

9-22-2010

Who Is the World'S Greatest Salesperson?

C. David Shepherd

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Who is the world's greatest salesperson?

Who do you believe is the world's greatest salesperson? Perhaps Zig Zigler, the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, President Obama or that guy who sold you the Yugo back in the '80s?



C. David Shepherd

Well, if you ask my opinion, the greatest living salesperson has to be Steve Jobs.

If you don't agree, consider

the fact that not long ago people stood in line for hours to buy a product, the iPad, they didn't even know they needed or wanted until earlier this year. Actually, they didn't know they needed it until Steve told them they did.

Not only did they stand in line to buy the iPad, but they also cheered for one another as they made their purchase for having the knowledge, luck or just common sense to know the iPad is a must-have.

How many salespeople do you know who have people

line up to buy their product and cheer for each other as they shell out their money?

Some have said Steve Jobs' aura is so strong a "reality distortion" field surrounds him. How does he do it? Can we learn anything from Steve that we can apply to selling cars, real estate or whatever you happen to be selling?

I would like to suggest three simple principles we can learn from Mr. Jobs and apply in our practice of selling.

First, Steve Jobs is totally focused on the customer and the customer experience.

Industry experts sometimes complain about the fact Apple products are more expensive than the competition. Others complain about the closed-system nature of Apple products and services. And yet, Apple is thriving.

What's the difference between Apple and its competitors? Many point to Steve Jobs' unrelenting focus on the customer experience.

Apple puts great pains into

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making sure the customer experience, from visiting an Apple Store, to buying or using an Apple product, to contacting customer service, is a highly pleasant experience. As a result, the stores, the products and the customer service are award- and customer-winning.

Second, Steve Jobs is never about the mundane. Consider the terms he uses. He doesn't refer to Apple products as good or even excellent. Instead, they are "insanely great."

Jobs doesn't spend time talking about the inner workings of an iPad. Instead, he describes it as magic. Mr. Jobs has even said the world is a better place because of Apple's existence.

Everything about Steve

Jobs and the company he runs is exciting. It's an excitement people want to be a part of, perhaps camping out overnight to hear him speak or to buy one of his insanely great products.

Third, for all his wealth and power, Steve Jobs still seems like a regular guy. The first time I watched Steve deliver a MacWorld keynote address, he did not meet my expectations.

Having heard of his reputation as a master motivator, I expected an amazing delivery that would leave the listener enthralled. Instead, a normal-looking guy took the stage in blue jeans and a black mock turtle-neck sweater.

In fact, when he spoke, it didn't even sound like he was making a presentation. It

actually sounded like a regular guy, who I could relate to, having a conversation with me. I believe his accessibility is what makes him such a persuasive presenter.

So there are my three simple observations about master salesperson Steve Jobs. He's a guy you can relate to, who is totally committed to the customer and who has great products.

Isn't that the kind of person you want to buy from? Isn't that the kind of salesperson you want to be?

Thanks for listening to my opinion. Now, I would like to know who you think is the greatest living salesperson. Please drop me a note with your opinion at dshepherd@georgiasouthern.edu or tweet me at sellingprof.

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