

**You want my signature on the line?**

**Francois Retief**

**Sales Training speech presented to the Sanlam Speaks Toastmasters Club in Pretoria during 2017 as part of the Advanced Communicator certification.**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the sales team

In a sense we are all salespeople: selling our time, skills, effort, commitment, loyalty.

But you are the experts, the specialists.

You know full well that salespeople generally do not have a good image in the eyes of the public. This has nothing to do with product or price.

This perception has been created at the intersection of the buyer-seller relationship – and this is what my training will focus on tonight.

### **Why this negative perception?**

I am going to mention two examples that may help us to understand this:

*Our first story goes back to 1994. That was the year mobile phones were introduced to South Africa.*

At first, we bought the phones and then bought airtime as needed. You could only make calls at that stage.

And then one good morning we opened our newspapers to a huge advertisement stating, "Free Cell phones!" Wow! This was something. A cell phone for free!

The excitement soon evaporated. You now had to sign a contract – effectively paying off the phone over 24 months. So much for "free." We felt cheated.

Then we noticed the small \* next to "free." At the bottom of the advertisement we found an unknown term: "Terms and conditions apply."

We soon realised how to interpret this. "Watch out – this is not as good as it sounds." "Where's the catch?" "Beware..."

Today you will probably not find any advertisement without "T's and C's apply."



You as salespeople operate in this space. My challenge to you is this: How are you going to counter the perception that "T's and C's apply" actually means you're trying to sell me a free meal in a mouse trap?

*Our second story is a more recent one. A few months ago, I bought my first new car ever. This was to me a special experience full of excitement with excellent customer service from my salesman.*

But: the moment I signed the deal, my phone started ringing. Optional extras offered left, right and centre. Additional insurance for scratches and dents. A Tracker system, comprehensive car and household insurance. And so on and so on...

I wanted to shout it from the rooftops: you are spoiling what was to me a special experience. I know full well about networking – but these vultures were just too much for me.

These guys were making a mess of the buying experience that is so important for your own success as salespeople.

**How can you become exceptional salespeople? How can you create a good experience at this intersection of buyer-seller?**

I would like to present you with two challenges:

*One: you know that salespeople are perceived to be dishonest and not trustworthy.*

It is therefore up to you to counter this perception. And the only way to do this is to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Or as a dentist once put it to his customer - and dentists are actually salespeople – "I will pull the tooth, the whole tooth and nothing but the tooth."

point of view  
**Truth** [tru:θ]  
is true as opposed  
with fact; correct  
statement.

That's integrity for you.

*Two: make me as the buyer feel great.*

Our family were late comers to the Nespresso scene. (And coffee-wise I am not yet convinced that their coffee tastes better than the coffee I can present you from a plunger.) However, we bought the machine – and off we went to the Nespresso shop in Menlyn to register as users and to buy some capsules.

On that Friday afternoon my wife and I found the Nespresso shop rather empty. A well-dressed man introduced himself to us. Garth – the manager.

We did the paperwork to officially become part of the Nespresso family, enjoyed a free cup of coffee and selected our coffee capsules according to Garth's recommendations.



We paid for everything and Garth made up a bag with our goodies. And then: Garth, the manager, came from behind the counter, handed us the bag and thanked us for shopping at Nespresso.

We went outside and stared at each other: what was that?"

A simple sale was elevated into an experience. We felt valued. We felt important.

Now compare this to your average shopping experience: "Next!" "Plastic?"

Make the buying – selling experience something special – whatever it is you are selling.

Make me feel great!

## **Conclusion**

You are in the position to elevate the buyer-seller relationship to a new level.

This is not about better products or a lower price. You can do this through your integrity. You can do this by creating something special in the interaction with your clients.

Go for it. And then: **I will put my signature on the line.**

**Francois Retief**

**[www.tippet.co.za](http://www.tippet.co.za)**

**[fjretief@tippet.co.za](mailto:fjretief@tippet.co.za)**