

# From the Handbook for Business, the Bible

## # 39: There is a time to speak

At times in life & business, silence is golden. In other words, it may be wise to, as mum used to say, mind your own business, don't be a sticky-beak! But when you're in sales, identifying and solving customer problems offering them the best solution, it's definitely time to speak up!

Example: I remember taking a faulty electric shaver back to the store where I bought it; there were few words spoken by the sales guy; he was focused on having to send it to Ballarat for repair and the service fee I needed to pay; but he neglected to figure out my real problem - it wasn't the broken shaver, rather, it was, what do I do in the meantime?

*...He didn't offer to lend me one or do a deal on buying a new one...just Ballarat and that fee!*

### What Handbook verse relates to this kind of incident?

**Eccl 3:7** - *'To everything there is a season & a purpose...a time to keep silence and a time to speak'*

In the selling 'season' (i.e., sales pitch), get your mind off money & need for a sale; speak about the customer's problem, its impact, how they tried to fix it; then offer your brilliant solution!

\* The shaver guy was silent, maybe thinking, *'It's a small sale & I've got to package/send it, etc'*

Too often in a sales pitch, sellers outline features & benefits of the product/service, which is fine but these don't actually identify the real problem the customer needs to solve.

### What can sellers speak about that will radiate value to their customers?

**First**, business-as-usual for most means a homogeneous model, all offering the same products, same prices, same service with little or no point-of-difference; just relying on personalities or geography! this may work in good times but when the economy nosedives you will be in strife.

**Second**, identify what sets your business apart from all the others: Ask you a **Q**...*What aren't the opposition doing that we are/could be, doing? Then shout this difference from the rooftops.*

**Third**, with a different & better model, you can charge a premium price that some people will pay; the corollary of this is to stop discounting because that's what everyone else is doing!

**Fourth**, if you sell tangible products, include intangible benefits in your package; if you sell intangible services, create & offer a tangible, named product (e.g., All-Washers-Replaced Plan)

**Fifth**, to deflect focus from your premium prices, yes, **spea**k value, but also **add** value:

...Create product packages and offer a good-better-best option

...Include a DIFY service such as assembling (flatpack) products at a customer's home or office

...Offer after-sales training or a hotline customers can call for help

...Promise one or more follow-up calls/visits to ensure all is in order...and allay 'buyers-regret'

...Tap into peoples' appreciation of speed...solve their problem quicker than everyone else

...Offer an incredible guarantee, reversing the risk from buyers to you, where it should be

...Add soft-dollar extras (low cost, high perceived value) using your products or someone else's (e.g., if you sell carpet, add one or more free steam cleans over the next 1- 3 years).

***My counsel to business owners in these volatile days: There is a time to speak and that time is NOW but make sure you have something worthwhile to say to prospects & customers that attracts them to your solution and your business!***