

With Dealer and Customer

Getting Together To Solve Radio Selling Problems

The dealer is out to increase his sales. The prospective buyer wants to get the best possible value for his money. By understanding each other's viewpoint, dealer and customer can meet on a basis of perfect confidence. Should the dealer give demonstrations in the prospective buyer's home? That is a knotty problem. All dealers will be interested in the article below, which deals with that point, while prospective buyers will see this matter from the viewpoint of the dealer.

TEACH YOUR CUSTOMERS.

Do you take it for granted that your customers know how to operate a set? Remember the old days when the motor-car man gave one driving lesson and let it go at that? Of course the present-day type of set, with simplified controls, looks so easy that it seems almost foolish to talk about training people to handle it. But the fact remains that plenty of women and some men are unable to master the complexities of a single dial until they are shown. They are afraid something may go wrong. If the set squeals they jump. Give them a little help in getting acquainted with it and you have made friends. Besides, you should instruct your customers very thoroughly how to connect up the batteries.

SEE THE SET.

Radio dealers should not attempt to diagnose troubles in customers' sets from verbal description. Usually such efforts go wrong, bringing loss of prestige. Moreover, the customer who comes in with some vague information about a set that is not performing is too often trying to get free advice when he ought to pay for an inspection. No good doctor attempts to prescribe without seeing the patient.

HONEST OPINIONS.

Do your customers ask your advice as to whether to buy batteries or eliminators, this set or that? It is a good sign when they do, but some radio men spoil the opportunity by "hedging." Give your customers the benefit of your honest opinion when they ask it. At the same time, be careful not to put your opinion in such form that it can be twisted into a promise of performance or a warranty of merchandise. Make it clear—in other words, that you are voicing your own views, based on experience and expert knowledge—nothing more.

AS THEY COME.

Speaking of handling customers, how many sales have been lost to radio dealers by the needless mistake of waiting on the wrong person first! It is human nature to resent having to wait while someone else who came later is served. Watch your front door when business begins to get brisk. Take them as they come.

WELL-PLACED SETS.

Have you ever stopped to consider that the location of a set or a loudspeaker in the average household has a great deal to do with the extent to which it will be used? When the matter of locating the installation is left to you put the set where it can conveniently be used during meals. Dinner-time brings the whole family together.

GOOD USE OF POSTERS.

Some radio shops at this season take on the most unattractive appearance growing out of the habit of hanging, tacking, and standing all around the place the miscellaneous posters, circulars, and other display matter provided by manufacturers. Such material has real value when used right, but when allowed to accumulate beyond reasonable limits it is about as attractive as a deserted barn covered with plug tobacco advertisements.

LOUDSPEAKERS.

This season has brought some real improvement in speakers. If in doubt about it, get out and compare some of the other lines with those you are handling. You will find that there is a very wide range, from very good to rather bad. Thus you can check up on what you are selling and determine whether your lines are representative of the best. There are good and bad cone loudspeakers just as there are excellent and poor horn-type loudspeakers.

TRASHY GOODS.

New Zealand radio trades, if they have any regard for their future success, should not stock anything "cheap and nasty." The sale of such an article may please the purchaser temporarily with the idea that he has got a bargain, but he will soon discover the thing is a dud and dear at any price. He won't come back to your shop.

EXHAUSTED BATTERIES.

Listeners, don't spoil your reception by using exhausted "B" batteries. A 45-volt "B" battery, which is down to 35 or 36 volts, has become useless, and should be discarded. Go to your nearest dealer and get two "heavy service" 45-volt "B" batteries. You will then be able to enjoy all the holiday broadcasting. It would be extremely disappointing to find your batteries run down and all the radio shops closed.

CLEAN THE BATTERIES.

A word to battery service station managers. Never let a battery go back to its owner with the terminals encrusted with sulphate and the top of the cells like a duck pond. I saw a battery delivered to its owner in that condition the other day, after it had been recharged at the service station. This sort of thing evidences carelessness or thoughtlessness. The owner of the battery is entitled to have it returned clean and free from liquid on the top outside.

SPARE VALVES HANDY.

Multivalve-set owners should always have a spare valve at hand. Valves, like motor tires, are subject to mishap, and it would be decidedly disconcerting to have guests present when one's set becomes crippled through one of the valves breaking down. This would be all the more unpleasant if it occurred during the holidays, when the radio shops are closed.

FLOOD LIGHTS.

Lighting and decoration play just as an important part in the merchandising of radio sets as does the music, and since all the music necessary can be obtained from the sets, play up the lighting and decorations. Some American dealers use flood lights equipped with colour shields in the display windows and the interior of the shop, playing them upon the best-looking consoles displayed.

ATTRACT ATTENTION.

Warm colours are essential in attracting attention, and these can be obtained in the display windows by equipping the flood lights with red, orange, or amber colour shields. In the interior floor and table lamps with coloured shades can be used in the arrangement of the display.

Again in the interior of the shop use more gay trimmings, or holly wreaths, and have the shop brightly and artistically decorated.

THE HOLIDAYS.

It's well to be ready for some extra demand for batteries, tubes, etc., to-day. How about a sign in the window? "Are your Batteries Ready for the Holidays?"

WHAT DO YOU STOCK?

No wise trader fails to stock any article that is in big demand even if there is not much profit in it. The writer was told by a radio dealer recently, "We don't stock that line. There's nothing in it. We don't think it's worth while handling." But the man around the corner did stock that particular line, and those who went there to buy it also purchased other accessories there. It is known that one dealer bought another right out of one line for his own shop because he found it brought other business with it. A knowing bird!

"FREE ENTERTAINMENT."

If you make a practice of home demonstrations, this is a good week to put on some extra pressure. But beware of people who want a little free entertainment to please their family or guests.

SATISFY THE CUSTOMER.

The president of one of America's largest radio-set manufacturing corporations says:—

"At Christmas time you can find out more readily than at any other time just how much your customer wishes to spend. Concentrate on the model nearest to that price; don't bother to tell him how it can be made cheaper or better. Later we may be able to sell this customer a more expensive set. But make him stick to one model at Christmas time. If you make him believe the selection of a radio set requires a lot of discrimination and judgment he is liable to delay the purchase until time is not so pressing, and a bird in the hand is worth more than two listening to the neighbours brag about their sets."

THE FINEST GIFT.

Radio dealers should remember that thousands of families regard a radio set as the finest possible Christmas gift. What can we do to stimulate this desire to the point of an actual purchase? What can we do to make a radio set easy and convenient to buy, and most important of all, what can we do to convince those who know nothing about radio that it is the most wonderful invention of to-day, and that it gives never-ending pleasure? And that a radio set is now as easy as a gramophone to manipulate.

Home Demonstration

A KNOTTY PROBLEM

Can a radio shop give trial demonstrations and make money? (writes Will Whitmore in the New York "Radio Merchandising"). This problem is just about as difficult as the service problem, and has been the cause for many radio dealers being visited by the sheriff. Every dealer has to answer it sooner or later, and the way he solves the problem has much to do with the ultimate success of his business.

The Texas Radio Syndicate of San Antonio, a retail radio shop in the heart of the quaint old Texas city, was confronted with the problem of trial demonstrations in the home. To-day its answer is, "Yes, a radio shop can give trial demonstrations and make money."

"Trial demonstrations are an abomination to any radio shop," declared Frank Davis, manager of the shop, "and we had just about reached the point where we could successfully refuse to give them, when our competitors began giving them on such a large scale it was impossible for us to refuse and still do much business. But giving trial demonstrations is one of the quickest and surest ways of losing money if it is not done carefully. We set about to do it carefully."

"To-day approximately ninety per cent. of our sales come from trial demonstrations in the home, and we are not losing money. The first rule of our trial demonstrations plan is not to leave any set in a home more than two nights, and we allow it to stay in a home two nights only on rare occasions, when static is bad or reception is poor from other unavoidable causes.

"We have found that the easiest way to lose a sale is to give a prospect too much rope. Leave a set in a home more than two nights and you can kiss your sale good-bye. We have found that the firmer you are with a prospect the easier it is to sell a set. Never seem too anxious to make a sale. We try to make the prospect ask us for a demonstration. Then he feels indebted to us, and it is less difficult to make the sale. On the other hand, if we press a man to allow us to make a demonstration he feels no responsibility towards us.

"The country is full of people looking for radio dealers who will make trial demonstrations, people who have no idea of buying. Unless the dealer is able to weed these people out from those who are actually desirous of buying a set, he will lose money just as surely as if he cuts prices. We have no set policy to weed out this class, but we are successful just the same. Our method is to find out first as much about the prospect as possible.

AVOIDING DEMONSTRATION HOUNDS.

"The first thing to find out is, has the prospect had demonstrations before? If he has had a number of other sets in his home, we know that he is merely a demonstration hound who has no idea of buying a set. When we find a man like this, we become all the more firm with him. We make him understand that if we give him a satisfactory demonstration, we will expect him to purchase the set. This eliminates the average prospect of this class.

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"Next we always try to make the prospect decide on the type of set he wants before we make the demonstration. If he wants a set that requires an outside antenna, we attempt to install a permanent antenna for the demonstration. We charge \$3 for this service. We know that if a man is willing for us to make this permanent installation he has made up his mind to buy a set.

"However, very often even the earnest prospect will not agree to this installation charge. Again we grow firm, and stress the fact that we expect him to buy if the demonstration is satisfactory. When the earnest prospect clearly understands this, a sale is comparatively easy after a successful demonstration has been given him. The cardinal principle of trial demonstrations is not to be too anxious to give one. Let the prospect be anxious to have it.

SOURCES OF LIVE LEADS.

"Now, how do we go about getting demonstrations? We have from two to three salesmen who devote their entire time to outside work.

"These leads usually come from satisfied customers. When we install a set, we always call the new owner and ask him if the set is giving thorough satisfaction. This pleases the customer, to know that we are interested in him, but it has another advantage for us. We endeavour to get the names of the owner's friends who have seen and appreciated the set. These names afford excellent leads for new sales.

"Another source of leads comes from the trial demonstration itself, and this is one of the best advantages of trial demonstrations. Very often the prospect invites his friends to his house the night that we are making the demonstration. Quite often if the original prospect is satisfied with the set and purchases, his neighbour who is present to hear the demonstration will also buy a set at the same time. If he doesn't he is a good prospect for a demonstration in his own home.

"As to the actual demonstration itself, there is a definite technique and procedure to carry out. We always have a salesman at the home on the night of the demonstration who is in charge of the demonstration. This is absolutely imperative, we believe. If the salesman goes about the demonstration in the proper way he can create a desire of ownership in any prospect.

"Our salesmen first tune in stations themselves, in order to show the prospect the worth of the set, but the big idea is to let the prospect himself operate the set. Of course at first he does not have the same success as does the salesman. This makes the prospect decide to let the prospect himself operate the set efficiently. And when he sees that he can bring in a station with ease, he is proud of his own dexterity, and the pride of ownership begins to get in its work for the salesman.

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