

Who Does the Selling?

BY JOE BURNS

Everyone

Including field men, office employees, partners, janitors - those who contact the public and "back room" personnel who never meet a client.

Companies that take time to cultivate good will and promote morale among their employees are in effect making each one part of their marketing force.

This seems like a single truth but some owners fail to agree. One told me, "This business of a happy ship is a lot of hogwash." His company grew very large but rarely made more money partly due to the constant turmoil, infighting and high turnover at all levels.

Other owners seem to have little concern for the small social amenities that most employees enjoy - company-sponsored bowling, golf, fishing trips, parties, open house for families - small, inexpensive gestures that draw people together.

Consider how these employees can help.

Aerial Crews

When crews fly a city, a county or a block of USGS quads local newspapers usually find this newsworthy. One photographer made a point of calling on the local media and often achieved a favourable article on the company, sometimes with photos of the crew and aircraft.

Survey Crews

Often entering private property, surveyors can make friends or create ill-will by their actions. Unfortunately, most fieldmen are not adept at communicating and sometimes can raise havoc with the company image.

One of our crews drove across part of a golf course in the spring with a Chevy Suburban. The deep tracks on the ground were repaired later but the impression on the country club clientele was probably more lasting.

An Eastern firm sent a crew to the Midwest once to map a power transmission line with instructions not to talk about the project. They antagonized a farmer who called the sheriff who ordered the crew (still not talking) out of the county. This action led to a mass meeting of local farmers and the utility company finally built the line *around* the county.

Are your field crews well briefed on the need for tact and common sense? If not, you're risking legal action.

Receptionists

The worst telephone manners I've encountered are in the U.S. Government in Washington. Nine out of ten agency operators are rude, brusque and seem anxious to get you off the phone as soon as possible (with or without the information).

The most valuable receptionist I recall was not too bright (she spelled all cities with one word, including South Bend and Grand Rapids) but she was physically attractive, had a nice smile and projected a warmth that clients felt over the telephone. A real jewel.

Most receptionists fall between these extremes and are often undervalued by their employers who fail to realize the value of good telephone manners and a pleasant welcome.

Clients who call or visit your office can be turned off or put in a mellow mood by the treatment they receive.

These are small but important points that alert executives recognize. First impressions are important; all employees should help build a favourable image.

*The Photogrammetric Coyote
March, 1983*