

Salespeople's Weapons : Humor and Eye contact

by Bae Jung-ran

There is a Korean saying, "A word can pay a heap of debts." This means that if people say a word appropriately, the word has a very big power to move one's mind or change someone's behavior. And there is another saying, "The eyes are the window of the soul." This saying tells us that eyes shows us who he is--his attitude, his characteristics--and what he is saying--true or false. These two sayings give Korean salespeople, who don't think deeply what to say and how to say to their customers and don't contact their eyes with the customer's, very important and essential lessons. The sayings tell salespeople creating an emotional common ground with the customer through humor and the eye contact is an effective way to achieve their successful sales in this era.

The salesperson has to create a common ground to persuade the customer to buy his product instead of using a product-driven orientation. It is necessary for Korean salespeople to build an emotional common ground with the customer these days because this era is the "Age of Information" and the "Age of Sensibility." People can get more specific information about some products through the mass media and the Internet and can compare them basing on information which they gain. Hence, it isn't effective to explain about products to the customer who already know well about that. Another reason to build emotional agreement for the sales is that people regard 21st century as "Age of Sensibility." Daniel Goleman, who is the originator of concept of Emotional Quotient (EQ), says that human's emotion is stronger than intelligence and insists that we have to break a common idea of a business world that intelligence is more important than emotion. These days people are resisting to the bleakness of 20C, whose feature was that head and intelligence dominated the behavior of people. People think people's emotional aspects is important thing to influence a person's behavior. We think 'feeling' is very important when we buy or do something. The salespeople can persuade his customer to buy the product by building an affinity between himself and the customer. Therefore, it is the most important for the salesman to make an emotional agreement with the customer for the sales.

One good way to build rapport with the customer is through using humor. When a salesman tries to talk with the customer who is not acquainted with him, he can break the ice and persuade his customer by making joke or humorous story. According to 'Secrets of Power Persuasion for Salespeople' by Roger Dawson, famous people like Sir Winston Churchill or Abraham Lincoln used humor frequently when they persuaded someone because humor was a powerful tool to persuade someone. Also he says being rich in humor is one of many elements to develop an unconscious affinity between seller and customer. The salesman can draw the customer's attention and interest by saying joke. Then the customer feels familiarity to the seller goes one step forward—trust him based on the familiarity. When my mother and I went to buy refrigerator, we went to Samsung and LG shop. In LG shop, the salesman just jumped immediately into his memorized sales pitch to give us the information about their refrigerators without any endeavor to make an affinity, but Samsung man was an humorous person. He joked about refrigerator—how to make elephant go into a refrigerator—and made us laugh. Due to his joke, he, I and my mother were on a common ground, and we felt friendly toward him. At that time, we knew through the Internet that Samsung and LG refrigerators had same price and function, so it wasn't easy to decide which one to buy. Finally we found trust in his words, so we were inclined to

buy a refrigerator from him. We felt we were influenced by his optimistic attitude from his humor and smile. Like this Humor has great power to establish familiarity to give someone trust.

A salesperson couldn't deliver his message to the customer completely without proper non-verbal language, even if he used humor. This is because non-verbal language occupies 93 percent of total impact of message, according to the formula devised by psychologist Albert Mehrabian. To create the emotional common ground with the customer, it is an effective way for the salesman to use proper non-verbal language. Back Sook-hyen, who is working in 'Daewoo Electronic' and very famous in sales business field because she has been selling ten billion won worth of goods for 10years, says that with proper eye behavior, a salesperson can build rapport with the customers because eye behavior that someone holds the other's eyes is a sign of respect and affection. Then the customers feel these 'feelings' and they can trust the salesperson's words. Actually according to KOSOMAR, 80% of people in poll answered they felt more trust and kindness when salespersons held their eyes. In my case, for example, when I went to 'Samsung Digital Plaza', the salesman just explain to me his product reading only catalogue to deliver the every information. His toil of persuading me to buy the product, however, did more harm than good because I felt he ignored me and told me with his memorized sales pitch with an annoyed look. On the other hand, when I went to 'Intel-centrino' shop, the salesman gave me impression that we were in conversation, not just an one-sided explanation because his eye contact was very good. He looked intently and kindly into my eyes. This made me feel trust in his words and he was respecting me, so I could bend an ear and I moved to buy a notebook from him. Like this, the eye contact plays a big role to build an affinity between seller and customer.

Hans Uwe, who is the best consultant in sales field in Europe and created "Love-Selling Project," said, "It is 5% of reason and 95% of emotion that make customers buy the products." This means the salespeople need to make a common ground with the customers as if they fall in love with customer because customers unconsciously tend to buy products when they have an affinity with the salesmen. The salespeople who arm themselves with humor and proper eye contact can satisfy the customer's emotional wants. And salespeople who can satisfy the customer's emotional wants can be the successful one.