of retail outlets. This subject is covered in Chapter VII - "Contents of The Training Program".

5. Training Received

The following answers were received from salesmen relative to the type of training they received when starting on their present jobs in the distributor organization for which they are now working:

Type of Training	Salesmen
Sales meetings	16
On-the-job training	10
None	5
Office training	4
Warehouse training	1
Misc. product information	1

The replies point to the prevalence of sales meetings and on-the-job training programs in distributor organizations throughout the greater Boston area. Five of eighteen salesmen reported that they received no training when commencing their sales jobs. It appears that where training does exist, distributors are relying on sales meetings and on-the-job training for this function. The use of formal training programs does not appear to be prevalent in the greater Boston area since no salesman reported receiving any such training.

6. Subjects in Which Training Is Received

Salesmen reported receiving training in the following subjects:

Subject	Salesmen
Product knowledge	18
Securing new accounts	6
Knowledge of the company	6
Demonstration methods	5
Salesmanship	5
Conducting sales meetings	5
Basic business procedure	5
Sales promotion	4
Route planning	4
Advertising	1

Three important facts may be gleaned from the above replies. First, all salesmen received training in product knowledge, probably through sales meetings and on-the-job training. Second, training in other subjects was received by one-third or less of the salesmen. Third, although sales managers reported giving training in the following subjects, salesmen reported receiving no such training:

Subject	Distributor Questionnaire	Salesmen's Questionnaire
Knowledge of buyers	4	0
Training of others	4	0
Effective displays	3	0
Consumer buying motives	2	0

These replies seem to bear out the belief that training in distributor organizations consists primarily of one or two subjects. The basic need for training in a variety of subjects is covered in Chapter VII - "Contents of The Training Program".

7. Previous Sales Experience

Of eighteen replies received, only four salesmen reported having had previous sales experience before starting on their present jobs. The average experience of these salesmen was four years. All others had no previous sales experience. This fact appears to substantiate the replies received to question four of the Questionnaire for Distributors in which distributor sales managers reported requiring little or no previous experience for sales applicants. It indicates that the average salesman had little, if any, previous experience

when starting on his present job. The importance of this subject is discussed in the analysis of the replies to the Questionnaire for Distributors on pages thirty and thirty-one of this report.

8. Training Received Now

Fifteen salesmen reported that they are now receiving some training through sales meetings. Five reported on-the-job training. This substantiates the answers received to question five of the Questionnaire for Distributor Salesmen as reported on page forty-two of this report, in which distributor salesmen reported receiving most of their training in sales meetings and in field training. Other methods of training distributor salesmen appear to be neglected in the greater Boston area. Additional methods of training which may be employed by distributors are explained in Chapter VIII - "Installation of The Training Program".

9. Satisfaction With Training Received

Only two salesmen reported that they were satisfied with the training received. The dissatisfaction on the part of most salesmen reveals their apparent desire for a more complete training program in many subjects.

The comments relative to this question were interesting and informative. Some of the more pertinant comments are reported herewith:

> Need more help on how, when, and with whom to "give" for volume. Need help to learn to sell.
>
> Would like to attend company-conducted school.
>
> I believe that there should be a training session at least once a year, for possibly three days, and not just on product knowledge.

It is evident from statements such as these that there will be little necessity for "selling" the salesmen on a training program.

10. Improvement of Training Program

This last question gave the salesmen an opportunity to comment on how the training program might be improved. The comments were varied and interesting. Some of the more important comments are as follows:

> Need much closer cooperation between by management in all phases of the business.
>
> Need training program.
>
> There should be more initial training with each new territory taken over from previous salesmen. i.e.: personal introductions by previous salesman. This speeds up pleasant relations with the right people and helps the sometime painful process of changing salesmen. First impressions are extremely important and they are usually improved by the appearance of a mutual friend.#

This would appear to substantiate the need for training in the securing of new accounts. See Chapter VII for a discussion of this subject.

> I believe that it would be difficult to outline a program for our type of selling, because in a dual distribution set-up such as ours your selling price more than anything else is the important factor in sales.
>
> Need help of my own management in the field with problem accounts and problem products.
>
> Need assistance in the field by sales manager.
>
> Need help but not by factory representatives.

The author, after personally interviewing the eighteen salesmen replying to the Questionnaire for Distributor Salesmen, is convinced that these salesmen are cognizant of the need for complete training in all phases of their work. These salesmen, he is convinced, desire further training. The many interesting comments on this question, as indicated above, appear to substantiate this conviction. Salesmen are aware of their training needs.

C. Conclusions Resulting From Interviews and Questionnaires

After analyzing the answers to the two questionnaires and the results of personal interviews, one comes to two conclusions. First, it appears that there is a lack of planned training among distributor organizations in the greater Boston area. Second, it appears that salesmen, more than sales managers, are aware of their need for training in a variety of subjects. They want a complete training program.

It is not the intention of the author to review the questionnaires again. The results, as previously reported, are fairly obvious and speak for themselves. The replies indicate that salesmen are trained either through sales meetings or on-the-job training programs. It appears that many important subjects are neglected in the training of distributor salesmen.

Yet, when one analyzes the replies to the salesmen's questionnaire, one becomes aware of the salesmen's desire for more training. They are desirous of training in subjects other than product knowledge. Some salesmen's comments actually urge management to help them in this respect. It must be remembered that this survey indicates the average salesman started with no previous sales experience. He is now responsible for one hundred twenty-five accounts. These accounts range from small drug and hardware stores to large department stores and discount houses. It is not difficult to comprehend why an intelligent, energetic salesman would welcome any training which might help him in his complex job.

The results of this survey show a lack of complete training in the greater Boston area. They indicate the need and desire on the part of wholesale salesmen for such training. It will be the purpose of this thesis to outline a training program suitable for wholesale distributors, large or small. It is hoped that sales managers in studying the suggested subjects and methods which may be used in a training program, will be encouraged to use them. The benefits, although perhaps not immediately apparent, should more than offset the efforts of installing and maintaining such a program.

V. THE CASE FOR A TRAINING PROGRAM

A. "Born or Made" Controversy

The old belief that salesmen are born, not made, retains its vogue with some sales managers today. They believe with conviction that certain men are endowed with abilities at birth, and that sales training is a waste of time and money. Other sales executives believe that in selling, as in many activities, most individuals are successful because certain natural gifts have been conditioned and directed by proper training. "Born" salesmen may develop and exercise their gifts unconsciously, but the average salesman must do so knowingly and preferably with guidance. As Thorpe said*:

> A salesman is made, not born. A salesman may be born with many of the qualities that make him a good salesman: a liking for people, a natural effervescence, a competitive spirit, a persuasive tongue. But if a man should be born with all these qualities, he still would have to learn his trade before he could become a salesman.

Good salesmanship does not come about by chance, but by training in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits required by the job. Eastman, in Psychology of Salesmanship, had this to say about the necessity for training**:

> The art of selling may be acquired by blind imitation of other's methods of selling and by more or less haphazard methods of trial and error. The

* 18, p. 49
** 7, p. 12

> methods that succeed are adopted, without knowing why they fail or succeed. Such a process of acquiring knowledge and skill lacks the guiding light of intelligence. Even when one has gained practical success by this method, he does not know why one attempt succeeded and the other failed.

One might say, after reading the above statement from a student of salesmanship, that the old idea, "experience is the best teacher" is no longer held by training specialists. Specialists recognize that experience alone is both costly and ineffective. They do not discount the importance of actual field selling, but they know that the salesman who is forced to learn only from experience is at a distinct disadvantage in comparison with one who learns through experience plus a planned training program. As Eastman said*:

> The theory of salesmanship endeavors to bring into clear consciousness a knowledge of the 'whats' and the 'hows', the 'whys' and the 'wherefores' of the art of selling. It aims, not at a theory divorced from practice, but at a system of general principles which will furnish helpful guidance to the various practical activities of the salesman.

Star salesmen are probably born - there are geniuses in all walks of life - but they are successful because their natural gifts and abilities have been trained in the work they are to do. "Industry no longer completely accepts the myth of the 'born' salesman, but it does recognize that the most brilliant training program and advertising campaign will not compensate for inadequacies in the basic ability of the salesman"**. Certain natural gifts must be developed by proper training if a salesman is to reach his maximum accomplishment in his job.

* 7, p. 12
** 20, p. 9

B. Why Training

At one time the salesman's job was to sell the company's product and little else was expected of him. Today, however, securing an order marks the beginning of customer interest and does not insure continuing success. As Robert A. Gopel stated, in his book Managing Salesmen*:

> If a salesman can be taught to develop further customer friendship and trust by offering thoughtful service and assistance, which often can be done with little time and effort, then the interests which he has started will develop into a long and successful business relationship.

William M. Maxwell, in his book The Training of A Salesman, written almost fifty years ago, stated**:

> Salesmanship is not alone the art of making people want to buy. It is also the art of making it very difficult for them to resist buying.

Salesmen must know their products and how to demonstrate their merits to prospective buyers. They must be able to convince such buyers that their products fill certain needs. They must develop their territories and be alert to market conditions, through continuous study and planning. It is clear that salesmen must be better equipped for these tasks than nature and circumstances have provided. Training, it might be said, is of vital importance in the work of developing an effective sales organization.

* 10, p. 51
** 15, p. 15

What are the results of training? Laird reported the results of a survey made in 1950, which disclosed the effect of training on earnings of retail salespeople*:

> Statistics reported to the National Retail Dry Goods Association show the following average weekly sales by various groups of retail salespeople:
>
> | | Weekly sales |
> |---|---|
> | Untrained, and not tested for sales ability when employed | $200 |
> | Selected for sales ability, but not given sales training | 260 |
> | Selected and also trained to get along with and handle customers | 340 |

It would appear that if such results were obtained through training retail personnel, similar improvement in sales volume would be obtained by training wholesale salesmen.

The Handbook of Sales Training, published by the National Society of Sales Training Executives, goes into detail on the results of training. These are summarized as follows**:

1. Increased sales through better selling methods.
2. Reduced selling costs by averaging more sales per call.
3. Increased individual earnings resulting from more sales.
4. Reduced personnel turnover because of more successful salesmen.
5. Reduced need for supervision, since salesmen have more interest in their jobs.

* 12, p. 50
** 22, p. 28

6. Better employee morale through increased interest in salesmen by management.

7. Elimination of misfits by transferring those unable to grasp the training program to other jobs in the company.

8. Better customer relationships through more efficient and capable salesmen.

The results of good training, as outlined above are many. These results, in the final analysis, should lead to more successful salesmen. Since the success of salesmen has such an effect on the success of a distributor organization, does it not follow that training is necessary for the distributor if it is to grow and prosper? Surely, we can conclude that training should help the distributor organization to become more important to those whom it serves, the manufacturer and the retailer.

VI. BASIS FOR A TRAINING PROGRAM

A. Job Analysis

An effective sales training program must be tailor-made for the task it is to accomplish. The starting point for any training program is a careful analysis of the job that is to be done. From this a job description is written, and the sales trainer need no longer guess as to what is required of the salesmen.

Information covering the job analysis is usually based upon the following*:

1. Interviews with salesmen - such a method should reveal the salesmen's duties.

2. Observation of the salesmen in the field - the sales manager or, better still, some detached person should observe various salesmen in their daily rounds. He should be able to tell what the salesman does, how he does it, and when he does it better than the salesman himself. This should be a great help in writing the job description.

3. Interviews with executives - they should offer suggestions as to what they desire the salesmen to do.

From the job analysis, information is derived which will allow one to write a complete job description. From the job description, it is possible to analyze the qualifications required of salesmen for each sales job.

* 16, p. 38

This is a positive method of determining the training needs for a particular selling task. The job description is most helpful in many other ways in the distributor organization, some of which are as follows*:

1. Reference for selection of new salesmen.
2. Aid in placement and transfers.
3. Guide for development of individual salesmen.
4. Guide for revising sales jobs.
5. Clues for policy formulation and revision.
6. Source of information for reorganizing the sales department.

The first step, then, in deciding what the training program is to cover, is to make a complete job analysis of the salesmen's work, followed by a job description. From this information the needs of the salesmen, relative to their jobs, will be disclosed. Training should be based upon these needs.

B. Studies of Success and Failure

The studies of the causes of success and failure of salesmen who have attempted a selling task may be used to supplement the information obtained by the job analysis.

Information relative to the needs of salesmen may be obtained through discussions with experienced, successful salesmen and sales executives. These men, quite frequently, can point out desirable qualifi-

* 22, pp. 38-39

cations necessary for success in a particular selling task. From these qualifications, as from the job analysis, it is possible to base the training program on the needs of salesmen.

Another method of obtaining information relative to the needs of salesmen in a training program, is through an analysis of the causes of failures. It is possible, after a study of the reasons for failures, to determine some of the subjects which should be taught to avoid these failures. This information may be obtained through the keeping of termination records, similar to the sample Separation Report for Salesmen, Exhibit F, on pages fifty-six and fifty-seven of this report. A study of these records will reveal with some accuracy why salesmen quit their jobs or were released. Such information should furnish a fairly good index on the reasons for failure.

In a survey made in 1954 by the American Management Association, the weaknesses most frequently found in salesmen were disclosed by replies received from one hundred forty-three companies*:

	Number of companies mentioning in first place
Poor planning and organization of time and effort.	40
Lack of effort, ambition, aggressiveness, stamina, motivation	34
Failure to make sufficient calls, develop prospects and get new accounts . . .	10
Uncooperative attitude; failure to get along with colleagues and customers. .	9

* 20, p. 17

EXHIBIT F

SEPARATION REPORT FOR SALESMEN

Division
Territory

Salesman's Name _____ Manager _____

Date Employed _____ 19 ____ Selected by_____ Date____19____

Interviewer's conclusion - real reason for leaving _____

_____

_____

I understand that you are leaving. How long have you worked here?____

What are your real reasons for your resignation?_____

Why right now? _____

Did other reasons contribute? _____

Do you feel that you are better fitted for another type of work?_____

What and why? _____

How do you feel about these factors in your work:

Your initial training _____

Your field training _____

Sales meetings _____

Sales promotion materials _____

Contacts with your manager _____

Quality of products _____

Competitive position of products _____

Pricing and terms _____

Company policies _____

EXHIBIT F (CONTINUED)

Support by management _____

Reports and records _____

Deliveries _____

Service _____

Advertising _____

Compensation _____

Expense allowance _____

Did you like your manager? _____

Other department heads? _____

What did your wife and family think of your position? _____

_____

_____

Your dissatisfactions appear to come from? _____

_____

If these could be cleared would you like to continue to work for this firm? _____

Other comments: _____

_____

Interviewed by _____ Date _____

****

Source: Gopel, Robert A.: Managing Salesmen
Pleasantville, N. Y., Printers Ink Books, 1955
Pp. 49-50

	Number of companies mentioning in first place
Insufficient study of new products and applications, and failure to push them	8
Failure to conduct self properly (drinking, excessive entertaining, general irresponsibility).	7

From studies such as these, and from studies of sales jobs, certain basic training needs will be disclosed. Time and money should not be wasted on subjects which are not necessary in a particular training program. Each company must decide for itself what subjects are applicable to its peculiar needs. This can only be done after complete and detailed studies are made.

VII. CONTENTS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

Benjamin Disraeli, who for six years was Prime Minister of England, once said, "I have observed that the most successful man in any undertaking is the man who has the most information". Mere knowledge of goods is not sufficient for the wholesale appliance salesman of today, though all too few salesmen are well equipped in this direction. The salesman who is effective must teach the dealer to be a merchant. He must know how successful dealers achieve quick turnover, handle accounts, use advertising and store displays, train sales personnel, and assist the retail merchant through his knowledge of merchandising.

Salesmen, as a group, are always on the alert for new ideas. They eagerly compare experiences with one another wherever they meet. As Herbert G. Kenagy said in his book The Selection and Training of Salesmen*:

> Salesmen will welcome training based on actual practical experience. The training should not be based on 'how it ought to be done', rather on exactly 'how it is being done successfully in the field'.

The contents of a training program are determined by the needs of the salesmen through job analysis. Many subjects may be helpful in a particular distributor training program for salesmen. Such subjects are usually ranked in order of importance to the distributor organization. The most important subjects usually receive

* 11, p. 16

prior attention. It is possible, however, that when the needs of salesmen are analyzed, some minor subjects may need to be considered at once, and may take precedence over subjects which seemingly are the more important ones. In this instance, the minor subjects would make up the first part of the training program.

The subjects which follow are analyzed in detail. They are the results of interviews with sales managers and salesmen, and numerous studies of current literature. After twelve years of sales experience, the author believes that each of these subjects is important to wholesale appliance salesmen. He suggests that each subject be considered on the basis of need. Each distributor organization will base its program upon the peculiar needs of its own salesmen.

A. Selling Techniques

Selling techniques, or "salesmanship", as the subject is more commonly known, is an important subject in any training program for wholesale salesmen. A training course should emphasize the necessity for a salesman to study salesmanship. Salesmanship, even in this age of mass production and mass distribution, is a personal, man-to-man proposition.

There are many texts on the subject of salesmanship. E. K. Strong, in his book The Psychology of Selling Life Insurance, suggested that the following points be considered in drawing up a good plan of salesmanship*:

* 17, p. 13

1. Prospect - to whom am I selling?

2. Proposition - what am I selling?

3. Convictions - what convictions must the prospect have before he will buy?

4. Impulses - what impulses must the prospect have before he will buy?

5. Appeals - what ideas and incitements must I present so that the prospect will have the necessary convictions and impulses to buy?

Studies such as these should be helpful in improving the selling technique of distributor salesmen. Salesmanship is not the easiest subject to teach. Tosdal, in his book Introduction to Sales Management, referred to the subject of salesmanship as follows*:

> The most difficult portion of the training of salesmen relates to the teaching of salesmanship, that is, teaching a salesman to use his knowledge of the product and his knowledge of the market in such a way as to accomplish the purposes for which he was hired.

Yet, it does not seem that the teaching of this subject is as difficult as Tosdal would have us believe. The dramatizing of sales techniques and the relating of actual experiences, make this an interesting subject to most salesmen. It is the author's belief, after an intensive study, that today's salesman wants to learn. He will welcome instruction in selling techniques, provided this instruction relates to his own problems and is carried on in an interesting and constructive manner.

* 19, pp. 287-288

B. Knowledge of Products

Too much dependence should not be placed on the idea that the "strength" which a manufacturer has put into his line through brand name should be easily recognized by the dealer, and that this will, of itself, consummate a sale. Unless the salesman knows his line, the hidden merits of products are lost. Many retail outlets still recognize an article by its price, regardless of its actual quality. It is not every salesman that can surmount this obstacle. The best salesmen sell through a knowledge of their products and not price alone. Charles H. Fernald said*:

> These are reasons why the man who is selling should have this knowledge of the goods he sells. It gives him the other essentials of success: confidence in his goods, and enthusiasm about them. He tells his story with contagious enthusiasm.

With the current expansion of chain stores and large discount houses, and with the increase in larger business units, trained buyers are more in evidence. Professional buyers may often ask a score of embarrassing questions about construction and use values of a product if a salesman is inadequately trained.

How much must the salesman know about the products he is selling? This is a controversial question among sales managers, as well as salesmen. Some say, "You can't know too much about the products", while others say, "It's a waste of time to get a salesman involved in a discussion of a 'nuts and bolts' story". It would appear

* 8, p. 42

logical to lay down the rule that the salesman should know enough about his products to enable him to sell them. He must not only be able to sell them under ordinary circumstances, but to make that unusual sale, which he might otherwise miss.

It will be wise to offer an opportunity for salesmen to obtain adequate product knowledge in a training course. In analyzing the needs of a sales force, one might ask the following questions: Does he know what the product is made of, its outstanding features of material and design? Does he know how to use the product? Does he know how it compares with competition? Does he know that the particular product was designed and produced after years of research? Does he know what the potential sales are for the product?

Some sales executives hesitate to give too much product information. They fear that their salesmen will bore prospects with technical explanations in which the prospect is not interested. They fear that the prospect will be bored to the point where the order is lost. Yet, if the salesman is given product information and is also taught how to present this information to his prospects briefly, simply, and interestingly, such information can be used to advantage. As Hugh E. Agnew stated*:

> The salesman is expected to approach his prospect with a feeling that he has something definite to offer, not that he is merely asking for something. He should go with the definite feeling that one who denies him an interview is losing something of value. In other words, he has sufficient knowledge of his product and of conditions in his particular

* 1, p. 173

> industry so that he can readily make it worth while to the buyer to listen to his proposition. He offers something in an intelligent and forceful way that will be to the buyer's interest to accept. To make this an actuality, the salesman must have confidence in his goods through complete product knowledge.

C. Knowledge of the House

No salesman can be brimming over with enthusiasm or full of ambition unless he thinks that he is working for the best concern of its kind in the country. To get that faith, he must know the policies and principles upon which his company was founded. The salesman should know the history of his company. With this information he will have at his command a set of facts that will give him confidence in the company which he represents, in the goods which he sells, and confidence in himself.

Every concern operates to provide some economic need. It must have been organized for some definite purpose, which was greater and more noble than just the making of money for its owners. No enterprise which fails to supply some need or render a real economic service can succeed. It is to the advantage of the salesman to know what the underlying factors were in the founding of his organization. There is always some outstanding feature in the founding and development of a company which makes it distinctive or different from the others. Many reputations have been built on such a background. The salesman should find that feature in his company and by all means capitalize on it.

A training course, therefore, should give trainees a background regarding the distributorship for which they work. It is possible that some salesmen have this background, especially some of the old timers, and an analysis of the salesmen's needs will decide the necessity for such training. A surprising number of salesmen know very little about the concern which they represent. To allow them to complete their training without gaining this knowledge would appear to be a serious mistake. It breeds the type of salesman who builds up a personal clientele, loyal only to himself, and a clientele which could go with the salesman if he should take a position elsewhere.

Any comprehensive training course should include a knowledge of the company, of its history, of its accomplishments, and of its place in its particular field. The human equation and the human quality should be stressed. The salesman can then present the company to prospects as a living organization of human beings ready to serve.

D. Knowledge of Market Conditions and Competition

The salesman who is posted on his own goods alone is not fit for intensive selling. There are few prospects who will not ask questions regarding the comparative merits of competing lines. The salesman without this knowledge is like a ship without a sail for, even though he knows his own product thoroughly, he is unable to convince a dealer that he should buy one product in preference to another. The merits of his proposition may not be found in the product itself. They

may lie in the comparative value of his proposition over competition in such fields as advertising, terms of sale, or one of many services that may prove advantageous to the particular buyer. A good salesman is not content to seek only the strong points of his own merchandise, for if there are any weak points, those whom he interviews are sure to find them and question him concerning them. No article is made that does not possess some weakness. The salesman should recognize this fact and be able to show how the strong points more than counter-balance the minor weak ones. A knowledge of competitive products and policies is essential if the salesman is to be convincing.

It appears that the omission of training in relation to market conditions is usually a weak point in distributor organizations. Trade journals and publications often contain much valuable market information. An informed salesman with facts on local market conditions frequently can offer sound advice and information to his dealers.

The retailer must buy goods that he feels very certain he can sell. His profits depend upon his rate of stock turnover. Purchases cannot be based on mere price. The salesman with a basic knowledge of conditions in the market place and competitive offerings will be in a position to offer merchandise with confidence and enthusiasm. The buyer will have confidence in a well-informed salesman. He will see results in increased turnover and profits.

E. Basic Knowledge of Buyers

A salesman should study the buyers of his products. He should know who the buyers are and how to find new ones. A training course should provide some basic methods of acquiring this information. New salesmen, especially, should have access to the distributor's records of dealers in his territory as a guide to future plans. Too often the sales manager does not furnish significant data about customers or classes of prospective buyers.

A knowledge of the types of buyers and prospects will make it possible for the salesman to arrange his sales presentation accordingly. He must appeal to each class of buyer. More than one appeal will be necessary. For example, a jewelry buyer would be interested in different products and require a different sales appeal than a hardware buyer. The salesman must formulate a different sales presentation for each of these types of buyers.

A jewelry account, for example, would be interested in such products as electric shavers, better quality electric clocks, and some high quality radios, to mention a few. Samples of these products should be presented so that the quality and appearance of this merchandise can be used as a part of the sales presentation. Most jewelry accounts offer liberal credit terms to retail customers. They require a high margin of profit. The salesman must offer products on which the jeweler can realize a profit margin of from thirty-five to forty-five per cent. Extra dating is welcomed by jewelers because of their own

liberal credit terms.

The sales appeals for a jewelry store cannot be used for a hardware store. A hardware store of any considerable size sells many items in addition to electrical appliances. This outlet is interested in traffic items such as toasters, irons, and heaters; i.e. those small electrical appliances that invite traffic into the store to buy other merchandise. For this reason many products will appeal to this type of outlet despite the fact that the margin rate may be as low as twenty-five per cent. Price is usually more important than lengthy credit terms. The buyer will purchase in rather large quantities to obtain price concessions.

From these rather sketchy examples, it would seem that a salesman's training should include a study of buyers. Differences apply to buyers in each type of retail outlet. Each class is an important customer for the wholesale appliance distributor. This fact was substantiated in the replies to the Questionnaire for Distributor Salesmen, particularly those outlined on page forty-one of this report.

F. Methods of Securing New Accounts

Most distributor salesmen are responsible for a specific group of customers. These dealers require as much time as salesmen can afford to give them. Little thought is given, therefore, to the securing of new accounts. Little time is spent seeking new outlets

for the distributor's merchandise. If the salesman does spend some of his valuable time securing new accounts, his sales figures are sometimes adversely affected, since many calls are fruitless at first. The sales manager, unaware of the fact that this particular salesman is attempting to obtain new accounts, frequently questions the salesman's performance. Because he is spending time developing new accounts his sales figures suffer. His performance does not appear to be more than mediocre, since the sales manager looks at sales figures, alone. The salesman, therefore, is tempted to "go where the orders are". The urgency of today's sales figures weakens his search for future business.

It would seem that wholesale salesmen should be encouraged to secure new accounts. If this is so, then the broad subject of finding prospective customers should be included in a wholesale salesmen's training program. There are definite ways in which salesmen can be instructed in the securing of new accounts. Most sales managers visualize, when the subject of locating new dealers is mentioned, the now outdated method of "cold canvass". They visualize the salesman looking for prospects by going up one side of the street and down the other, calling on all stores, large or small, prosperous or poor, so long as they are a prospect. If the salesman obtains any orders by this method, chances are the credit department will reject the majority of them. The day spent canvassing for dealers would turn out to be a complete waste of time.

The author is familiar with a successful method for obtaining new dealers. This method utilizes a good credit manual, such as

the Reference Book of Dun and Bradstreet - State Edition. This handy credit reference book, small enough to carry in one's pocket, lists dealers by towns and cities, and classifies them according to type of store and merchandise handled, giving their credit rating in most cases. With this information, it is possible for a salesman to obtain a good list of prospects by analyzing dealers in each town. He obtains the names of additional dealers and weeds out the bad risks through credit information. This is one example of a successful method of locating new accounts.

Salesmen can secure a list of prospects by analyzing shipments into their territories, as evidenced by order copies or copies of invoices. Telephone orders and over-the-counter orders should be analyzed. These frequently provide names of prospective customers. These records should be made available to salesmen.

The use of direct mail by distributors is becoming increasingly important today. The returns derived therefrom will frequently offer a list of good prospects.

Inquiries resulting from newspaper, radio or television advertising provide additional prospects. Factories will frequently receive inquiries from dealers and retail customers. These leads, when turned over to local distributors, should be given to salesmen for follow-up.

Trade journals and magazines often furnish leads for salesmen. Articles about successful dealers in certain areas provide names of possible customers. Dealer listings on certain products in news-

paper advertisements, represent prospects for similar or competitive lines. For example, a newspaper advertisement might list the authorized dealers for a specific line of power mowers. It is possible these dealers will be interested in another line of power mowers in a different price class. In addition, this list represents possible customers for other products which this type of retail outlet might handle. Such products as garden supplies, outdoor furniture, outdoor grills, power tools, and other similar merchandise for suburban home owners should be presented to these dealers. Dealers appearing in such advertisements are usually most desirable because they are promotionally minded.

If a distributor organization is to grow, it would seem logical that wholesale salesmen should be encouraged to locate new dealers. This subject should be made a part of the training program. Proven methods for the securing of new accounts should be offered to distributor salesmen. Salesmen should be encouraged, through instruction and training, to allocate a definite part of their time for the locating of new customers. One new customer per week adds up to fifty dealers in a year's time finding their way onto the books of a distributor. These dealers could have been lost to competition. A good training program, it seems, cannot omit this important subject.

G. Promotional Functions

A distributor salesman has not done his job until the dealer has sold the merchandise bought from him and is in a position to re-order. Dealers do not like to feel that a salesman's sole interest in them is in getting merchandise off the distributor's hands. If a distributor salesman is to be a merchandising counsellor, he must be able to assist his dealers in advertising and other promotional functions to help move merchandise on to the ultimate consumer.

One important promotional function of distributor salesmen is the training of retail salespeople. If these individuals sell the distributor's products, the dealer has to buy. The distributor salesman should participate in regular dealer sales meetings. If these meetings are not being held, he should initiate them and show the dealer how to carry them on. The salesman should see that sales clerks possess a basic knowledge of his products.

Another promotional function of distributor salesmen centers around the subject of cooperative advertising. Manufacturers, distributors and dealers share in the cost of newspaper, radio and television advertising. Unfortunately, advertising is a subject which many wholesale appliance salesmen shun. This evasiveness is usually caused by their lack of training on the subject. The salesman must be familiar with cooperative advertising plans offered by his company and by competitors. He should know the various advertising media, their rates and their value to his dealers. He should know how to

calculate the cost of an advertisement either on a rate-per-line or per-inch basis. He should know what mats are available and furnish these to the dealer. He should suggest the use of certain scripts for radio and television advertisements. When business is good, there is a tendency for dealers to become callous to promotions. The good wholesale salesman does not allow his dealers to become complacent. He encourages the dealer to advertise and promote regularly. With sufficient training, the distributor salesman will not avoid the subject of advertising. He will learn to use it as a means of merchandising his products through the retail outlet into the hands of the ultimate consumer.

Another promotional subject which may be discussed in a training program, is the effective use of merchandise displays. Distributor salesmen should constantly urge their dealers to expose certain merchandise in store windows and on counters. They should furnish window and counter display material and help install these displays in dealers' stores. Effective use of available displays should be encouraged.

Most manufacturers offer line folders, specification sheets, and envelope stuffers on their line. The distributor salesman should make use of these. Dealers should be urged to employ line folders by having them available on their counters. Envelope stuffers should be used in mailings to customers. The salesman should check periodically to ascertain that such literature is current and that it promotes products which are available for delivery.

An important promotional function of the distributor salesman is that of product demonstration. He should know how to demonstrate his products to dealer sales personnel and to the retail customer. He should be able to teach demonstration techniques for each product to his dealers' sales personnel.

These are the more important promotional functions with which distributor salesmen should be familiar. This vital subject should be considered when formulating the curriculum of a training program.

H. Use of Time

From the results of distributor surveys, it seems apparent that little is being done to instruct distributor salesmen in the proper use of their time. This subject, although frequently overlooked, is an important one. Laird, in Practical Sales Psychology, illustrated "how the traveling salesmakers' work day is spent"*. He reported that only fifteen per cent of the salesman's working hours are spent in actual selling time. This is illustrated in Exhibit G, page seventy-five.

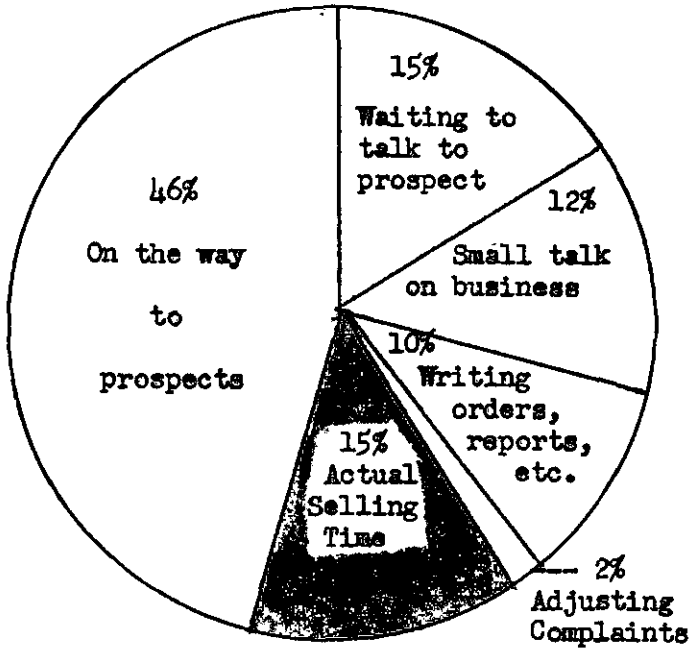
Actually, the problem of use of time appears to be twofold, as indicated by two questions John C. Aspley asked of salesmen, the first of which is as follows**:

* 12, p. 76
** 3, p. 684

EXHIBIT G

HOW THE TRAVELING SALESMAKER'S

WORK DAY IS SPENT



Source: Practical Sales Psychology by Donald A. Laird and Eleanor C. Laird. New York, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1952

> Have you recently made a time study of your work to see what proportion of your average month is non-productive? Are you systematically working to reduce this percentage of non-profitable time, and increase the percentage of time you spend face to fact with probable buyers?

The first problem involves the arranging of territories and the planning of calls so that an increasingly greater proportion of time is spent in actual selling. This analysis requires that territories be assigned to permit the most efficient use of time. Salesmen should then be trained in the proper analysis and planning of dealer calls to avoid doubling back over territories.

The second problem is aptly inferred from John C. Aspley's quote*:

> Are you dissipating too much time on 'fringe' business? Do you keep a time record to make sure that you are getting enough business from each account to repay you for time invested?

This problem indicates the need for a study of dealers to ascertain the amount of time each dealer warrants, based upon his potential business for the distributor salesman. Some dealers, particularly important ones, may be worth weekly calls. Some small dealers, on the other hand, are worth only a few calls a year. It is possible that an analysis of dealer potential may disclose certain accounts which are not worth calling upon. In a recent interview with a local sales manager, the author learned that such a study of this particular distributor's dealers disclosed that it was economically unsound to

* 3, p. 684

call on small retail outlets of a particular size. This study of dealers relative to potential sales, costs, and margin rates, resulted in the decision that no salesman was to call upon a dealer unless his potential business was at least two thousand dollars annually. All other accounts were to be handled through direct mail and by telephone solicitation.

Salesmen should be trained to analyze their time to increase profitable selling time. They should be instructed in methods of analyzing their dealer calls to ascertain that time is spent on worthwhile prospects, not on questionable accounts. Aspley asked of salesmen*: "Are you constantly striving to make those hours of selling more and more productive of signed orders?" It would seem that the answer to this question lies in the overall subject of "use of time".

I. Basic Business Procedure

Before a new salesman goes to work for a distributor, regardless of his background, experience, or success in his field, he should be thoroughly indoctrinated in the basic business procedure of his company. He should become thoroughly familiar with the methods and procedures used. He should know and understand the policies of the company. He should have a general knowledge of credit and collection work so that when calling upon new or marginal accounts, he will be familiar with this phase of the business. He should know and

* 3, p. 684

understand terms of sale, discount structures, invoice due dates and transportation policies. He should know how to handle the return of merchandise and the company policy regarding such returns. He should know and understand the types of reports required, how and why they are used, when they are to be submitted, and in what form. He should know the members of the organization by name and their responsibilities. When problems arise he should be able to contact the proper individuals because of his familiarity with them.

Each distributorship is as varied in its business procedure as are the individuals working for that distributor. It is important, especially for new employees, that thorough training be received in the business routines and policies of the company. Frequently, much of this training can be accomplished through the use of sales manuals, as discussed in Chapter VIII - "Training Aids".

VIII. INSTALLATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

The previous Chapter of this report outlines various subjects which might be considered in a training program for wholesale distributor salesmen. Each subject must be considered in its relationship to the needs of the salesmen. The needs are determined through job analysis and other studies, as previously explained in this report.

It is entirely possible that a particular training course will not include all of the subjects outlined heretofore. Perhaps one or two subjects will be completely excluded. Others may be touched on briefly. Some may require a great deal of instruction. The needs of the salesmen and the feasibility of teaching the subjects will likely be the determining factors as to what will be included in a complete training program.

Once the subject matter of the training program has been decided upon, planning for the actual installation of the training program can begin. This involves numerous decisions. The question of how courses should be presented is one problem that encompasses numerous minor problems such as location of classes, when classes should be held, who should teach, and how much training should be given. All of these questions are covered in this section of the report which covers the important step of installing the training program for distributor salesmen.

A. Methods of Training

1. Formal Training Courses

Numerous firms have found it advantageous and profitable to establish formal training courses for salesmen. Some manufacturers offer these courses at the factory, while some distributors hold such courses at their place of business.

An outstanding example of a specialized formal training program is one sponsored by the National Association of Electrical Distributors. This "Sales Builder" program, developed for electrical distributors' salesmen, is outlined in Exhibit H, pages eighty-one through eighty-four. It incorporates such methods of instruction as role playing, phonograph recordings, and flip charts. These methods, along with others, are discussed in some detail in this report in Chapter VIII - "Installation of the Training Program". This particular course is an excellent example of a formal training course, developed for a specific industry. A distributor organization using such a course will have to adapt it to its own particular needs.

Under a formal training course, the most natural step after deciding on the curriculum, is to set up classes similar to those in schools or colleges. From studies of various texts and cases, and from personal interviews, the author offers the following suggestions for consideration in the establishment of formal training courses in a distributor organization:

EXHIBIT H

Sign up now!

AT LAST...
a complete, easy-to-stage

SALES TRAINING PROGRAM

FOR ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS' SALESMEN

This is your new **SALES BUILDER** Program, developed by professional sales trainers under the guidance of the **NAED Education Committee** and produced exclusively for our industry by the

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS
200 MADISON AVENUE — NEW YORK 17, NEW YORK

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTORS
NAED

EXHIBIT H (CONTINUED)

IT'S DIFFERENT!

This is a far cry from the usual "selling tips" approach. This new SALES BUILDER course enables you to give to your men, in brief conference sessions, a complete *education* in wholesale selling to all markets.

IT'S SPECIFIC!

Months of research and planning, guided by NAED's own Education Committee and carried out by professional sales trainers, have gone into the course. It deals with your salesmen's problems, specific to our industry. It talks their language. It builds accepted selling methods, using successful salesmen's experiences as a base.

IT'S DRAMATIC!

These lively conference-type sessions use audience participation... phonograph recordings... sure-fire case histories... to guarantee fast-moving sessions. Everyone gets into the act. It's impossible for anyone to be bored. Your salesmen will actually look forward to the next meeting.

IT'S SOUND!

Created for NAED by Porter Henry & Co., Inc., sales training specialists who have produced outstandingly successful programs for National Electrical Contractors Association, National Lighting Bureau, National Electrical Manufacturers Association, Edison Electric Institute and many others. These people know how to make salesmen *want* training — and how to make that training stick.

IT'S FOR YOU!

Whether you have four salesmen or 30, you can easily put on fact-filled SALES BUILDER sessions. Complete instructions for the conference leader, plus a full kit of materials, assure maximum results with minimum effort.

EXHIBIT H (CONTINUED)

YOU NEED THIS SALES BUILDER COURSE IF...

Your salesmen are doing "just about as well" as other salesmen *in our industry. Because – it's sad, but it's a fact – the average* salesman of electrical supplies is not a world-beater.

We hear, from member after member, that the typical salesman is not sales-minded in ways that pay off. He's not building accounts in ways that salesmen in other wholesale lines are using. He needs a quick, yet thorough, professional education.

He's capable of learning – and using – stronger and surer selling methods. Otherwise he wouldn't be on your payroll. And when he does learn to build sales, exactly what will it mean to you? In brief this is what you will gain:

- ***Additional business – that might have gone to a competitor***
- ***Reduced cost per sale – almost the only area in today's profit picture that you can control***
- ***Tomorrow's management – a firm step toward building a continuing organization***
- ***Better insight into your men – you'll learn their day-to-day work problems, their inner attitudes, and you'll see what can be done about them.***

And – if that's not enough – you'll develop your inside men. The telephone salesmen and countermen will be anxious to attend the SALES BUILDER sessions, too. They'll gain a great deal personally... and you'll create tomorrow's salesmen as well as today's.

HERE'S WHAT YOU GET

A fully-contained kit of materials for staging the series of SALES BUILDER conferences. Included are:

- Conference Leader's Manual – detailed instructions for the man who will lead the sessions. Whether he is inexperienced or an old pro at leading meetings, he'll find all the information he needs. Includes point-by-point preparation and planning checklists.
- Meeting Guides – complete, word-by-word "scripts" for running each session and using the "props" that are furnished. Proven meeting techniques, like *role playing*, are used to develop the tested sales methods.
- Phonograph Recordings – professionally-acted case histories, included to stimulate group discussions.
- Flipcharts – thought-provoking words and pictures mounted on a large and sturdy easel.
- Assorted miscellaneous take-home material for distribution to the men.

THESE ARE THE TOPICS

Basic Conferences

1. Introductory Meeting
2. Selling the Benefits
3. Overcoming Price Objections
4. Analyzing
5. Selling Yourself and Your Service
6. The Effective Sales Call
7. Sales Obstacles
8. Building Volume With Present Customers
9. Reducing Lost Time
10. New Accounts
11. Complaints
12. Inside Selling

Optional, Additional Conferences

included in every kit, all for the same price

- 2A Practice on Selling the Benefits
- 3A Practice on Overcoming Price Objections
- 8A Building Volume with Present Industrial Customers
- 8B Building Volume with Present Contractor Customers
- 8C Building Volume with Present Dealers
- 10A New Accounts—Industrial
- 10B New Accounts—Contractor
- 10C New Accounts—Dealer

CONFERENCE-TYPE COURSE

The conference, or audience-participation, method is recognized by professional sales trainers as much more productive than lectures, motion pictures or other conventional teaching techniques. Easier to put on, the SALES BUILDER sessions are completely flexible: you can schedule from 12 to 20 conferences, each lasting from 75 minutes to two hours. The conferences are completely adaptable to your firm's special circumstances. The arrangement of 12 basic sessions and 8 optional additional sessions adds to the flexibility. Schedule the course anytime. The meetings need not be held in strict sequence. New and old personnel will both gain by each other's presence . . . and the ease of presentation means it can be offered again and again without major preparation. It's ideal for use in multiple-based operations.

TO RESERVE your SALES BUILDER kit, please send the enclosed postcard to NAED headquarters. Printing and production will be under way in early autumn of 1958—*and exact quantities must be scheduled now.* Your kit will arrive during November, 1958, at which ti[me] will be billed $150.

In the opinion of the Education Com[mittee] and others who have seen the materials, y[ou] will receive many, many times the purchase [price] in extra sales—and extra profits. It's an i[nvestment] in the future of your company.

1. Avoid convential classroom furniture - small desks, blackboards, or a "teacher's desk". These make many men feel awkward and silly, and there is no need for such furniture.

2. Salesmen's classwork should not be made unduly formal. They should be "talked with", not "lectured to". Find out how much they know before boring them with material which is too elemental - remember the curriculum should be based on the men's needs.

3. Encourage the men to talk freely, especially if they keep within the scope of the lesson. The best teaching is to get the men, so far as possible, to teach one another.

4. The case method has been used successfully in many schools and colleges, and is recommended in the training course. Emphasis should be on "what should be done" rather than "how it should be done". The cases should be decidedly practical.

5. If the company has developed a standard sales presentation, this may be rehearsed. The instructor, with the aid of students, will dramatize problems and situations.

In discussing this phase of personal training in an interview with a local sales manager, the author learned of an outstanding five-week formal training course for distributor salesmen being offered by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. This course, held at the factory for outstanding distributor salesmen, is divided into four major classifications:

1. Dealer Coverage - distribution and market analysis.

2. Selling the Dealer - analysis of dealers' needs.

3. Dealer Development - methods of increasing dealer sales and profits.

4. Training Retail Salesmen - product demonstrations, sales and training methods.

These broad subjects are covered by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation in a five-week's formal training course at the factory.

Such formal courses, either at the factory or in distributors' headquarters, provide opportunities to train salesmen in many subjects. Some of these subjects cannot be taught very well by any other method. Formal courses can be made both interesting and educational. Yet, such courses require a great deal of planning.

A formal training course requires study to determine the best curriculum inasmuch as a group of salesmen will be involved in class work. The subject cannot be too broad, or it will not be effective. It must be one of interest to the particular group being trained.

One must be particularly careful when using a general training course, such as the one previously mentioned for electrical distributor salesmen. The category, "electrical distributor salesmen", in itself, covers such a broad field that this course must be adapted to the peculiar needs and interests of a specific group being trained. It is quite evident that electrical distributor salesmen selling large appliances will not require the identical training course that electrical distributor salesmen who sell small electrical appliances will need. Both of these groups are composed of electrical distributor salesmen, for whom the course was developed. Yet, each group will require a specific program based upon its peculiar needs and interests.

From the problems outlined above, it is clear that formal training programs require a great deal of planning. This planning should be done far enough in advance so that the subject matter involved, and the techniques of presentation to be used, are sound.

2. Field or Road Training

Some distributors give their salesmen field or on-the-job training only. Others, however, precede field training with a formal training course, such as previously outlined. Field training then becomes supervised application of the principles and practices learned in the formal training courses.

The most common method of furnishing field training is to place inexperienced men under the tutelage of older, more experienced salesmen. The recruits gain a great deal from close observation of the work of the older men. The experienced salesman will often allow the recruit to try some customer himself, giving him constructive suggestions and criticisms afterward. The advantages of this method are rather obvious. Both salesmen learn through actual practice. However, the success of such a method depends upon the ability of the older man, not only as a salesman, but particularly as a teacher and coach. As Hugh E. Agnew pointed out*:

> If the senior salesman is something of a teacher and takes an interest in developing the new man, this may work satisfactorily. But if he is not a

* 1, p. 173

> type to impart information, if he regards himself as a possessor of some valuable secrets about the art of selling, he will probably give the newcomer very little help. Besides, any bad habits of salesmen tend to be perpetuated with this plan.

Not every successful salesman is a successful teacher. The man who has been a crack salesman for a long period may have forgotten his difficulties and may lack patience and be completely out of sympathy with the salesman's problems. Experienced salesmen, too, are inclined to dispense with rules and even ridicule the youngster if he tries to apply methods learned in the training course at the office.

Another method of giving field sales training is to have the sales manager work with salesmen in the field. In so doing, the sales manager becomes better acquainted with his salesmen and with dealer attitudes and problems. However, the sales manager should remember that his main objective is not to make sales himself, but to instruct the salesman so as to increase the effectiveness of those who look to him for suggestions and corrections. Many experienced sales managers believe it is best to remain in the background where they can observe and analyze the salesman's performance. They wait until after the presentation when they return to the salesman's car to take corrective steps. At this point is held what is commonly referred to as a "curbstone conference" and suggestions for conducting

a discussion of this type after each sales presentation are as follows*:

1. It should be held immediately after each sales presentation.
2. It should cover only one idea at a time.
3. It should take the form of suggestion rather than criticism or ridicule.
4. The suggested method should be correctly understood by the salesman before leaving the subject.

On-the-job training is frequently accomplished through the use of manufacturer's representatives. Most manufacturers encourage their representatives to work with distributor salesmen. Usually these men are only too willing to assist in the training of salesmen on their particular products. L. H. Brendell had this to say about on-the-job training with factory representatives**:

> We encourage our salesmen to make calls with manufacturer's representatives. If the representative is capable and is well informed about his products, the salesman can learn a great deal about selling. This kind of training is far more effective than any kind of sales meeting. We offer the following suggestions to factory representatives in distributor work: (1) Schedule in advance - three weeks necessary; (2) Be punctual; (3) Be helpful and allow the salesmen to promote other lines on the calls; (4) Be interesting - salesmen are inclined to sell products they like.

* 11, p. 38
** 30

It is interesting to note that in the replies received from the Questionnaire for Distributors*, only one out of nine sales managers interviewed did not believe factory representatives helpful in sales training work. This speaks well for factory representatives. The opinion of most sales managers is that the effectiveness of this training is greatly dependent upon the abilities and attitudes of factory representatives.

The value of on-the-job training is quite apparent. A salesman may be inefficient in just one technique of his job. It is not practical to call a sales meeting of the entire sales force to overcome these particular shortcomings. The answer, then, is individual training which can be accomplished economically and efficiently in the field. Most distributors now use some on-the-job training. This type of training can be made an effective part of a complete training program.

3. Sales Meetings

Some companies consider sales meetings as the place for their training courses. From interviews with distributor sales managers in the Boston area, the author learned that sales meetings are the most important part of local sales training programs. These meetings are held primarily to furnish product information to the salesmen. Sometimes demonstrations on particular products are

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presented. The use of sales meetings for training purposes appears to have both advantages and disadvantages. The principal advantage of using sales meetings as a place for training courses is the saving of time and money. Periodic meetings of distributor salesmen are a necessity. Salesmen must be kept regularly informed of product and policy changes. Rather than attempt to impart this information on an individual basis, sales meetings offer an opportunity to reach the greatest number in the shortest time. The disadvantage of utilizing sales meetings for training is that such meetings become too lengthy to accomplish their purpose. They often become so broad in scope that any effort made at basic training is usually wasted.

If it is planned to employ sales meetings as a place for training, it would seem wise to attempt only one subject at each meeting. Like a good salesman going after an order, the sales manager should plan his meeting well in advance. He should not attempt to cover too much. He should make certain that his meetings never drift from the subjects to be covered.

If others are called upon to address the group, they should be advised of their subject matter far enough in advance for ample preparation. They should be checked some time before the actual presentation to ascertain that the presentation is desirable.

Added interest may be obtained by having variety in the presentation of various subjects. The use of films, slides, skits, demonstrations, speakers and other media are helpful in this respect.

Sessions should start on time, be short, and should close on time. One sales manager interviewed by the author disclosed his plan for holding such meetings to a definite time schedule. He made arrangements for an alarm clock to sound when the meeting time was over. No matter who was talking at the time, when the alarm sounded, the meeting was brought to a swift close. This plan, according to the sales manager, assured the salesmen they were not attending a long drawn-out meeting. He was quite emphatic in his praise of a definite time schedule for sales meetings. He reported that as a result, his salesmen participated in the meetings with more interest and enthusiasm than when meetings were continued indefinitely. It would seem wise, therefore, to arrange a definite time schedule, adequate to cover important subject matter, yet not too long to unduly lengthen sales meetings.

Sales meetings are a necessity. They can form an important part of a basic training program. They should not, however, take the place of other more adequate methods of training simply because they are more convenient or less costly. The tendency today appears to be one of relying almost completely on sales meetings as the media for instruction and training*. Distributors should question this development. They should consider other training methods which are more suitable for specific subjects. The most efficient method is usually the least costly method.

* 35, 36

4. Role Playing

A method of training that has in recent years been used to great advantage is that of role playing. Under this method a group of salesmen meet in conference, and two or more are selected to act out some situation which is commonly encountered. For example, the situation may be that of a dealer who is bringing up a sales obstacle in the form of a price objection. One of the salesmen is assigned the role of the dealer and the second becomes the salesman. A few pertinent facts are decided upon, and then the two, without rehearsal, act out how the dealer and the salesman would react. As the two act, the members of the group observe, make mental notes, and evaluate the performance. After the drama is completed, others may be selected to act out the same situation, or the acting thus far may be reviewed. Sometimes a recording is made so that the salesmen can review their own performance. Allan H. Tyler, in The Handbook of Sales Training, listed the desirable features of role playing as follows*:

1. The learner learns by doing. He puts what he has learned into immediate practice.

2. The trainee assists in training himself. He can observe, sometimes for the first time, his own actions in a critical way.

3. Sound recording encourages self development. Hearing his own voice seems to have a powerful effect on a person.

4. There is a high degree of learning by observation and listening.

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5. When a salesman takes a dealer's part in a skit, it gives him a real approach to the dealer's position in a difficult problem.

6. The whole procedure does an excellent job of improving the salesman's ability to be convincing. The salesman must continually seek acceptance of his sales talks just as his job normally requires him to do.

7. Enables management to separate those who do well from those who show little ability.

Today's aim in role playing is to give the trainees ease in meeting successfully any unexpected situation in any form of interpersonal relations where they may be required to carry out a business objective. G. R. Stahl stated*:

> It affords the candidate a chance to translate into action the words, motions, situations - and above all the thinking - he has learned in theory and to do all this under conditions where a mistake will not ruin a business deal. It is frequently successful in improving attitudes as there are many different approaches to a given situation.

Role playing can be used in a training program to advantage. It helps to season men so that when they do get into the field, they are not flustered, but can start to think in an orderly and sales fashion. Errors in technique are detected before a sale is lost.

The author cannot attempt to go into the technique of employing role playing in training programs. Many pages could be written on this subject. In fact, there are many recent texts which present detailed procedures to be followed in role playing. Some of the outstanding texts on this subject are listed in the bibliography at the

* 31

end of the thesis. Distributors should learn of the possibilities, at least, of the use of role playing in their training programs. This recent development in training methods has definite advantages in many well-rounded training programs.

5. Office and Warehouse Training

From interviews with several Boston distributor sales managers, the author learned that in those companies new recruits without exception are given office or warehouse training before embarking on a territorial assignment. These future salesmen receive instruction in basic business procedure, knowledge of products, and a knowledge of the house and its personnel. The advantages of such training are many and so obvious they need not be discussed at this point. However, some trainees become bored after a week or two in the office or warehouse. They may eventually lose interest to the point where they are learning little, if anything, of value. This is especially true if the trainees receive little or no guidance or supervision.

It is suggested that before any such apprenticeship is undertaken, the trainee be made cognizant of his need for this practical training. He should be informed of the period for which he will be subject to this type of training. He should know that if he applies himself and learns well, at the end of a specified period he will be allowed to take his place on the road. Some distributors arrange for experienced salesmen to take the trainee with them occasionally during

the office and warehouse training period. This procedure will break the monotony of such training and will usually impress upon the trainee the importance of the basic training he is receiving.

If the sales recruit is one of the distributor's own personnel, the length of this time of training will depend upon the needs of the individual involved. He will, at least, require some time to study past records of the accounts to which he will be assigned, and to plan the coverage of his territory.

Salesmen should receive some basic warehouse and office training. This training should be well planned. It must be based upon the needs of the sales trainee. It must be well supervised to be effective. It should have a definite time limit.

6. Correspondence Courses

Another method of training available for distributors is training by correspondence. Correspondence training, especially for the older recruits, can become a part of the machinery for the continuous stimulation and inspiration of these men. One advantage of training by correspondence is that such training can be conducted with comparatively small expense. Another advantage is that it enables the salesmen to put the principles imparted by it immediately into practice. The salesman on the road can study a correspondence lesson when he returns home at night, consider it in the light of his past experience, and answer the review questions usually required.

He can then go forth in the morning prepared to apply his newly acquired knowledge in the day's work. In this way the salesman obtains a little knowledge each night. Material is not crammed into his head in a three or four day formal training program.

Companies employing this method usually devise close checks to insure that the student is actually absorbing the material. He is required to pass examinations and to make extensive reports on what he studies. The student salesman who studies a correspondence course and then in his reports and examinations actually writes out for his manager what he has learned, will most likely have an exact knowledge of the content of his course.

There are many correspondence courses available for salesmen. Some manufacturers issue sales training courses of their own. The General Electric Company, for example, recently published a three-months' training course for distributor salesmen on the sale of radios and television sets. Each salesman completing the three-months' course received a certificate of accomplishment and a small gift in the form of a pen and pencil set. Prizes were awarded to those receiving outstanding grades. This course evoked considerable comment from participating salesmen. Many points of interest were discussed for months after the course had been completed. It was felt that this course, in addition to imparting knowledge on sales principles, had its effect on the salesmen by making them aware of the necessity for analyzing their work. It was considered a definite success.

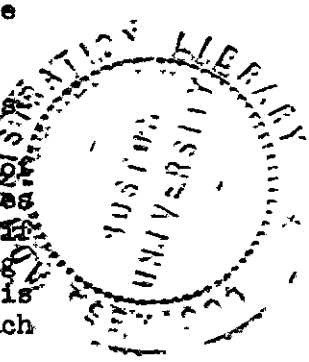
Distributors may look into the possibility of training by correspondence. Although this type of training is more or less on theoretical principles, the theory can be followed up by more practical instruction in sales meetings and on-the-job training. Based on the needs of a particular distributor, correspondence courses can frequently fit into an over-all training program.

7. Standardized Selling Talk

One of the oldest controversies in the field of selling centers around the use of so called "standardized" or "canned" sales talks as a method of training. The opponents of this method think of it as a method that seeks to prescribe virtually every word the salesman is to speak in making the sale, and the order in which it is spoken. The proponents of standardized sales talks, on the other hand, overcome the objections by recommending that the salesman use words and phrases that are natural to his own personality rather than a prepared set of words. They propose that the points to be covered, the order in which they are best presented, and the manner of their presentation, all are carefully detailed. The words will differ in varying degree, and each man will develop small modifications, but the content and approach will not differ substantially from one salesman to another.

Saul Poliak had this to say about standardized sales talks*:

> The inevitable consequence of sound training is the development of a standardized or organized sales talk that in all its essentials, if not in actual words, is substantially identical for all the salesmen of a given company or given sales department. If the training program is projected on the basis of seeking to arrive at a pooling of the best practices and experience of the company's best salesmen and if all salesmen are then trained against the resulting standards, then obviously if the training program is to be successful, it must effect a standard approach by all the company's salesmen in their efforts to achieve the company's objectives. If you accept the idea that sales training is desirable, then you must necessarily accept the standardized sales talk as desirable.



Proponents of the standardized sales presentation present the following arguements. There is only one best way to sell a product - a way determined by observing the most successful salesmen of the product. The results of these observations assembled in permanent form, constitute standardized sales presentations. "The plain truth is that most salesmen consciously or unconsciously use a 'canned' sales talk anyway"**. This is the result of the salesman's unguided experience. The "canned" presentation prepared by the office is a result of the valuable experience of the best salesmen, sifted, analyzed, and molded into a whole by the best and most expert brains in the company.

Each salesman would most likely put his own personality into a standardized sales presentation, just as any actor gives a certain individual interpretation. Some proponents of standardized sales talks

* 16, p. 400
** 16, p. 401

suggest that after the initial presentation has been memorized, the salesman can then forget it, since the points in the sales arguements will be remembered. The salesman should then be able to inject his own personality into the sale more effectively because he is not confined to a definite way of saying things. Mere memorizing is not enough, they state. The selling talk must contain the personality of the salesman, himself.

Such, briefly, are the advantages of standardized sales presentations. This method of training can be used by wholesale distributor salesmen. Sales managers might consider the use of this method in their basic training program.

B. Location of Training Program

Clearly, the location of the training program is dependent upon the training methods to be used. The various methods previously discussed in this report are as follows:

1. Group training:
   (a) Formal training courses
   (b) Sales meetings
   (c) Role playing

2. Individual training:
   (a) Field or on-the-job training
   (b) Office and warehouse training

Group training methods will of necessity be held in meeting rooms. These may be at the factory, in a distributor's headquarters, or at a local hotel. There are advantages to each of these locations.

Having an occasional meeting at the factory gives the salesmen an opportunity to see the products being manufactured. They receive first-hand knowledge of products, a knowledge which could not be so adequately obtained in any other location. These meetings provide an oft-needed change in surroundings for the men. They provide an opportunity to meet factory personnel and management. They are helpful in boosting salesmen's morale, and their confidence in the company.

Training meetings at the distributor's place of business have the advantages of convenience and economy. All of the necessary products and materials for the sales meeting are usually available. In addition, the meeting room is at hand, ready for use. No expense will be involved in the rental of rooms. There will be no problem of hotel reservations which usually are made far in advance of a meeting.

Much can be said for occasional meetings at a local hotel. In the first place, meetings held during the day will be subject to fewer interruptions at a hotel than if held at the regular place of business. Secondly, if factory representatives are to present products at these meetings, it is usually more convenient at a hotel because of facilities for storage and for the setting up of displays. Luncheon and dinner can usually be served more conveniently than at the distributor's place of business.

Plans for such meetings should be made well enough in advance to assure ample accommodations for all involved. If cooperative funds are available from manufacturers to offset the cost of formal meetings at hotels, prior approval of such plans will usually be required.

These factory cooperative funds frequently cover the major share of such expenses. They offer a strong arguement in favor of hotel meetings.

Individual training will, in most cases, determine the location of such training, since the particular subject to be covered will have its effect upon the location. On-the-job training will be carried on in the field; office and warehouse training will, of necessity, be carried on at the required locations.

The location of the training program is an important consideration because proper accommodations and convenience will contribute to the success of any program. Individual training will be carried on in the field; group training, carried on in a variety of locations. Each location should be weighed from the standpoint of the needs of the individuals involved in the training program. The most convenient and acceptable location for the majority should be chosen.

C. Time of Training

Training should be a continuous process. If this is true, then there is only one answer to the question of when the training should be given. In one form or another it should start when the

salesman is selected and continue as long as he remains with the company. Laird stated*:

> Today, the salesman who thinks he is done with his training is done. Training has to be kept up, year after year, because men tend to become careless, and because sales situations change as time goes on. As with vitamins, steady doses are needed.

In carrying out a continuous training program, various types of training are involved. Indoctrination or orientation training should be given immediately upon hiring the salesman. Some initial training must be given before the salesman can be expected to do even a minimum job alone in the territory. Periodic or refresher training should be given at intervals during his selling career. Continuous training, in the form of sales meetings and on-the-job training, should be a matter of almost daily concern.

Group training, unlike on-the-job training, should seldom be carried on during regular working hours. The salesman's time is much too valuable, actual selling time too short, to call him from his sales task to a meeting. In discussing this subject with local sales managers, the author learned that some distributors have a weekly sales meeting on Saturday mornings, during the winter months. These meetings are scheduled on Friday evenings during the summer, for the convenience of salesmen. Some distributors schedule their sales meetings during the evening after working hours; some early in the morning before selling time. Some meetings are scheduled during actual working hours. There does not appear to be any definite pattern with relation to time for sales meetings in the greater Boston area.

* 12, p. 48

It is the author's belief, after several years of experience, that from the salesman's point of view there are two requirements in determining the actual time for sales meetings:

1. The time should be most convenient for the majority of the salesmen involved, based on business and personal reasons.

2. The schedule for the meetings should be announced far enough in advance so that plans can be made by the salesmen to attend without undue inconvenience because of personal engagements.

In summary, training should be a continuous process. As Laird so aptly stated, "a salesman never graduates"*. A well-rounded training program will offer salesmen opportunities for continuous study. It will encourage salesmen to analyze their work and to improve their techniques continuously.

D. Who Should Do the Training

Training programs, conceived and developed on sound principles, can fall short of their bright promises if no one individual in the organization is responsible for the program. It is evident that if there is a failure to delegate responsibility, and along with it the authority to develop a training program, the entire program may end in failure. It is suggested, therefore, that some one individual be made responsible for the training program. The question of whom

* 12, p. 49

this individual should be, presents itself. Mandell, in a research project for the American Management Association, surveyed a broad group of companies and found the following individuals responsible for the selection and training program in their company*:

Sales Department:		
Sales manager	48	
Regional, district sales offices	17	
Sales personnel department	10	
Vice president - sales	9	
Home and territorial offices together	3	
Manager of sales engineering	1	
No particular sales group or individual specified	33	
Total - Sales department		121
Personnel Department		34
Personnel and Sales Departments together		15
Others		7
Companies surveyed		177

It should be noted that in more than two-thirds of the companies surveyed, the sales department is responsible for this function. The reason for this is apparent. This department is responsible to management for the supervision and control of salesmen. The sales supervisor or sales manager, as he is most frequently called, is the logical individual, therefore, for the assignment of the responsibility for training the salesmen. He is in a position to translate the potential values of a training program into actual practice. No one else in the organization is in as favorable a position as he, relative to the sales force, to accomplish this purpose.

* 20, p. 99

The sales supervisor, responsible for the training program, will, of course, call upon others to assist him. The selection of those who will do the actual training will likely depend upon such factors as: (1) personnel available for this task and their qualifications, and (2) available time for this task from capable salesmen, supervisors, sales managers, factory representatives, and other personnel. The selection of trainers will also be affected by the contents of the training program, i.e., the subject matter. For example, the following subjects would likely be taught by specialists, as indicated below:

Subject	Teacher
1. Knowledge of products	Factory representatives, salesmen
2. Knowledge of the house	Distributor operating manager
3. Promotional functions	Sales promotion manager, advertising agency
4. Basic business procedure	Office manager, credit manager, warehouse supervisor
5. On-the-job training	Salesmen, sales managers, factory representatives

Many individuals will be brought into the training function. This has definite advantages. Salesmen will recognize the authority with which each teacher speaks, since each is a specialist in his own particular subject. In addition, the variety of speakers will make the program more interesting.

The question of who should do the training should be answered by the supervisor of the training program. He will require many individuals to carry out effective training methods. The selection of these individuals should be based upon their qualifications to teach specific subjects. Each distributorship should choose individuals based upon the peculiar needs of its own training program.

E. How Much Training Should be Given

It is possible for a company to overdo a training program. Giving the same amount of training to all salesmen, regardless of previous training, experience and background is a waste of time and effort. One should be cautious to avoid these pitfalls in training*:

1. Devoting too much time to general information on company background, policy, and theory, much of which is of no practical value to the salesmen.

2. Devoting too much time to minor technical details of products which will never be used in selling.

3. Devoting too much time to involved courses in sales psychology not tied in with practical sales problems of the men involved.

The amount of training must be decided by the needs of the salesmen involved in the program. Some salesmen will require detailed training in the various phases of selling. Others, with years of sales experience, might be wasting their time on minor details of such training. Surely a new recruit would require a more complete training program

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than an experienced salesman. Each individual salesman's requirements should determine whether he takes part in a particular section of the training program. After a job analysis has been completed, it should be possible to classify salesmen by subjects, based upon their training needs.

It is interesting to note that in the replies to the Questionnaire for Distributors, eight of nine distributor sales managers reported that they give the same training to all salesmen*. From this information, it seems clear that there is a basic deficiency in local training programs. If the amount of training is to be based upon the needs of salesmen, it is evident that with varying degrees of experience and ability, all salesmen do not require the same amount of training.

The amount of training salesmen should receive is based on the needs of the men. Unless each distributor bases its training program on this firm foundation, it cannot hope for the desired results.

F. Training Aids

1. Sales Manuals. The definition of a sales manual is, "a grouping of all information which the salesman should possess in order to sell his products, line or proposition"**. Broadly, there are two major objectives involved in the development of a sales manual: (1) to contrive a truly worthy and helpful tool for the

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salesmen; and (2) to encourage the salesmen to use it. The effectiveness of the sales manual is very largely determined by how well the manual is integrated into the company training program and philosophy.

The sales manual is highly individual and peculiar to the specific needs of a distributor organization. Obviously, the specifying of exactly what shall go into a sales manual can be done only in the case of a particular company, and then only when the needs and conditions of that company are thoroughly known. The author, based upon studies of recent texts, summarizes subjects which a typical distributor sales manual should contain:

1. Selling techniques:
   (a) Instruction in elements of successful salesmanship
   (b) Sales objections and answers

2. Knowledge of the house:
   (a) History of the company, including something of the history of the industry
   (b) Organization charts
   (c) Individuals to contact on various problems

3. Knowledge of products:
   (a) Information regarding types of products sold
   (b) Service information - location of service centers and service policies

4. Market conditions and competition:
   (a) Definite description of company policies, particularly concerning various trade practices, such as discounts, rebates, transportation allowances
   (b) Testimonial letters from satisfied users

5. Basic knowledge of buyers:
   (a) Information concerning company's more important types of customers - their needs and desires

6. Promotional functions:
   (a) Information concerning company's advertising policies and programs
   (b) Detailed instruction regarding advertising commitments under cooperative program

7. Basic business procedure:
   (a) Reports required - how and where to submit
   (b) Information concerning equipment salesmen must carry, such as samples, forms, etc.
   (c) Handling of sample accounts
   (d) Handling of expense accounts
   (e) Instructions concerning the filling out of order forms

The contents of a specific manual will, of necessity, vary from those listed heretofore. Suggested areas of coverage, however, may be developed from this basic list. The job analysis should furnish information for the sales manual. As previously pointed out in this report, one primary objective of the job analysis is to narrow training material down to the specific requirements of the individuals involved. If the contents of the sales manual are based on job analysis it is likely that everything essential to the most effective performance of the salesman's job will be included. Contrariwise, everything irrelevant, however attractive it may be in theory, will be excluded.

The most successful methods of obtaining this material for manuals is to: (1) draw up a tentative skeleton outline of what information is to be included; and (2) gather this material from the best possible sources, some of which are summarized by the author as follows:

1. Interviews with successful salesmen
2. Studies of salesmen in the field
3. Use of questionnaires for salesmen
4. Studies of available sales material and other sales manuals
5. Help from other members of the organization

The sales manual must be attractively presented. If manuals are to be effective, they must be easily read, to the point, and helpful. Manuals are of no service if salesmen will not read them. In most companies, getting salesmen to use the manual is a far more difficult problem than its preparation. One method of assuring the use of the manual is to use it as a text in the formal or informal training course. It may be well to make the manual a text for sales conferences and informal sales get-togethers. It should be the basis for discussion at such gatherings. Obviously, the character of the company's sales organization and the nature of controls over salesmen will dictate the procedure to be used. Some companies send weekly bulletins to salesmen to call their attention to one important section of the sales manual, or to point to the sales manual as a valuable tool in their selling efforts.

If the sales manual is based on the results of job analysis it will equip the salesman with much of the information he requires to do his job most satisfactorily. It will omit nothing essential to the performance of the salesman's duties. It will contain nothing which is obviously irrelevant to the sales job. If these conditions are carried out, the sales manual can be an instrument of value, a sales training device which is immediately and continually effective.

2. Audio-visual aids. By visual aids is meant such mechanics as motion pictures, slide films, charts, illustrations, models and other such training aids. Visual aids are just that - aids. They

cannot do the whole training job or a major part of it. They are not training methods, but training aids, and their proper relationship to other and perhaps more important tools must be recognized and established. The use of visual aids implies group training, class room training, formal or informal. Visual aids must be characterized by the limitations of the class room method of training.

There are several outstanding organizations offering training programs through the use of audio-visual aids. The Dartnell Corporation has developed a series of seven ten-minute slide films called "Strategy in Selling" for this purpose. Seven booklets for the films are also available. The sequence of pictures is so arranged that it leads into a special tie-in talk by the group leader. The cost of the films and training material is about seventy dollars. The Jam Handy Organization of Detroit, Michigan, offers a complete six session sales course on film, entitled "Stars of Selling". Fourteen top sales managers show how they go about getting an order. This course consists of six half-hour films.

It is also possible to borrow or rent sales training films produced by manufacturers for their own products, but which dramatize fundamentals applicable to selling any product. These films, if soundly conceived and judiciously used, deserve consideration for at least incidental inclusion in the training program.

The value of visual aids for training will vary considerably, depending on several factors, notably the character of the specific subject matter under consideration and the training methods employed by the company.

Charts illustrating the various features of the assignment are valuable teaching aids. The type or lettering on them should be large enough to be read easily by all the students in the class, even by those in the last row. They should be simple and clear. They should tie in completely with the subject matter.

Forms and records used by various companies can frequently be used to good advantage in the discussion of certain subjects. It is possible to enlarge forms so that they can be readily seen by members of the class. Furthermore, it should be remembered that filled-in forms are more valuable than blank ones. Photographs are sometimes excellent in bringing out the physical aspects of certain products. Some photographs can be used during a lecture by being projected on a screen by means of a delineascope.

Samples, of course, are important aids in training. Their extensive use for meetings needs no further discussion. Samples should be available at the opening of the meeting, set up, in working order, and attractively displayed so that their true value will be demonstrated before the group.

3. Tape Recorders. Although tape recorders are rather limited in their use, they can be helpful in the role-playing method of instruction. Sound recording encourages self-development. Hearing one's own voice seems to have a powerful effect on a person. Recordings give salesmen an opportunity to make a critical analysis of their

presentations, and thus evaluate their performance and the performance of a colleague.

Tape recorders do have a place in training programs. The particular methods by which they are used is wholy dependent upon the needs of the group.

4. Courses at Local Schools and Colleges. Those who reside in the greater Boston area are fortunate, indeed, because of the proximity to outstanding schools and colleges available for further study. Although these local educational institutions should not take the place of a training program, they are supplementary aids in the development of salesmen. Such local schools as the Bentley School of Accounting, Boston College, Boston University, and Northeastern University should be considered by distributors for their salesmen. Most courses can be taken during the evening. Laird had this to say regarding the further education of salesmen*:

> The educational standards of all occupations have been rising, but the standards for selling may have risen more than for most other commercial occupations. The salesman represents the company to the public. Both salesman and company stand to profit from his better education.

Salesmen can increase their effectiveness through further study in various marketing subjects. Salesmanship, sales management, marketing policies, market research, and many other subjects are taught in evening sessions. The salesman will find that most marketing

* 12, p. 12

instructors in the evening division are men, who like they, are interested in furthering the sales profession.

5. Trade Publications and Magazines. Salesmen should be encouraged to read trade publications and at least one general business magazine such as Time, Business Week, Fortune or Nations Business. Some distributor sales managers pointed out in interviews with the author, that they subscribe to trade publications for their salesmen. These are delivered to the salesman's home. Some of the recommended publications for wholesale appliance distributor salesmen in the New England area are: New England Television and Appliance News, Dealerscope, New England Hardware, Home Furnishings Daily, Electrical Merchandising, and Sales Management. Each of these publications plays an important part in increasing the knowledge of salesmen.

IX. EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM

A. Necessity for Periodical Check-up

If a training program is to continue in its effectiveness, it must be continually evaluated. Measuring the effectiveness of the training program and activities gives an indication of what is being accomplished. As a result, what should or should not be done in the future can be determined more accurately. In the Handbook of Sales Training, the following suggested outline for an analysis of sales effectiveness is printed*:

	Six Months 1957	Six Months 1958
Salesman		
Territory		
Number of working days		
Number of calls		
Average daily calls		
Total gross billing		
Total cost to sell		
Per cent cost to sell		
Cost per call		
Cost per order		
Volume per call		
New customers		
Sales promotion work		

* 22

This information, when analyzed, can form the basis for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the training program in terms of profits. This information is helpful to the sales manager in convincing management of the value of a training program.

Other studies can be conducted on particular subjects. For example, the credit manager can evaluate results of the program from his viewpoint. The operating manager can evaluate the program on the basis of how the routine work of salesmen, insofar as office methods are concerned, has improved. Evaluation of the training program will embrace the services of various individuals or groups. Unless there is a periodical check-up, the entire training program may become stagnant and ineffective. It is recommended that provision be made for such studies.

B. Evaluation of Results

The field of evaluation is so broad and the evaluation of results of such a program so difficult, that this particular subject should require considerable study. Kenagy in The Selection and Training of Salesmen reported the results of training as follows*:

1. Increased knowledge of salesmen
2. Practical demonstrable skill by salesmen
3. Improved customer relations
4. Reduction in complaints
5. Greater ease of performance by salesmen
6. More effective use of salesmen's time

* 11, p. 394

He summarized the results of training as increasing over-all production and profits. "This is brought about by more orders, a larger share of the potential market, and greater sale of quality products"*.

The contribution of the training program to the attainment of these results cannot be sharply delineated. Kenagy stated*:

> If a salesman's total sales increase steadily as he is trained, can it be indisputably demonstrated that training alone is responsible, or even to what degree training is responsible? Even without training he might have shown a consistant increase in sales, through the sheer passage of time and improvement in business conditions.

There is, however, certain data which may provide measurements both quantitative and qualitative by which one can do this work of evaluation. From studies, the author summarizes the more important data as follows:

1. Questionnaires which may be used to ascertain the salesman's reaction to the sales training program as a whole. These will indicate the attitude of the salesmen toward the training course and suggestions for deletions or additions.

2. Tests to determine the results of certain teaching. The answers to certain questions will give a good indication as to how much of the lesson material has been absorbed by the salesmen.

3. Severance interviews, as outlined on pages fifty-six and fifty-seven of this report, held with salesmen who are about to leave the company. These records give a good evaluation of the training program. If the program is really effective, the turnover rate of salesmen would likely be reduced.

* 11, p. 394

4. Analysis of salesmen's performance. The effect of training on performance is difficult to measure. However, certain indicative trends will be helpful in the evaluation of the program. Trends should be studied relative to
   (a) Sales volume
   (b) Number of dealer calls
   (c) Use of time
   (d) Working habits
   (e) Cooperation with other personnel
   (f) Promotional activities with dealers
   (g) General overall attitude of the salesmen

The results of a training program can be evaluated. It may be impossible to be as specific in this evaluation as desired. Yet, a training program, if it is effective, should effect certain benefits to the distributor organization over a period of time.

X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Restatement of the Findings of the Thesis

In earlier chapters we have examined sales training as it is now presented by distributors in the greater Boston area. We have looked at possible areas of training for wholesale distributor salesmen. We have examined the methods and principles of actually installing a complete training program.

Examination of the results of questionnaires and interviews of sales managers locally, have indicated these facts:

1. High school education is the basic requirement.
2. Previous experience usually is required.
3. Training generally, is handled through on-the-job instruction and formal sales meetings with a variety of individuals doing the training.
4. Same basic training is received by all salesmen, primarily in product knowledge and demonstration methods.
5. Lack of encouragement by distributors of salesmen to pursue further education in schools or colleges. Few offer financial aid.
6. Lack of interest in subject of training.

Examination of the results of questionnaires and interviews of wholesale appliance salesmen in the greater Boston area have indicated these facts:

1. Number of retail outlets called on by salesmen varies from one hundred to two hundred.

2. Salesmen rate their success with dealers from forty to seventy-five per cent effective.

3. Variety of classes of accounts called upon by average salesman is broad.

4. Training received has been through on-the-job instruction and sales meetings.

5. Product knowledge training is generally received by all salesmen.

6. Few salesmen had previous sales experience, although distributors require it.

7. Dissatisfaction with training being received - desire for more and varied training.

From the results indicated, it appears that training of wholesale distributor salesmen in the greater Boston area consists primarily of product knowledge through sales meetings, and on-the-job training. These efforts, we have learned, do not constitute a complete training program. They do not aid in developing salesmen from much more than routine order-takers. It appears, also, that there is a general lack of interest among distributor sales managers in a complete training program. This appears to be due to the fact that most distributors have only a few salesmen, most of whom are old hands in the business - men who have learned through trial and error methods.

The salesmen, on the other hand, appear to be dissatisfied with the training received. They seem to be aware of their need for instruction in more than mere product knowledge, and are desirous of a broad training program.

In this final chapter, the author will bring together relevant facts from preceeding chapters. From these facts it should be possible to arrive at a possible solution to the problem of installing a suitable training program for wholesale distributor salesmen.

B. The Need for Training

This report has previously pointed out the importance of the wholesale salesman in the economic picture. To the customer the salesman is the wholesaler, the key man in that organization, representing his company at every call he makes. If, then, this man is so important, the final verdict as to the value of wholesale distributors in general could well rest upon his performance in the field. We may expect, then, an ever increasing need for training if these men are to perform their important duties so as to justify their very existance.

Sales managers should be encouraged to give serious thought to the subject of training. They will be tempted under today's competitive conditions to short-cut or compromise on inadequate programs. They will be called upon more than once to justify an expense, the results of which, like advertising, are so difficult to measure. Yet, if one considers the many responsibilities of the salesman which are so basic to the continuance of the distributor organization, it seems likely that any forward-looking sales manager can convince management of the necessity for a basic training program. It is this distributor who will advance; the others will eventually fall by the wayside.

C. The Need for a Plan

It is quite evident that no training program will be successful without a plan and some individual responsible for the execution of that plan. A good training program should be planned to meet the needs of a particular distributor organization. Some one individual should be given the responsibility and authority to see that this plan is carried on steadily and efficiently, at the least cost and in the shortest length of time. Training must be a continuous process. The results must be appraised periodically through various means as explained in this report. The program should not be burdensome in time or money for any distributor. It should pay its own way. The results should overbalance the costs.

Programs vary in scope primarily because of management's attitude towards training in general. If management's attitude is to be favorable, a logical plan of action must be presented.

In the following section a suggested basic training plan for an average Boston area wholesale appliance distributor is outlined. This is the type of plan that can be presented to management for approval, and can form the basis for further study on the important subject of training.

D. Suggested Training Program for an Average Distributor

Sales managers are, on the whole, highly practical men, not accustomed to dealing in theory. "Let's look at the facts", they say. Therefore any suggested training program must be practical. It must be worthy of consideration, and upon being considered, must be able to prove its worth.

The following suggested program outline is predicated on the basis of practicability:

1. Consider the needs: There are two parts to this first step. Find out:
   (a) What are the needs of the salesmen to do their job well. This is obtained through job analysis and other studies.
   (b) How much of this the salesmen already know.
   (c) The difference between what the salesmen need to know and what they already know is the basis of the training program. This is what remains to be taught.

2. Determine the subject matter: Suggested subjects outlined in the report are:
   (a) Selling techniques
   (b) Knowledge of products
   (c) Knowledge of the house
   (d) Knowledge of market conditions and competition
   (e) Basic knowledge of buyers
   (f) Methods of securing new accounts
   (g) Promotional functions
   (h) Use of time
   (i) Basic business knowledge

From the analysis of salesmen's needs in step one above, subjects are selected which should be covered in the program. Selection of subjects is based on their importance to the salesmen and feasability of teaching. In other words, some subject of importance may not be selected now because no one is available to teach it. It will have to wait its turn and some other, less important subject be taught.

3. Start the training: After deciding what subjects are to be taught, the training is begun. Methods of teaching are based upon the subject itself, and the number of salesmen to be taught. Suggested methods of teaching various subjects are outlined below:

	Trade Mag's.	Schools and Colleg.	Corres. Courses	On Job Trg.	Role Playing	Aud. Vis. Aid	Lectures	Written Material
Selling Techniques	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Knowledge of Prod.				X	X	X	X	X
Knowledge of House						X	X	X
Knowledge of Market and Comp.	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Basic Knowledge Buyers					X	X	X	X
Securing New Accounts					X	X	X	X
Promotion Functions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Use of Time				X		X	X	X
Basic Business Knowledge				X		X	X	X

For example, if only one or two salesmen need to be taught "selling techniques" the lecture method would be ruled out as impracticable. Methods of presentation should be varied, based on efficiency and practicability.

4. Evaluate results: Through an analysis of the results, find the best subjects to teach and the most successful methods of teaching them.

E. Conclusions

The installation of a training program, regardless of how simple, will fulfill a need which most distributor salesmen have evidenced. Today this need must be met by forward-looking distributors, if only from the selfish standpoint of survival. Good training will bring results in which every distributor is interested: (1) greater sales volume because of fewer lost sales, more sales per call, better customer and manufacturer relations; and (2) lower sales costs through efficiency, increased calls per salesman and better employee morale*.

Increased sales and lower costs are desired by every distributor organization. Any program which points to the achievement of these results should be given an opportunity to prove itself.

It is hoped that this thesis will, at least, stimulate a genuine interest on the part of distributors in the field of sales training. It is a broad field, with many ramifications. Yet, it is a field in which one may help his fellow man to develop and

* 11, p. 394

become more valuable to himself, his family, his job, and his country. Christian Nestell Bovee, the noted American author, once said regarding one's personal development, "The grandest of all laws is the law of progressive development - under it, in the wide sweep of things, men grow wiser as they grow older, and societies better".

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