IMPERIAL RETAIL STATION SALESMANSHIP

Section Two
Better Selling at Your Station

Prepared in Co-operation with
IMPERIAL OIL LIMITED

LA SALLE CORPORATION SERVICE
a Division of
LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
# IMPERIAL RETAIL STATION SALESMANSHIP

## Section Two

Better Selling at Your Station

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YOUR COMPETITION—AN OPPORTUNITY AND A CHALLENGE

In the preceding Section of this Imperial-LaSalle sales-development program you learned the first great basic principle of expert salesmanship: the buyer buys advantages. Expert salesmanship, therefore, must always be based on the offer of these advantages. That is easy to remember and easy to apply, isn’t it?

In this Section you will be given two more basic sales principles. They will equip you to make the most effective use of these buying motives as you saw them explained and illustrated in Section One. These principles deal with the selling process you will use in all your work and with the buying decisions which every buyer makes.

Before going forward with these new selling principles, however, it will be helpful and interesting to consider an introductory subject which looms very large in the mind of every Imperial salesman—competition. Perhaps you think of competition as your biggest problem.

There Are Various Kinds of Competition

When you think of competition, you are, perhaps, most likely to think of the competitor down the street or road who, you suspect, is cutting the price of his gasoline, or of the competing station which is too close to yours for comfort.

These kinds of competition are, of course, real problems, and will be dealt with as such in this program. But there is a great deal more to the subject of com-
petition than just the ordinary use of the word might imply.

For example, Mr. Smith, who has been buying Three Star, Marvelube, and Imperial Specialized Lubrication from you, suddenly transfers his business to another station. This is the most direct effect of competition as we ordinarily think of it. There is also Mr. Jones, who buys only his motor fuel—Three Star—from you and his oil and lubrication somewhere else; Mr. Black, who buys only Polarine from you; Mr. White, who visits your station only occasionally, mostly for free service; and Messrs. Jones, White, and Black, who buy their tires, batteries, and accessories somewhere else.

These motorists all buy somewhere, and so you see that your competition problem is considerably wider than just that of the competing station down the street. Let’s take these customers we have just named and see how competition is affecting their patronage. We shall see immediately that there are other factors besides a company name, or its products, or service stations—their location, quality, upkeep, etc.—that enter into this battle for customers and their continued loyalty. We’ll see that the service-station salesmen’s personality, service, and the type of salesmanship employed; and the buying habits and preferences of motorists, etc., are often much more determinative in their effect.

Why Mr. Smith Changes Stations

In the first Section you saw that 40 per cent of all changes from one station to another are made for personal reasons. Either the service and personality of the old station become unsatisfactory, or the service and personality of the new station are considered to
ten who change service stations do so on account of the *people* at the stations, it certainly is high time to see that the personality factors at your station are such that more changes are made to your station than from it.

Recently a progressive Imperial salesman said to a LaSalle field man:

"I read somewhere recently that the Chinese spend unlimited money, time, and skill in building their pagodas, or temples, and then never give them a lick of repair afterward, but let them fall into decay. This is a custom that afflicts a lot of service-station retailers. They are eager to get new customers, but once they are considered to be ‘safely in the bag,’ as the saying is, they’re not very particular about giving them the kind of service that will keep them in the bag.

"One fact we should always remember is that our so-called steady customer is our competitor's prospect. Therefore, if we all devote ourselves chiefly to getting new customers and neglect the steady ones, it stands to reason that our competitor down the road is devoting his best efforts to winning our steady customers.

"The Canadians took the Hindenburg line by taking trenches and then *dug in*. That’s the way we must hold our customers. We must sell ourselves—our friendliness, our service, our interest in their motoring welfare—along with our products; and then keep these sales ‘dug in’ by continued personal salesmanship. In this way we build the friendship and loyalty of our customers.

"Since the majority of motorists prefer Imperial products, and a far greater percentage prefer Imperial products to those of any one competitor, the competitive job of holding customers is for us an easier one than it is for any competitor. That’s perfectly plain.

"If our station is just as attractive a place to trade, if our premises are just as clean and our restrooms as inviting, and our attitude toward the motorist and the service we give him are just as good as those of our competitor, we still have..."
fore, he feels no more loyalty to the Blank station than he would to a gasoline vending machine at the side of the road into which he could put his coins to get back the right measure of gasoline. Convenience and habit are the only things which held him to the Blank station—both of them mighty slender reeds to lean on, as you will admit.

Then one day something happens. He may be talking to a neighbor about how hard it is to start his car, or the trouble he is having with his battery, or any number of things. The friend says, “Why don’t you go down to Bill Thomas’ station (your station)? They give you good service down there, and they’re a fine bunch of fellows, too.”

Mr. Smith remembers this, and, having no particular loyalty to the Blank station, the next time he drives a block farther and comes into your station instead of Blank’s. At Blank’s the salesman (?) would amble up and say, “Yeah? How many?” and at the end of the transaction, “One-thirty-five from two. O.K.” But at your station he finds an entirely different atmosphere. You are glad to see him, appreciate his business, and show that you do. You give him windshield and radiator service, offer to check his oil and battery, and perhaps call his attention to a tire that looks soft. You impress him with the fact that you are really interested in the well-being of his car. You have a friendly smile. If you know who he is, you tell him you are glad to receive his visit. If he has a new car, you compliment him on it. Your sense of tact and diplomacy will be a safe guide in giving him the assurance that you are glad he came in, appreciate his business, and want him to come back.

When he drives out, instead of feeling that he has put a coin in a slot, he is likely to feel, “Pretty live outfit back there. Guess I’ll go there again.” Do not forget that actual surveys have shown that 14 per cent of those who change stations do so on the recommendation of friends. Consequently, you can never be sure that the next stranger who drives up to your pump hasn’t come at the suggestion of a mutual friend to test his recommendation.

Why Mr. Smith Comes Back to Your Station

Why did Mr. Smith decide to “go there again”? Because he believed that he would continue to receive the same sort of friendly, interested, expert service he received on his first visit. As long as he does, he will
continue to come back, quickly forming a buying habit (which will be explained shortly), and in his turn becoming a “booster” like the friend who originally sent him to your station.

But remember, Mr. Smith continues to be a prospect for all the good competing service-station salesmen in your territory. Never lose sight of that fact for a moment. He is your customer only as long as you keep him sold on your service. He is buying not only your products and service, but also the satisfaction he gets from them. Other retailers are making similar efforts to get his patronage. He will read competing advertisements, which will have their effect on him. Other friends may suggest competing stations. More attractive-looking or more elaborate stations may exert their pulling power on him. Many things can happen! In fact, some competitor may adopt the last-ditch methods of the defeated and offer to cut the price of his gasoline. The only protection you can give Mr. Smith against all these inducements of competition is to keep him so well-pleased with the personality of your station and your continued good service that he will not think of changing.

Friendship Must Always Be Based on Salesmanship

It will always be good business to treat every motorist who drives into your station as a prospect whom you are eager to win by your salesmanship. Even though you and a particular customer are friendly enough to call each other by your first names, service is the sound basis of this friendship, and salesmanship sustains it. Here is an actual case of the result of taking friendship for granted, which was observed by a LaSalle field man:

A motorist drove into an Imperial station and greeted the salesman with, “Hi, there, Harry! About six, I guess.”

Harry started for the tank and then stopped and said, “Say, look here, you’ve got four new tires on your rims. You know I sell as good a tire as money can buy. Why didn’t you give me that business?”

“Gosh, Jim,” said Harry contritely, “I never thought of you! I was over in Newtown last week, and Blank’s gave me a good deal on these. I never gave your tire a thought. I’m sorry, old man. The next time I’ll surely give you a shot at it.”

The “next time” is probably a year and a half away. There never could be any “next time” to compensate for this lost sale—lost because Jim took Harry’s loyalty to him for granted. Doubtless, Harry had driven into Jim’s station many times with his growing need for new tires plainly evident. Unfortunately, Harry ran into some competing salesmanship over at Newtown before Jim said anything about his tires. To Blank, you see, he wasn’t an old friend; he was a prospect.

Thus, in your straight-line competition with other service stations for the business of the Mr. Smiths of your community or territory, you must keep selling all the time, keep giving gilt-edged service, keep selling yourself, keep making your station and surroundings attractive, keep observing needs of your customers which they will buy as advantages. If you do that, you can agree with the Imperial salesman who said:

“Yes, we have plenty of competition here—five station identifications within a block and a half. But I’m so busy keeping my customers happy and satisfied with my service that I don’t have much time to worry about competition.

“Infact, I guess our being bunched here this way is an advantage, just as you will find all the good stores bunched on the main business street. If you try to get away from
competition, you simply get away from where business is. I guess we'll get plenty of business at the station as long as we have that Imperial sign hanging out front and keep our station spick-and-span; and as long as we have plenty of customers to recommend our services and we keep up our neighborhood-development and the company's fifty-fifty plan. Equally important, we've found, is keeping the business after we get it, and we do that with good service and salesmanship."

What Happens to Mr. Jones' Oil and Lubrication Business

Mr. Jones, you will recall, buys Three Star at your station, but gets his oil and lubrication elsewhere. Evidently some other retailer is competing successfully with you for this business. This may be due to any one of a variety of reasons:

He may be sold on the superiority of some particular brand of oil which he cannot get at your station.

He may think he saves money by buying his oil in drums by mail or at department or motor-supply stores and putting it in his car himself.

He may believe that the only place to get an "expert" lubrication service is from some mechanic whom he knows or from the service department of the dealer from whom he bought his car.

He may not have had his car lubricated since he began buying gasoline from you.

Whatever the reason may be, the fact that you are not selling these products and services to Mr. Jones is because you are not trying to sell them. In Marvelube, Mobiloil, and Pollarine you have oils which can meet any and all competition. In Imperial Specialized Lubrication you have the equipment, charts, and lubricants which will convince any motorist that you can give him the best and safest lubrication that money can buy. Therefore, if Mr. Jones is going out of his way to subject himself to the inconvenience of splitting his business among several retailers, it must be because he does not realize that he could save time and money by giving it all to you.

Doubtless, you have Mr. Joneses among your customers—motorists who buy only gasoline from you. If so, make it a point to ask them where they are buying their other motoring needs. As a rule, they will readily tell you why they are buying elsewhere. They will give you such answers as, "Well, I have been using Blank oil for some time, and my motor seems to like it." Or, "Charlie Smith looks after my greasing; he does a good job, and I like to give him some business."
Competing for Mr. Jones’ Business

Plainly, Mr. Jones is buying Three Star from you because he is sold on Imperial gasoline, and yours is the most convenient place to get it. Thus, you are merely riding free on business that your Imperial sign has brought you. You are “giving ’em what they ask for,” but you are not practicing salesmanship—making your gasoline contact a means and an opportunity to sell the other Imperial products and services which Mr. Jones would find just as satisfactory as he has found Three Star.

If Mr. Jones is not a price buyer, but is using a competing brand of oil, perhaps paying more for it than Marvelube costs because he thinks it is the best oil, you can sell him Marvelube if you try. Thus:

“Mr. Jones, we appreciate the opportunity to sell you Three Star gasoline. This is an Imperial product that is used by more motorists than all other brands combined because it demonstrates its superiority by its performance. I’m sure you would find Marvelube just as satisfactory in your crankcase. It has all the qualities that a good motor oil should have, and I know it would give you excellent service. It will be more convenient for you, too, for I can look after your crankcase service whenever you come in for gasoline.”

If Mr. Jones is a price buyer, you have two ways of selling him: You have the possibility of selling him the superior value of Marvelube on a service basis, or of selling him Polarine on a price basis.

In presenting Marvelube, you can say:

“Mr. Jones, the oil you put in your crankcase is a very important factor in the life and service of your car. Marvelube is the best oil that money can buy, and on the basis of long life and protection for your motor it is the cheapest oil you can buy. You could buy lower-priced gasoline than
it yourself, let me take over this job, and thus you can buy
your oil only as you need it. This will be more convenient
for you, and, also, you will always be sure of a uniform quality
of oil and complete protection for your motor."

The Effectiveness of Asking for Business

In Section Four you will be given the real facts of
the superiority of your motor oils. These brief sales
talks are given here merely to illustrate the process of asking for business on the basis of Imperial prestige
by setting up in the motorist's mind the idea: "Well, if
it's an Imperial product, it must be good."

Much of the business that is lost to competition is
lost by default—the salesman does not ask for it. You
know for a certainty that whoever buys gasoline also
buys oil. If they are not buying it from you, "there's
a reason." It is up to you to find out what that reason
is and then use salesmanship to overcome it. Always
remember: When you allow Mr. Jones to shop around
for some of his requirements, you are exposing him to
competing salesmanship and thus incurring the danger
of losing him entirely.

Building Up Mr. Black's Business

You will recall that Mr. Black buys nothing but
Polarine from you. Doubtless, he has used it for years
and is one of those conservative people who believe in
sticking to known and familiar products. Therefore,
he would be a valuable customer for your other prod-
ucts and services because he would stick to them also,
once he was sold.

The same principles and methods used in asking Mr.
Jones for more of his business would also apply to Mr.
Black. For example:

"Mr. Black, I notice that you are one of the many loyal
friends of Polarine, but I haven't had the privilege of filling
your tank with Three Star gasoline. I'm sure that if you
would give this excellent fuel a trial, you would find it just
as satisfactory as you have found Polarine."

Here, again, exists the same necessity of asking for
business. You will not get all of it, of course, but you
will get a percentage of it, which will bring you in-
creased profits. You can always get more sales by
asking for them than you can by waiting for the pros-
spect to ask you to sell him, and if you strengthen your
asking with salesmanship, you will find your averages
working out satisfactorily.

Developing Mr. White into a Cash Customer

Mr. White visits your station occasionally for free
service. Evidently it must be a convenient one for
him. He may be taking his trade, however, to some
less convenient station on account of his liking for the
salesman or the products at that station. If so,
your sales job is clear-cut. Let's listen to what one
Imperial salesman has to say on this point:

"If I were a life insurance salesman and someone said,'That fellow over there has a good job, several children, and
no life insurance,' I'd go after him as a 'red-hot' prospect.

"Whenever a car drives into my station for free service, I
know that it has needed a number of things I sell to run at
all, and that the motorist is buying these things somewhere.
Therefore, he is my 'red-hot' prospect. We must, of course,
take care of the regular cash customer first; but if it is at
all possible, I make it a point to hustle over and take charge
of the free service.

"I want this motorist to know that he is welcome and that
I am obliging and efficient. You can't keep on doing this
without giving him some feeling of obligation. If you keep
your eyes open, you'll find many sales opportunities about the
car, or seasonal suggestions such as anti-freeze, spring and fall conditioning, and so on. At any rate, while you’re giving the service, you have an opportunity to get acquainted with the motorist and do some selling.

“This idea appeals particularly to women who drive in for free service. They appreciate courtesy and service more than men do as a rule, and I’ve won a number of profitable 100 per cent women customers simply because I showed them that I was eager to give them free service.”

You wouldn’t want one of your good customers to come into contact with such a salesman as this at a competing station, would you? After all, there’s only so much free service that the motorist can secure. The rest he must pay for, and he is very likely to pay you for that if he is impressed with your friendly service attitude and your courtesy.

**Developing Messrs. Jones, White, and Black into 100 Per Cent Customers**

In considering the buying habits of these typical customers up to this point, you have been dealing with competition as it exists between stations. But since these customers do not buy their tires, batteries, and many of their accessories at any retail station, you are confronted with an entirely different sort of competition—competition that can cost you plenty of business and profits.

**A Little History**

Perhaps you can remember the earlier days of “gas stations.” Service then usually began and ended with putting fuel into the tank and oil into the crankcase. Lubrication consisted largely of turning up the grease cups by the owner or the mechanic who was charged with the difficult job of keeping the car in action.

As is the case with all young and aggressive industries, the automobile-service business tended to branch off into specializations. Enterprising people opened up tire stores and battery shops; department stores and mail-order companies established departments handling these products; manufacturers often opened service stores in order to give the public proper service and to ensure adequate outlets for their products.

Thus, the motorists formed the habit of going to these places for their tires, batteries, and accessories in order to secure the expert service to be found there; at the same time they became confirmed advocates of the superiority of certain makes or brands. As a result, the motorists formed two kinds of buying habits:

1. The habit of buying a certain brand of tire, battery, or accessory.
2. The habit of buying them at certain places.
From your own experience you know that your affairs tend to get into grooves and then to follow them as a matter of course. As an instance of this: You form the habit of taking a certain route to your work or home, of trading at certain stores, of buying certain products. It is more comfortable to do this than to decide anew each time. If you want a new suit, you do not ordinarily debate whether you shall go to Davis or Nichols. You are in the habit of going to Nichols; therefore, that is where you go.

Established Buying Habits Are Serious Competitors of Yours

Many thousands of motorists do exactly the same thing when it is time to buy a new tire or battery. They are in the habit of using Road Runner or Goodstone tires, and so they buy a Road Runner or a Goodstone without considering any other brand. Further, they have been buying them at Smith's, so they say, "Well, I guess I'd better go down to Smith's and buy a couple of Road Runners." Thus, Mr. Jones, your good customer for Three Star and Marvelube, will drive right past your station and go out of his way to Smith's to buy a Road Runner.

He does this, not because he doesn't believe in Atlas, but purely as a matter of habit, and because you have not sold him the advantages of letting you look after his tire and battery requirements.

The tire stores, battery shops, and accessory departments that exist in your trading area do so by sufferance—because you and your brother station retailers are not cashing in on the decisive advantages you enjoy over these competitors. In short, there is a definite lack of salesmanship.

The Decisive Advantages You Enjoy

As you saw in the first Section, the motorist buys advantages. Let's take each of these advantages as you learned them, and see just how the motorist would enjoy more of them by buying his tires, batteries, and accessories at your station instead of going elsewhere.

Gain and economy: In Atlas tires and batteries you can offer the motorist as good quality as he can buy, and at a lower first cost. The Atlas guaranty will give him the protection and moneysaving values provided by any other guaranty. If his time is of value, you can save his time. Atlas tires and batteries are economical to buy on account of their guaranteed long service and trouble-free performance.

Pride and self-respect: The motorist can take pride in the attractive appearance of Atlas tires and in the performance of Atlas batteries. He can serve his self-respect in the knowledge that he is using first-line products of recognized quality, and that his car is giving top-notch tire and battery performance.

Comfort and convenience—timesaving: Here are the really decisive advantages of buying Atlas tires and batteries, aside from first-line quality at a lower price. In buying at the specialty store or shop, the motorist must go out of his beaten track and thus sacrifice his time and convenience. In order to get the maximum service and life from his tires and battery, they should be frequently inspected and looked after. They require service just the same as the radiator or the bearings. If you sell him Atlas, he is sure of frequent and expert inspection, without loss of time, during his regular visits to your station.

If adjustments are to be made, they are made at
once, without loss of time and without writing some distant source or taking time out to visit a store or shop off his regular route. The proprietor of a battery shop recently said, "If people would just come back for the service that goes with Blank batteries, they would get much longer life from them. But they drive out with their new batteries, and that's the last we see of them."

This cannot happen at your station. If a car is equipped with your tires and your battery, you are going to see to it that they are properly looked after and serviced. The motorist doesn't have to "remember"—that is, if you are a salesman.

Another thing: Thousands of stations throughout Canada and the States are official service stations for Atlas—greater in number by many thousands than those of any competitor.

*Protection and safety of investment or family:* The motorist who buys a tire or battery because he can get it cheaper is always sacrificing the protection and safety, based on quality, that he would get from an Atlas. Quality for quality, no one can undersell you. If the motorist is offered a lower price elsewhere, he must take a lower quality with it. If this were not true, then all buying would be on the basis of price. But you know one of the very definite things the motorist buys, in order to enjoy the advantages he seeks, is quality, and he will always consider quality in weighing price; but quality and values have to be sold to be appreciated.

**Summing Up the Question of Competition**

From the foregoing brief outline you can readily see that the motorist would enjoy all the advantages he seeks in buying all his motoring needs at your station, and that he is subjecting himself to very definite disadvantages in doing otherwise.

The *only* reason why he shops around, going here for his tires and there for his batteries, is because he has fallen into the habit of doing so. The only thing that will get him out of that groove of habit is your aggressive salesmanship. You must give him *new* buying habits, based on the economy, timesaving, and profit of buying all his motoring needs from one source—your station.

You have a world of sales appeals and advantages to use in this task. Whereas the tire and battery com-
petitors can reach the prospect only through advertising or his infrequent visits to their retail outlets, you are in constant and friendly personal contact with him.

It must be clear to you by now that the problem of competition is much more involved than the simple process of determining why a motorist turns in at your pump rather than at the one in the next block. You can plainly see such business getting away from you; but unless you are fully alive to all your sales opportunities and look on your job as a sales job, there will be other kinds of competition taking business away from you that you cannot see so plainly. You may be dealing with such intangible things as buying habits, as you have seen them described. If you are, then there is all the more reason for constructive and creative salesmanship which will meet and overcome them.

When you think of your competition, therefore, think of it constructively and in all its aspects. Do not think merely of the fellow down the street whom you suspect of cutting the price of gasoline. However, you must meet cut-price competition, and the following are some of the methods in use at other Imperial retail stations.

Meeting Cut-Price Competition

Whenever an irritating substance is introduced into an organism, such as a grain of sand in an oyster, the organism builds a covering for it to sterilize it and overcome its irritating qualities. Whenever a man is born with or suffers some physical disability, he has a tendency to develop other abilities which compensate for the disability, and carries on. For example, a highly successful accountant in the States was once a railroad

brakeman whose injuries forced him to turn to mental pursuits for a livelihood.

There always have been and always will be price cutters, because price cutting is an obvious method of increasing business and one which will always suggest itself to those who know very little about the principles of good salesmanship. Since this is the case, the price cutter is an irritant in, or a disability to, the body of legitimate business, whichever way you wish to look at it.

The only thing to do, then, is to accept him as an ever-present irritant—a disability—and develop other business measures which will offset the effects of his practices.

Two Viewpoints on the Price Cutter

The following viewpoints were given by two service-station retailers interviewed by a LaSalle field man, and illustrate a choice which any Imperial salesman may make. The first man unburdened himself in this manner:

"There isn't much use trying to build a business in this location because that fellow over there is rebating 2 cents a gallon on gasoline. I ought to be doing double the gallonage I am here, but he takes my customers away from me as fast as I get them."

The field man did not check up to see if the competitor really was cutting the price, because if he was, there would be nothing to do about it. He was greatly interested, however, in the mental attitude of the dealer and the handicap it was to him.

The second man spoke as follows:

"Yes, those folks down there are cutting the price, no doubt about that. It used to worry me a lot, but I soon
realized that there was nothing to be gained by worrying. I'm doing around 25,000 gallons, and probably without that sort of competition I could do considerably more. So I'm holding a lot of business they can't get even for less money.

"It was only when I thought the problem through that I found I had nothing really serious to worry about. In the first place, those people are not building anything permanent. Their only appeal is that of price, and their customers will stay with them only as long as they cut the price.

"I found, too, that I had been thinking of this competition solely in terms of gasoline. When I inquired, I found that they weren't cutting the price on the rest of their line, and while they sell a certain amount of oil and accessories, they are not doing a third as much as I am.

"As a matter of fact, I suppose their price cutting has been a good thing for me, because it made me realize that I had to get a large share of my profits through holding my quality customers with good service and attractive surroundings, and by selling them more of their motorizing needs. I've been obliged to offset the price advantage by better merchandising and better salesmanship. As a result, I am making an extra profit of nearly 5 cents a gallon, and I'll bet they are not making 1 cent. Some day they may wake up to the fact that they are working pretty cheap, or they may fail. But in the meantime I keep on 'sawing wood' and I'm not doing so badly."

How One Imperial Dealer Handles Cut-Price Competition

A progressive Imperial salesman who has had to meet this problem of cut-price competition has developed the following sales methods. He says:

"The first I heard that price cutting was going on was when my customers began to tell me that they could save 2 cents a gallon, and asked me what I proposed to do about it. After a lot of thought, I succeeded in working out a sales talk that, while it didn't save all my customers, did save most of them.

"In the first place, I know most of my customers pretty well, and have always given them the best service I know how to give. They know that and appreciate it, but, of course, money is money. So when one of them would put the cut-price idea up to me, I would come back along these lines:

"'Mr. Customer, I can't cut the price, and you know that it isn't fair business practice to do so. It costs me money to maintain this station and give you gilt-edged service. If I did cut the price, I couldn't give good service and make a fair profit; I might just as well go out of business. If the outfit that offers to cut the price for you is giving good service, they can't make any money either, and the only thing they can do in the end is to take it out of you, or go out of business themselves.'

"Then I would go on and say:

"'I know, Mr. Customer, that a lower price is always at-
tractive, but have you figured out just how much you save on it? You use about ten gallons a week; that means a saving of 20 cents—if you get full measure. Now, if the service I give here and the way I look after your car aren't worth that 20 cents, well, then, I've failed on my job, that's all.

"I found this to be a very effective argument. I would have customers leave me without saying anything about it and then come back for Marvelube or Mobiloil, and I'd give them that sales talk. Lots of them said they hadn't figured it out that way, and agreed they liked Three Star better anyhow."

Good Salesmanship Overcomes the Cut-Price Obstacle

These constructive viewpoints on the cut-price problem prove that it is a problem only in the degree that you allow it to become one. If you think of your business only in terms of gasoline gallonage, this competition, of course, becomes a real problem, but if you consider all the profit opportunities at your station, it is not so serious after all.

Suppose, just for example, that you are selling 20,000 gallons of gasoline and could sell 5,000 gallons more but for cut-price competition. Thus, you are losing a potential gross profit of $200. But in selling 20,000 gallons, you have between 3,500 and 4,000 contacts with customers—say 3,750 gasoline sales, alone. To offset your loss to price cutters, you would need to sell only enough products and services to result in a profit of less than 6 cents at each of these contacts.

Or let's state it another way: Say that your 20,000 gallons of gasoline are bought by 400 different customers. You would have to sell each of them enough products and services to pay you only 50 cents more profit a year. Surely these are not difficult quotas to set for yourself, are they?

The Cut Price Has a Very Limited Attraction

Another important point you should keep clearly before you is that the public in general is not attracted favorably by cut prices. The public has been fooled so often by so-called "bargains" that it is suspicious of the price cutter's appeal. Most customers are far more interested in getting quality—in securing those advantages you learned in Section One—than they are in saving a few pennies here and there at the expense of a greater loss. The fact that you continue to sell your present gallonage in the face of cut-price competition proves this statement. Theoretically, at least, the man who sells gasoline a penny a gallon cheaper should get all the business. That he doesn't get all the business must be convincing proof to you that the advantages you offer the motorist are more attractive to him than the saving of a few cents on gasoline. The truth of this is clearly evidenced by the fact that the great bulk of the service-station business is not done by the price cutter, but by soundly operated stations handling a quality product.

The real solution of the cut-price-competition problem, therefore, is, first, to look on it as a minor obstacle that can be overcome by good salesmanship, and, second, to build up the other valued advantages at your station to overcome its effect.

The same principle will apply to all price competition. A certain number of people, through dire necessity, will go where they can buy cheapest, whatever the long-run cost to them may be. But the vast majority will buy quality if skilled salesmanship impresses them with the profits of quality and the fact that in buying cheap products they are saving only a few pennies here and there. The saving of 5 cents a quart (or 25
If Price Were All-Important—

—He'd Get All the Business

cents) on five quarts of oil which will be run 1,000 miles means a saving of $.00025 a mile, or 1/40 of a cent a mile. Considering the difference that 5 cents a quart may mean, and the fact that a motor is a valuable piece of equipment, the saving seems hardly justified, does it?

SUMMING UP

You must see clearly now that the problem of competition is a many-sided one, involving factors which touch every feature of your station operation. You see how important the personality factors of your station are in relation to the problem of attracting and holding customers, and that the development of 100 per cent customers for your station is tied up with the problem of meeting competition—the competition of other brands and the competition of established buying habits. Finally, you must see that the solution of all these competitive problems is dependent on your salesmanship.

We can, therefore, end this subject by quoting a successful Imperial salesman who is steadily building his business and profits by the adoption of the methods he advocates. He says:

"The way to deal with competition is to forget it. The minute you start thinking about what the other fellow is doing, you neglect the thought and care which you should be devoting to your own business. The motoring public will
always give business to stations where they get the best products, the best service, and the best advice on their motoring needs.

"Imperial and Atlas products meet this first requisite. Our job is to supply the remaining two. If we do this to the best of our ability, we shall have so much to think about that we won’t have time to worry about competition. Besides, we'll be making enough money so that we won’t have to worry about it!"

This man voices the feelings of a great many Imperial retailers whom LaSalle field men have contacted. A man’s attitude toward competition and his ability to meet it are determined by his understanding of all the factors involved. You are now familiar with all the basic factors of competition: products, advertising, stations, prices, and, most important of all, the service rendered. You have excellent products, extensive advertising, high-grade stations, equitable prices, but it is your service and the manner in which it is given—plus SALESMAHSHIP—which enable you to meet competition effectively.

The rest of this Section concerns itself with a full discussion of all the principles you need to make selling at your station simple, direct, and effective.

Part 2

PRESENTING ADVANTAGES EFFECTIVELY WITH THE THREE-STEP SELLING PROCESS

Mr. Jones, whom you met in the first part of this Section and who you will recall buys only Three Star gasoline from you, drives in for his week’s supply. You know that he is spending a good portion of his motoring money elsewhere, and you want this business. It is the time of year, say, when the oil in the differential and transmission should be changed, and the car should be thoroughly lubricated for the coming change in weather. (His crankcase oil should also be changed, perhaps, but we shall confine ourselves to chassis lubrication for purposes of this illustration.)

Stating Advantages to Mr. Jones

You recall very definitely, as set up in Section One of this program, that Mr. Jones does not buy lubrication, he buys advantages; and these advantages are based on definite buying motives. Therefore, you approach your sale of Imperial Specialized Lubrication on that basis, saying something like this:

"Mr. Jones, you will shortly have to have your car fixed up for the cold (or hot) weather that’s coming. It will run better with the right oil in your differential and transmission and with complete winter lubrication. We are equipped here to give you an expert job, and you can save time and trouble by having us do this work here."

Here you have made a proper approach to your sale: You have offered Mr. Jones advantages based on the buying motives of protection, in claiming that you will do a good job; of comfort, in claiming that his car will run better; and of convenience, in having the service done at your station.

This sales procedure may be effective, and Mr. Jones
will agree to have you condition his car then and there. However, he may agree that it should be done, but no more. Or he may tell you that the shop of the dealer where he bought his car always looks after such matters. Or that some individual in whom he has confidence does it. The untrained salesman would quit right here, considering that he had made a good attempt and consoling himself with, "Well, you can't sell all of them." But the trained salesman would know that he really had not as yet done any selling. He had merely taken the first step in his sale.

Advantages Must Be Proved

As an illustration of this point: Suppose someone came to your home and said, "Buy this stock and you'll make a lot of money." Or a salesman came to your station and said, "Stock this product and you'll make a good profit." Now you might buy merely on such representation, but if you did, it would be because you were able to prove to yourself without any help that you would make money or a profit. If you lacked this self-generated proof based on your own knowledge and experience, then it would be up to the salesman to supply it, because—

You do not accept the claim of any advantage unless it is proved.

Thus, many untrained salesmen think they are selling when, as a matter of fact, they are merely making unsupported claims. If they put over a sale now and then, the proof either is self-evident or the prospect supplies it for himself.

Getting back to Mr. Jones, you can see that nothing you said proved anything. If he were to put his reactions into words, they might be, "Yes, that's what they all say!" Knowing this, you follow up your claimed advantages with the following proof:

"Let me show you how well we are equipped to give you expert service. Here is the lubrication diagram of your car. You see, every point that should be lubricated is indicated. Not only that, but just the proper lubricant, based on formulas worked out by Imperial lubrication engineers, is also indicated for each point. When your car is lubricated in accordance with this diagram, you can be absolutely sure that no important point has been overlooked, and just as sure that you are protected from trouble and expense later on.

"Here is our lubrication equipment. Many new cars require special equipment in order to get the lubricants into the tight bearings; it is very important for the safety and protection of your car that this be cared for correctly."
“Our work is also done very carefully, Mr. Jones. Protective coverings are used to cover the finish and your upholstery, and to ensure against soiling your clothing—an advantage that will make a hit with Mrs. Jones, I’m sure.

“You come in frequently for Three Star, and I’m sure it would be more convenient for you to let me look after your lubrication service. I can assure you that you will find this service on a par with the quality of Three Star.”

This is, of course, an extended sales talk. It is given purely as an example to illustrate the proof of the advantages claimed in the example. You might, or might not, find it advisable to give such an extended talk, depending on Mr. Jones’ attitude and your tactfulness.

The Real Sale Involved

Remember, in such cases you are not making a sale merely of chassis lubrication. You are aiming at a far bigger target than that! As you saw in the first part of this Section, you are selling against competition which is getting $100 worth of Mr. Jones’ long-profit business every year.

If Mr. Jones permits you to lubricate his car this time, he will doubtless let you do it regularly. This means that you will have an excellent periodic opportunity to inspect his car, observe his needs, call them to his attention as a service, and thus win a greater and greater proportion of his business until his confidence in you leads him to give you all of it.

You see, Mr. Jones may be having his car lubricated elsewhere purely as a habit. He may have got into a groove going to a certain place, perhaps, and continuing to go because no real salesmanship has proved to him that he could enjoy more advantages by changing that habit. After such a sales talk he might also conclude, “Well, those fellows over at Smith’s never showed me any such charts and equipment. Maybe they haven’t got them. I’ve heard that these new cars do require special lubrication. Maybe I’d better play safe and come to Bill’s (your station) after this.”

There is, of course, no telling what might happen in Mr. Jones’ case. He might still go to Smith’s for his lubrication service. Of one thing you can be absolutely sure: If you approach each sale by offering an advantage and then be sure to prove the advantage, you will sell far more of the Mr. Joneses who come to your station than if you fail to do so. You can see, can’t you, that you leave your sale hanging in the air when you merely make claims and then do not prove them? But there is still one more step to the selling process.

Getting the Agreement to Your Advantage and Its Proof

Here is an actual experience, with only the names changed. Bill Roberts had been telling a farmer prospect about the advantages of Marvelube for a long time, but never seemed to get anywhere. Finally one day he said:

“Jim, I’ve been telling you for a long time about Marvelube being the best oil on the market for your tractor and car. Why don’t you buy some of it and prove what I’ve said?”

“I don’t know,” replied Jim. “Mebbe it’s because you never asked me to buy any of it.”

When you claim an advantage and prove that advantage, you do so because you want to sell something. Yet actual observation of thousands of sales attempted by untrained salesmen proves that, in the vast majority of cases, they either ask for the sale immediately, before they have presented and proved their advantage, or else they fail to ask for the sale at all. That is, they either say, “Let me sell you this or that,”
before the prospect has had an opportunity to think about or hear any of the advantages; or their second mistake is to fail to bring their sales talk into sharp focus, and so get action.

Therefore, there is an essential third step to the selling process. This is called the agreement or action step. At this step you ask for agreement with what you have just claimed; that is, you ask the customer to agree with you. Sometimes this means he makes an immediate purchase; sometimes it means merely that he accepts the advantage offered or that he understands the proof given, before you go on to other advantages and proofs in building up an extended sales talk on one of your products or services.

The real importance of this third step will be brought out clearly in the third part of this Section, where you will see that it plays a vitally important part in another principle of salesmanship. Right here you can see that it is important because it gets action or an agreement leading to action. Thus, after you have proved to Mr. Jones that he will enjoy certain advantages in permitting you to lubricate his car, you say:

"I'm sure you can see the advantages of Imperial Specialized Lubrication, Mr. Jones, can't you?"

Or, "We'll take only a short time to do the job, and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that your car is properly protected."

Or, "Is it convenient for you to have it done now? If it would be more convenient, we'll call for and deliver your car any time you say. How would six-thirty this evening suit you?"

The Three-Step Selling Process

In this illustration you have seen that you have to take three distinct steps in your sale, or attempted sale, to Mr. Jones:

1. You claimed an advantage (appealing to buying motives).
2. You proved the advantage.
3. You asked for an agreement or acceptance of the proof, and appropriate action.

This formula is called the Advantage-Proof-Agreement selling process or, to shorten the phrase, the three-step selling process. It is very important that you master it thoroughly and understand it very clearly, because all expert selling is based on it, and you will meet it throughout the remainder of this sales-development program.

From this point on, if you drill your mind thoroughly to use this principle of salesmanship—approaching your sale with the statement of an advantage to be enjoyed, proving that advantage, and then asking for an agreement—you will find that the formula actually works, and the results will be profitably reflected in your sales. Just for added emphasis, let's look at a few wrong and right examples of approaching sales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incomplete Application of the Selling Process</th>
<th>Effective Application of the Selling Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proof Step Missing</td>
<td>Advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bill, you're going to need new tires pretty soon. How about letting me sell you some Atlas?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Bill, you're going to need new tires pretty soon. The tread on these two front tires is pretty well worn. Now, Atlas tires will give you safety, protection, and good mileage at an extremely low cost.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proof
“Atlas tires are quality tires, priced below other popular brands. Bradford Jones, one of my customers, has driven two Atlas tires over 25,000 miles, and they are still in fine condition.

Agreement
“You want the safety, saving, and mileage Atlas tires will give you, don’t you? Let me replace these two worn tires with Atlas regulars now.”

Agreement Step Missing
“You ought to have a new fan belt, Mrs. Smith. This one is about worn out.”

Advantage
“This fan belt is pretty well worn, Mrs. Smith. A new Atlas belt will eliminate any inconvenience caused by breakdown on the road and will protect your engine from overheating.

Proof
“In your particular car the fan belt operates the water pump. If it should break, the water will almost immediately boil away, causing your motor to overheat. This endangers your engine and is liable to cause a costly repair bill.

Agreement
“You want the protection of a new fan belt, don’t you, Mrs. Smith?”

Not Even an Advantage Stated
“Mr. Black, let me sell you some of this Marvelube. It’s great stuff.”

Advantage
“Mr. Black, Marvelube will give you quieter starting in this cold weather and will save your battery.”
No Advantage to Begin With

"Mr. Amos, I just dropped around to ask you if you wouldn't give us some of your gas and oil business."

Proof

"Marvelube flows readily at low temperatures and, consequently, will not put a heavy drag on your battery. Your motor turns over more easily and, therefore, starts quicker.

Agreement

"You want the easy-starting advantage of Marvelube, don't you?"

Advantage

"Mr. Amos, I just dropped around to tell you of some of the features of our station which are designed to ensure the utmost economy and convenience in the operation of your car.

Proof

"Because we are located close to your home, you save considerable time and gasoline in coming to our station. Then, too, whenever your car is in need of lubrication service, we'll gladly pick it up, lubricate it, and return it to you at no extra charge. If your wife, who drives frequently, ever desires any assistance, we're always ready to offer service and assistance to her. As you know, we're selling Imperial products, which are the finest products money can buy.

---Incomplete---

---Effective---

Agreement

"You want to do business with a station that can offer you this greater convenience and motoring economy, don't you?"

Advantage Step Missing

"Your tank will hold two more gallons. Better let me fill it up."

Advantage

"Your tank will hold two more gallons. Filling will save you the inconvenience of frequent stops.

Proof

"If you fill it now, you won't have to stop for gasoline on your trip.

Agreement

"Better let me fill it up."
These are just a few of the many hundreds of examples showing the difference between untrained, amateurish salesmanship and that based on the sound principles you have learned. You can at once see the logic and practicability of these principles, and will want to plan all your salesmanship with them in mind. This will not be at all difficult. Just a little practice, and you will quickly train your mind, first, to look on the success of the sale you wish to make as bound up with the customer’s recognition of advantages, and, second, to present the advantages as you want him to think of them. Never take it for granted that the customer will automatically see the implied advantages, for, in the vast majority of cases, he will not. He reacts to an offer to sell as an attempt on his pocketbook. The only way that anything can be sold is to have its advantages outweigh its cost. If you state advantages, your customer will think of them. If you don’t, he is almost sure to think first of the cost. Test yourself on this, and you will see that your mind works that way. Your customer is no different.

Building Your Proofs

Doubtless, it has occurred to you that one of the real problems in selling is the furnishing of proofs of your claimed advantages sufficiently strong to convince your prospect and move him to action. That is right. A weak proof is like a weak battery: it fails to start anything. Therefore, it will be important for you to inventory carefully all your proof resources and to build your effectiveness in presenting them.

As you will see, you have an almost unlimited supply of proofs of many kinds, and you need never be at a loss in selecting one or more to fit the immediate sales problem before you. The five kinds of proof most generally used in making sales at Imperial stations are:

1. Mechanical proof.
2. Demonstration proof.
3. Printed proof.
4. Experience-testimonial proof.
5. Confidence proof.

These various kinds of proof are illustrated so that you will be able to use them readily.

1. Mechanical Proof

In Section One you read of the Imperial salesman who secured an assortment of friction-worn parts and used them to demonstrate the damage done by improper and inadequate lubrication. This was mechanical proof; the proof rested on actual evidence.

Again: You can point out to a customer that a defective spark plug will waste his gasoline and power; but when you show him gasoline and power being wasted by weak firing plugs and dead ones, this mechanical proof will be far more convincing than anything you can say.

Still another example: A few drops of dirty, contaminated oil spread out on a white paper or cloth
where the contamination can be plainly seen is much more convincing than the oil seen on the rod or on a hand already somewhat soiled.

"Seeing is believing!" Wherever you can, or wherever your sale permits mechanical proof of your claimed advantage, by all means use it. It is often the strongest proof you can possibly give.

2. Demonstration Proof

Demonstration proof is closely allied to mechanical proof, and is also far more convincing than mere words. For example, the motorist who sees a used filter cartridge cut open will have a far more graphic idea of the importance of renewing his filter than he would if he were just told that it should be changed.

An Imperial salesman whose Atlas-battery sales are an important contribution to the profits of his station says:

"To almost every motorist the battery is pretty much of a mystery, and usually, like his stomach, he only becomes conscious of its existence when something goes wrong. In order for any battery to give maximum service and long life, it should be inspected regularly, the plates kept covered, and the battery fully charged.

"I always use the hydrometer when I check a battery, because this is the source of most of my rental and recharging business, as well as the means of discovering battery prospects. I always make it a point to explain the working of the hydrometer before I use it, and then let the customer read it along with me. If the charge is too low, it is more convincing to him to see this than to be told about it.

"In the same manner I explain the capacitester so that the customer can see for himself the true condition of his battery. The secret of making battery profits is in getting batteries that need service out of the car and onto the tester. I have found this easy to do if I demonstrate my service to the motorist."

Another Imperial salesman who has built a very profitable Atlas-battery business says:

"Cut-price and bargain batteries used to worry me a lot until one day I replaced one of these with an Atlas. I took it apart and compared it, part by part, with a battery of equal-rated capacity. Now, when a customer talks price to me, I lead him over to my battery display, which shows solid straps for the Atlas against hollow ones, which merely look solid, on the bargain box, and all the other structural and service superiorities of the Atlas.

"Batteries, like tires, oil, gasoline, and everything else about the station, should be sold on the service they give—time service, mileage service, and satisfaction service. When you can prove by actual demonstration that the Atlas will give all these services far better than any cut-price battery can, your selling job will cease being a hard one."

You will recall how Mr. Jones was convinced of the superior of Imperial Specialized Lubrication and your ability to give him expert service by demonstration of your lubrication equipment. Even in the small pin-money items, such as spot remover and handy oil, a demonstration of their effectiveness in removing spots from the upholstery and oiling sticking door catches will be effective.

Analyze every product and service you have to sell to see if in some way it will not lend itself to me-
chanical proof or demonstration proof. You will find a wealth of opportunities along these lines, and since we gain far more definite impressions through the eye than through the ear, you will find such resourcefulness very profitable.

3. Printed Proof

Imperial Oil is known throughout the Dominion as a great and trustworthy institution—not a leader in its industry, but the leader. Therefore, any claim or statement made by Imperial Oil carries weight and authority in the mind of the Canadian motorist. This authority is largely carried over to the printed material issued by the company. Therefore, the use of this material is always productive of results. This printed matter is of two kinds:

1. To be given to the motorist.
2. To inform you of the qualities and specifications of Imperial and Atlas products.

Both kinds of printed material should be put to use. A circular or booklet which tells the motorist a number of interesting facts about Marvelube, and which he will be inclined to accept because it is sponsored by Imperial, will be of value only in the motorist’s hands, never in a stack under a counter. A bulletin or book which contains valuable selling ammunition that you could show to the customer to back up your claims should never be shown to him unless you first know what is in it.

You will find printed proof very effective. It will often tell your sales story to the prospect who cannot wait to hear it from you verbally. It will back up your personal statements and claims with all the authority of a great company. You can often clinch what you

claim by saying, “See. Here is what it says in the book.” Make it a point to develop the use of all the printed material that is made available to you. It is designed for just one purpose—to help you make sales and profits. Use it to that end and you will find it of immense help in your everyday contacts with motorists.

4. Experience-Testimonial Proof

When some public-spirited citizen of your community wishes to start some kind of a “movement,” the first thing he does is to secure the endorsement of several representative leading citizens. The book agent does the same thing. He knows if he can get the name of Mr. Banker and Mr. Mayor on his subscription list, Mr. Plain Citizen will be very likely to conclude, “Well, if Mr. Banker and Mr. Mayor bought it, it must be all right.”

Likewise, making use of this same effective device, you can say to your hesitant customer:

“Mr. Smith changed over to Marvelube last month. He said it gives him much longer life and greater mileage in his trucks. I’d suggest that you ask him what he thinks about Marvelube.”

This carries conviction, even though Mr. Smith is not consulted. The customer knows, or knows of, Mr.
Smith, and he knows that you would not refer to him unless you felt safe in doing so. This fact carries conviction.

Another illustration:

“You can’t be too careful in the lubrication of these new Blank cars, Mr. Grey. I had one in here yesterday belonging to Jim McDonald, over on Cedar Street, that had several dry bearings because some ‘rule-of-thumb’ service man didn’t know where all the points of lubrication were.”

The naming of an actual person whose experience will prove your claim always carries weight. It moves a claim over from the general to the particular.

Thus, you can easily support all your claims with this experience-testimonial proof if you make it a point to provide it out of your daily experiences. For example, you ask a customer how he likes Three Star, and he says, “It’s the best gasoline I’ve ever used.” Or, better still, you may be able to suggest that he write you a letter to that effect. You can then quote him and give your claims about Three Star much more specific support than if you merely say, “My customers are enthusiastic about it.”

You can easily develop such proofs for your Atlas tires, Atlas batteries, Marvelube—in fact, for everything you sell which will require selling to any extent. Think for a moment how strongly you are impressed by the experience or testimony of disinterested people, and you will see the strength of this character of proof.

5. Confidence Proof

One of your strongest means of proof is your customer’s confidence in your honesty of purpose and your knowledge of your business. This is one of the reasons why the personality of your station, which was fully discussed in the first Section, is of such importance.

There are products and services at your station which do not lend themselves readily to visual or demonstrated proof, which must be bought largely on faith. Thus, you cannot demonstrate the real values and superiority of Marvelube before it goes into the customer’s crankcase. In many cases he must discontinue the use of oil that he considers to be satisfactory—disrupt a buying habit—and change to Marvelube purely on the strength of your say-so. Such a change must be based on his faith in you, both as a disinterested counselor and as an expert.

A large part of the proof of the values of Atlas tires and Atlas batteries must be deferred for a year or more, because it will take this long to prove their long life and trouble-free service. You can thus see how important it is that you should be able to say to your customer:

“Mr. Smith, you can rely on my word that Atlas tires (or whatever you are selling) will give you more safe miles and be most economical in the long run,” or whatever advantages you are presenting.”
The sound and necessary basis for such proofs must lie in your ability to make the customer believe that you value his business and are striving to give him the maximum measure of advantages from his motoring dollar, and that you are competent to do so.

How to Secure Agreement

Now you come to perhaps the most important step in the three-step process—securing agreement. There are many salesmen who can interest a prospect in a new idea. Many can present a lot of interesting facts and proof, but that’s where most untrained salesmen stop. They omit the most important step of all—getting appropriate action in response to arousing interest in an advantage and proving the advantage.

On the other hand, many successful salesmen who have never had the advantage of carefully organized training have, of their own accord, developed methods of securing agreement. You probably have heard them interrupt their sales talk frequently with such questions as, “Do you see that?” or, “Isn’t that so?” or, “Hasn’t that been your experience?” etc., in which they are actually securing agreements.

In this training you are going to learn not only how to secure agreement, but also how to get various types of agreement which will help you to gain the various objectives in every sales presentation where you use the Advantage-Proof-Agreement selling process.

Summing Up the Advantage-Proof-Agreement Selling Process

In the preceding pages you have seen illustrated the second important principle of expert salesmanship—namely, the Advantage-Proof-Agreement selling process. You have seen that what the untrained salesman considers to be salesmanship is merely the first step in the sale. You saw in the first Section that the unskilled salesman does not take even this first step effectively. He asks for the sale without telling the customer the advantages he will enjoy—without giving the reasons—why he should buy.

You have seen clearly that the effective way to begin your sale is to offer your prospect an advantage, or advantages, based on the reasons—why he would normally buy—the buying motives.

So far you have merely started your sale. Your next step must be to prove the advantage or advantages you have offered. You have seen this step fully illustrated and can readily agree to its importance. Finally, you check to discover whether or not your proof has been convincing and accepted. This third step has not yet been fully illustrated, but it will be in the next part of this Section.

From now on you will approach all your sales by telling your customer of the advantages he will enjoy. You will then prove that he will enjoy them by using as many of the various types of proof as may be neces-
Five Kinds of Proof

Mechanical Proof

Demonstration Proof

Printed Proof

Experience-Testimonial Proof

Confidence Proof

necessary. These two steps alone, thoroughly mastered and conscientiously followed, will lift your salesmanship into the expert class. Now you will be introduced to the five buying decisions and, in connection with these, the application of the agreement step of the selling process to every typical sales situation.
Part 3

THE FIVE BUYING DECISIONS AND HOW TO GAIN THEM

One of the best ways to figure out how the other fellow will act in any given situation is to see how you would act in like circumstances. You have put yourself in the picture at various places in this program; in order to give you a perfectly clear picture of the next important step in your salesmanship, you must put yourself into the buyer’s place again.

To begin with, it is clear that an action of any nature must be preceded by a thought, either by a conscious, logical thought, or by a thought-impulse, which is sometimes called a subconscious thought. Thus, we usually say “Yes” or “No” as the result of conscious, logical thought, whereas we dodge a thrown brick as a result of subconscious, instinctive thought.

A purchase of any kind is an action, and almost invariably it is the result of conscious, logical thought. We may feel sometimes that we buy “on the impulse of the moment,” but such actions are very few compared with those which result from a logical mental process of weighing needs, advantages, prices, etc., and then arriving at a decision.

Every Purchase Is the Result of a Number of Decisions

Offhand, one might conclude that he buys something as a result of one decision—to buy. Careful analysis of the action will show clearly, however, that there are a number of decisions involved within the decision to buy, just as there are a number of actions involved in the act of shooting a gun. Let’s take an example out of your own experience to prove this.

Suppose that tomorrow morning you decide, “I’ll go down to Abbott’s and buy one of those Dominion shirts I saw in his window.” Offhand, you might conclude that you had made one decision—to buy a shirt. But let’s see just what you did decide.

First, you made the decision that you need a shirt. You may not be entirely out of shirts, and so do not need one in the sense that you would go shirtless if you didn’t buy. But you want a shirt, perhaps as a matter of pride in your appearance—one of the buying motives, you see.

Second, you made the decision that you will buy a Dominion shirt—not just any shirt. Obviously, you know about Dominion shirts. You buy them either as a matter of habit or because they have been recommended by a friend. It may even be that you have been attracted to them in the window. Anyhow, you are thinking of shirts in terms of Dominion shirts as best filling your need.

Third, you decided to get this Dominion shirt at Abbott’s. Smith and Scott may also sell Dominion shirts, but you like Abbott’s and have formed the habit of going there for your furnishings. So you decide on the source from which you will buy a Dominion shirt to fill your need.

Fourth, the price tickets on the shirts, or your knowledge of their price, is within the range of the amount you are willing to pay for shirts; or the goods, pattern, style, and workmanship of Dominion shirts lead you to decide that they are good values for the money.

Fifth, and finally, you decide to buy a Dominion shirt at Abbott’s today—now—not tomorrow, next week, or at some indefinite time in the future.
All Five Buying Decisions Must Be Made

Now, what would happen if any of the following thoughts took place in your mind?

1. Those are good-looking shirts in that window, but I'm well stocked up with shirts right now.

2. Those are good-looking shirts in that window, but I see they are not Ontarios, which fit me best and give me longest service.

3. Those are good-looking shirts in that window, and are the kind I wear, too, but I wouldn't go into Abbott's on a bet.

4. Those are good-looking shirts in that window, but I think their price is too high.

5. Those are good-looking shirts in that window; some of these days I think I'll go in and buy one.

Thus, you see, if Abbott is to sell you a shirt tomorrow morning, you will have made not one but five decisions. If any of them is missing, Abbott will not sell you a shirt.

Two Kinds of Sales Involving Buying Decisions

There are, in general, two kinds of sales:

First, what might be called yes-or-no sales, in which the purchaser makes all five decisions simultaneously. For example, you might say:

"Your windshield wiper is in bad shape, Mr. Smith; it's apt to cause you trouble in the next rain or snow. Shall I put on a new one?"

If Mr. Smith says, "All right," he has made all five decisions at once. Most smaller purchases made habitually are made in this way.

Second, sales that require a considerable degree of salesmanship and thinking over on the part of the prospect. For example, you are trying to get a Three Star customer who buys his oil elsewhere to change to Marvelube, or you are selling an Atlas tire to a prospect who has been using a competitive tire.

All the decisions involved in a sale may be made simultaneously, so that it appears as if but one decision were required. The fact remains, however, that all five buying decisions must be made every time anything is purchased. A somewhat detailed discussion of each of these five buying decisions will prove valuable in giving you a clear picture of their place in the complete sales structure.

Getting the First Decision—The Need

Obviously, you do not buy anything unless you need or want it. You may think that you occasionally buy
things merely to please others, but if you do, you please others to please yourself, thus experiencing the pride or the satisfaction (both buying motives) of having done a favor. From the standpoint of business we can rely on the axiom that this first decision on the need must always be made in every sale.

This is why it is so important that the customer must be offered advantages. Advantages outweigh the sacrifice of money involved in a purchase. There are two kinds of advantages, both of which have been illustrated in these pages:

First, a positive advantage, enabling the customer to enjoy added economy, satisfaction, safety, and so on.

Second, a negative advantage, enabling the customer to avoid the loss of economy, satisfaction, safety, and so on.

As an illustration of the first, consider this:

"Mr. Jones, Marvelube will give your car longer life and easier starting than the oil you are now using."

As an illustration of the second:

"Mr. Jones, that tire is apt to get you into trouble. It might blow out when you are driving and cause a serious accident."

Thus, Mr. Jones would be impelled to acknowledge needs: in the first case to enjoy the advantages of long life and easy starting for his motor; and in the second case to escape the penalties you suggest.

Your first job, therefore, is to create this sense of need—to help your prospect make this first decision. There is no use talking about how good any product or service may be if your customer doesn't want it or feel that he needs it. Thus, he might say, "Yes, I'll be in

the market for tires soon, and I'll buy Atlas tires from you, but I'll make these do a little longer." It may be agreeable to have him say this, but you'll sell no Atlas tires to him until he makes this first decision.

These points are given emphasis here because they are very important in successful salesmanship. If you were to stand by and listen to untrained selling, as LaSalle field men have been doing for years, you would find that a great percentage of such selling is aimed at gaining decisions that are already made or ones that are ineffective at that particular point of the sale.

In any sales presentation which is aimed at an immediate sale—a sale today—you must first of all concentrate on this Decision 1. You must build up the
sense of need from either the positive or the negative standpoint, because all the other decisions depend on it. If you are selling for the future—for instance, building the sale of Atlas tires or an Atlas battery to a prospect who otherwise would go elsewhere when the need for buying arises—then you will concentrate on the three decisions: that Atlas is the best, that he should buy from you, and that the price is right. Because these decisions would all have to be made, it is, of course, to your advantage to have them made beforehand, so that they will automatically take effect when this customer makes his first decision—that he needs a tire or a battery.

Be sure that you understand this principle of selling and that you make a sharp distinction between selling for an immediate purchase and building a sale for the future. If for immediate sale, then concentrate on Decision 1 by stressing the advantages and then proving them.

GETTING THE SECOND DECISION—THE PRODUCT TO FILL THE NEED

Suppose you meet with such obstacles as the following:

“Yes, I know the car needs lubricating, but Jim Smith has always done this for me.”

“I’d like to buy the tires from you, Jim, but I think Ajax are better. I’ve used them for years.”

“Sure Marvelube is good oil, all right, but my motor seems to like Acme oil better.”

“No, I can’t buy your gas. It’s got lead in it, and lead raises hobo with the valves. A good mechanic told me that it eats ‘em.”

These and many similar obstacles might be raised as a result of your sales talks. Of course, it is your salesmanship which brings them to the surface. If you don’t try to sell, they are in the prospect’s mind anyway, preventing you from selling him Imperial Specialized Lubrication, Atlas tires, Marvelube, and Three Star. It is just such obstacles as these, expressed or unexpressed, which keep people from coming to your station. When you put forth salesmanship, you “get them out on the table” where you have an opportunity to meet and eliminate them.

Building Up the Second Buying Decision

An aggressive Imperial salesman says:

“‘The secret of success in building a good volume of sales on Atlas tires and batteries is to keep talking Atlas tires and
batteries all the time. If you wait until a customer actually needs either of these products, you will probably lose the sale, because he'll go where he has been buying, and you won't get a chance at him.

"Of course, you can't stop every customer and talk tires and batteries to him when he doesn't need them. The best way I've found to meet this situation is to make a consistent use of printed material. For instance, I may say to a customer who I know is buying some other kind of tires, 'Here's a little booklet on Atlas tires, sir. Read it when you get time; it'll give you some valuable information on the construction of Atlas.'

"I do the same with all the descriptive literature and handouts that I get, and I make it a point to keep well-supplied. Very often in taking a piece of literature, the customer indicates a willingness to talk, and then, of course, I give him a little build-up sales talk.

"In this way I'm constantly warming up a lot of prospects who sooner or later are going to be in the market for what I want to sell them. As a result, a good number eventually reach 'buying temperatures.' The secret of this plan is, of course, to keep on selling, not only for the immediate sale today, but also for next month and even for next year. I don't think that any sales effort, properly planned, is wasted. You don't get all the sales you try for, but you do get a whole lot more than if you wait for customers to come in and ask for what they want after the need has arisen."

Thus, you can see the profit of getting as many of your customers as possible to think, "That's a pretty good tire (or whatever it is). The next time I need one, I'll get it from Bill." The only way in which you can get them thinking along these lines is to keep on selling your products and services at every opportunity.

You have a double sales opportunity:

1. You observe the immediate needs of the car at your island, and when you have brought that need to your customer's attention and have made him realize the need, you recommend your product.

2. You KNOW, too, that there are other needs which will develop in the future.

When a motorist drives in and says, "Well, Bill, I guess you'd better put a couple of new Atlas tires on in front," that sale may have been developing over a long period of time, during which time this motorist has been making the buying decisions on product, source, and price. Something has happened that has made him need and time conscious, and, as a result, he buys Atlas tires from you. By the same token this customer may drive in with a new pair of Goodtown tires that he got elsewhere; if he does, it is probably
because you have not been selling him Atlas during your frequent contacts with him.

You can readily see that this second decision is a very important one, and that it should receive your earnest and painstaking attention. A great deal has been done for you toward securing this second decision from the motoring public—more than has been done for any of your competitors. Your Imperial sign says to 59 per cent of all passing motorists, “Here is where you can get the products which you have found to be the best.” Do your part; supplement this already great advantage with salesmanship and you will find gaining this second decision an easier problem to solve. Throughout this training you will learn how to present the advantages of your products so as to get this buying decision on the thing to fill the need.

GETTING THE THIRD DECISION—THE PLACE TO BUY

In small, individual sales this third decision is the least important, because if you have sold the need and the product to fill the need, the customer will buy from you. There is a class of sales, however, in which this third decision is of very great importance.

For example, Mr. Scott is thoroughly sold on Imperial and Atlas products and does not use any others. But he buys them wherever he happens to be when he needs them. You want him to become a 100 per cent customer of your station. His interests would be better served in that way, as you could then keep a correct service record for his car and could also give it those frequent and regular inspections which it probably doesn’t receive now. It would be just as convenient for him to center his trade at your station.

Decision 3—the Source

All that is necessary to bring this about is the formation of some buying habits on the part of Mr. Scott.

How to Get the Third Decision

Let’s have an Imperial salesman who is building a growing business at his station tell us how he gets this third decision. He says:

“The first thing to do in getting people to come back to your station regularly is to make them want to come. To do that, you must give them real service—prompt and efficient. An attractive, neat station is, of course, also important. A lot of ‘gingerbread’ isn’t necessary—only neatness and cleanliness, and a general air of order about the place.

“You must keep your eye on the customer’s car, too, and give him good advice about its upkeep and service. But you
must not be too eager for sales. Just treat the customer right, tell him what his car needs, and he will buy soon enough.

“But all this is merely the groundwork, so to speak. When you have been giving a customer good service and he still doesn’t give you all his business, the thing to do then is to ask him for it. If you have won his friendship and confidence, this isn’t hard. In my own experience, when I’ve asked such customers for all their business, I find that they hadn’t thought about it. But when you ask them, they do think about it, and if they are well-satisfied with your service and like you, they’re usually willing to do what you ask. I suppose they think, ‘Well, Charlie wants all my business; he certainly takes good care of me and is entitled to it. Why shouldn’t I give it to him?’

“I have found, too, that the customer who is giving you all his business is invariably a booster for you. When he hears others discussing their motoring problems and troubles, he is prone to say, ‘Well, I give all my business to Charlie. He looks after me in good shape, and I don’t have any such troubles. Why don’t you go there, too?’ Many of my good customers have come to me in that way.”

You will recall reading in Section One that a large percentage of motorists who change stations do so on the recommendation of friends. One of the reasons friends recommend your particular station is because of personality factors—your attitude toward the motorist, your knowledge of your job, station appearance, and what you do to win his friendship and confidence. Your service must stand out from that of the general run of service stations. If it doesn’t, then you aren’t entitled to ask the motorist for all his business. Furthermore, you won’t get it. When you ask for the business, the customer will unconsciously compare your service with that of other retailers who are sharing his business, and if your station does stand out, you will get the business. But, as this salesman just quoted says, you must ask for it.

The whole world is asking for business all the time. Your daily newspaper is filled with advertisements asking for business and among them are those released by Imperial. Don’t hide your own light under a bushel! Promote yourself.

Decision 4—the Price

will get the business. But, as this salesman just quoted says, you must ask for it.

The whole world is asking for business all the time. Your daily newspaper is filled with advertisements asking for business and among them are those released by Imperial. Don’t hide your own light under a bushel! Promote yourself.

Getting the Fourth Decision—the Price Is Right

Mr. James tells you, “Yes, I know Marvelube is first-rate oil and I’d like to buy it from you, but I can’t afford to pay that price.” Here are Decisions 1, 2, and 3 giving you no trouble, but Decision 4 is blocking the road to gaining another regular user of Marvelube.
You can see that this fourth decision involves competition, cut prices, and price buying. This ground has been quite fully covered in Part 1 of this Section; the same principles given there always apply where cost or price is involved, whether the sale depends on the customer’s ability to pay the price asked or whether competitive prices are obstructing your sale.

The one thing which offsets price is value, expressed in terms of the advantages—economy, convenience, safety, and pride. The selling of the price, therefore, is a process of building up real values. Using Marvelube as an illustration, a sales talk might proceed along such lines as these:

"It’s true that Marvelube will cost you 5 cents more a quart, but it is the lowest-priced oil you can buy when you consider the many values it gives you which cheaper oils cannot give.

"You must buy motor oil largely on faith, because you cannot see it at work in your crankcase. If it is going to do damage, the damage is done before you know it. If an oil thins out and breaks down, the damage may not be immediately apparent, but it will have to be paid for in the end.

"Friction is what makes cars old before their time. An improperly lubricated car will not only wear out sooner, but it will also waste gasoline and power while it is wearing out. By ‘improperly lubricated’ I don’t mean a car that refuses to run on its oil, but a car that is not getting the best lubrication.

"No cheaper oil than Marvelube can give your car the best lubrication. To put a cheaper oil into your car is merely to gain a few cents now at the cost of many dollars later on. Furthermore, Marvelube will give you more miles per quart and greater protection for your motor. The difference in cost is only 25 cents, but this is very cheap insurance for knowing that your car is running on the purest and best oil that the resources of Imperial have been able to develop.

"I have had many people tell me that this explanation gives them an entirely different understanding of the importance of good oil. Do you see the difference?"

In general, a person wants the best quality, provided he knows what quality really is. The majority of people who come to your station could buy cheaper clothing than they wear, live in cheaper houses, drive cheaper cars, and eat cheaper food. They don’t do so, because the advantages of the best quality they can afford are obvious, understood, and wanted. Build up the qualities of your products, many of which must be built because they cannot demonstrate themselves, and you will have no difficulty in gaining this fourth decision.

**Getting the Fifth Decision—Now Is the Time to Buy**

From the standpoint of actual success in selling, this fifth decision is the most important, because only through it are all the other decisions given effect.

As a rule, you do not have to gain the time decision in selling gasoline, because the motorist has already made the fifth buying decision when he drives in, stops at your pump, and asks for “Five.”

In the sale of an oil change, a greasing job, a new tire, a new battery, etc., the gaining of the time decision is often very important in making the sale. Car owners put these things off just as they put off dental work which they know should be done now, and they usually pay for their neglect.

A successful salesman learns how to make appeals to gain the buying decision “now.” He appeals to the various buying motives—protection, comfort, gain,
pride—by pointing out the advantages of buying now as against the disadvantages of putting off buying. He points out the small cost involved in enjoying those advantages and the high cost of trying to get along a little while longer without them.

A good example of how to gain the time decision is given by an Imperial salesman who was trying to sell a tire to a man who badly needed it. This man, however, was anxious to get the last mile out of his old tire. The salesman finally got him to admit that he couldn’t get more than 500 miles out of the tire at the most. The salesman said:

“Mr. Hayes, do you know how much you would save if you had good luck and succeeded in getting 500 more miles on that tire? . . .

“Well, let’s figure it this way: With a new Atlas and the type of driving that you do, you can safely expect 25,000 miles of safe mileage on a new tire. At the price of a new Atlas, your tire mileage costs about 40 cents per 1,000 miles. In other words, at best you will save about 20 cents on the old tire, and for that 20 cents you are taking all the risk of an accident as a result of a blowout that you might get at any time.

“Do you really feel, Mr. Hayes, that you can afford to take that chance?”

Throughout this training program you will see how other salesmen are using this principle. You yourself can make many effective adaptations of it to your work. From this very moment begin working out effective sales talks of your own by means of which you will get the fifth buying decision whenever the customer hesitates to buy now.

How to Close the Sale

In your study of the three-step selling process you saw that the third step asked for agreement with the statement of the advantage and the proof just offered. In the examples already given, you saw that without this agreement step the sale simply wanders off into thin air. Take the illustration just given under Decision 4, on page 68, in which the salesman sells Marvelube. If he had stopped before the final paragraph, he would have stated that, based on quality, Marvelube is the cheapest oil the customer could buy; and he would have supplied a number of excellent proofs of this claim. Unless he follows through, however, and asks the question, “Do you see the difference?” and then waits for agreement, he will not get action.

As you realize from your own experience, there are two general classifications for sales:
1. Yes-or-no sales.

2. Sales in which the decisions are made one at a time.

In the first class the decisions would all be made simultaneously, and the agreement step would be the actual sale. Thus:

"Marvelube is the oil you want in your crankcase, isn't it, sir?"

Assuming that the motorist needs oil, but had intended buying cheaper oil until you gave him an explanation of the advantages of Marvelube and put forth proof, his agreement would be not only that the proof advanced is acceptable to him, but also that Marvelube is the oil he wants put into his crankcase.

Let's leave for a little later the agreement step as it pertains to the more involved sale. Right here you should note that in any ordinary sale at the pump, pit, or air-standard, the customer would say "Yes" or "No," and this agreement would become the close—the actual asking for and accepting of the order.

In many lines of selling the salesman's effectiveness is largely measured by whether or not he is a "good closer." The literature of salesmanship is filled with examples of salesmen who "talk themselves in and out of sales"—of salesmen who are afraid to ask for the order. Such salesmen talk on and on and never reach the closing point before the prospect is worn out. They do not know, for they have not learned as you have, this simple and effective method—the Advantage-Proof-Agreement selling process—and they never reach the agreement step on which the whole sale hangs.
How to Gain Agreement

The easy, frictionless method of getting your customer to say “Yes,” therefore, is to include this third step in all your salesmanship. Train your mind to take this third step in every sale. Offer an advantage, prove the advantage, and then ask for agreement. A moment’s thought will show you how easy this is to do, and also how necessary if you want to close sales:

“Shall I put it in now?”
“Shall I put it in now?”
“This is the kind you want, isn’t it, sir?”
“You don’t want that to happen, do you, Mrs. Smith?”

An agreement to set questions constitutes a close of the sale, authorizing you to proceed at once with the delivery of the service involved. Or, you gain an opportunity close by an approximate closing suggestion, such as:

“Drive over the pit, and I’ll do it right now.”
“You, of course, will want a new tube to go in your new Atlas tire.”

“Which do you prefer, the pint or the quart size?”
“Shall I change the tires for you right now, or would you prefer to have me do it this evening while you are at dinner?”

Many such closing methods on different products will be given throughout this training, but these examples show how you can use the agreement step to close actual sales.

The Real Nature of a Sale

From the foregoing discussion of the five buying decisions you can see that a sale is a rather compli-

icated mental process, whether it is made in a minute or involves months of preliminary cultivation.

In order to visualize your sale, suppose you picture it as a bridge of five spans, each of them constituting one of the decisions. Thus, you have a bridge leading from the Marvelube in your tanks, let us say, to the customer’s crankcase. If one of these spans is missing, your bridge will be incomplete and cannot be crossed. If the first span is missing, you cannot even get onto the bridge; and if the last one is missing, you cannot get off the bridge.

The decisions may be made in any order or sequence, as, for instance, when a customer might decide to give you all his business (third decision) and thus decide to use Imperial products (second decision). Again, he might decide that he needs oil in his crankcase immediately, and, driving by your station, think, “I’ve never tried Marvelube, but it’s a pretty expensive oil.
I'll ask this fellow about it." When he comes in, there are still three decisions you must gain; probably Decision 4 will be the one on which you will lay the most stress in order to make this sale.

Therefore, recognize now, and throughout all the selling you do, that all five decisions must be made, and that your real sales job is to help your customer to make them.

The Effect of Missing Decisions

An Imperial salesman said to a LaSalle field man:

"See that chap who just drove out? I've been trying to sell him Atlas tires for a year, and I've never even got to first base. How would you handle a fellow like that?"

This was a fair question and one that could be solved only by correct analysis.

If such a customer had made all five buying decisions on Atlas tires, he would buy. Therefore, one or more of the buying decisions were missing. Sometimes a customer will voice an objection which will tell you which decision or decisions are missing; sometimes he will indicate the wrong decision; in other cases he won't help you a bit, but leave you to find out why he refuses to buy.

In the first case he may tell you that he is thoroughly sold on some other make of tire. (Decision 2 is missing.) In the second he may tell you that he is sold on some other tire, but the real reason is that he prefers, or is obligated, to buy his tires of some other retailer. (Decision 3 is missing.) In the third he just sits tight. (One or more are missing.) In all cases you are stopped until you find where your obstacle is, or, to revert to the bridge, which span is out.

How to Find the Missing Decision

When one or more units are missing from an assortment, you find out by logical methods which one (or ones) is missing. You have seen that a sale is an assortment of buying decisions, so you logically set out to find which is missing when your sale does not move along.

Here, then, is the place where that vitally important third step—the agreement—comes to the fore. You say to yourself, "There is a missing decision here somewhere," and instead of fumbling blindly, or, perhaps, wasting your time and energy by trying to build up a part of the sale that is nonessential, you check off each decision in its turn, being sure that you have won it before you leave it. Your agreement step is the only means you have to make this check.

Begin at the first decision, the need: You offer your advantages and then prove them; you then ask for agreement. This agreement means that your prospect will express in some way, by word or nod, that he needs and ought to buy what you offer. If you get this agreement, you can then go on to the second decision. If you don't get the agreement because of some mental reservation or resistance on the part of the prospect, you stay right with this decision until you do get it. There is no use in trying to sell something that isn't wanted! And so you keep on piling up advantages and proofs until you get your first decision, or realize that your sale is hopeless. You treat all the decisions in the same manner until you have agreements to your third-step questions for all five decisions along these lines:

Decision 1

"You can see the economy of regular lubrication for your car, can't you, sir?"
Decision 2

"The advantages of Imperial Specialized Lubrication are what you want, aren't they?"

Decision 3

"You can see that we are thoroughly equipped to give you an expert job, can't you?"

Decision 4

"A dollar (or whatever the price is) is a bargain for this quality of service, isn't it?"

Decision 5

"Bob and I can take care of your car right now. Will you drive it over the pit?"

If the customer has agreed to these five questions, his car is put over the pit. If he doesn't, then whichever one he hesitates over or fails to answer affirmatively is the missing buying decision. You know where to concentrate your further sales effort.

Remember, these decisions must all be made every time. If a customer drives in and over to your pit, he has made all the decisions before he came in. If you say:

"Your tag shows it's time for another lubrication, Mr. Jones," and Mr. Jones says, "O.K.," he has made the first decision and the rest of them simultaneously.

Try to imagine any sale in which all five buying decisions are not made, and you will agree that every one is as essential to a sale as a span is to a bridge.

Checking the "Yes" Man

Consider the ease of the man who gives you an affirmative on all five steps and yet hesitates to buy. Either you are wrong in your opinion that you have got five agreements, or he has been "yesing" you, as the saying goes. You can say:

"Mr. Jones, you have agreed that your car needs lubricating. You also agree that Imperial Specialized Lubrication is the best type of lubrication service you can get, that we are thoroughly equipped to give it, and that our price is reasonable. Now, there must be some reason why you do not want us to look after this service for you. I would appreciate it if you'd tell me frankly what it is. We are striving to merit the confidence and patronage of the motoring public, and if we are falling down in any particular, I'd consider it more of a favor than a criticism to hear of it."

Such an appeal will usually disclose the real reason.
It may be something that you cannot change—a personal tie-up somewhere else, or any number of things, but at any rate you have followed your sales procedure to its logical end and have taken advantage of every sales resource available. You will not make every sale you attempt in this way, but you will certainly make far more sales by following these principles than you will without them.

**Summing Up**

These principles and their application, as they have been presented and illustrated, may seem somewhat involved to you. But in actual practice they are extremely simple and easy to apply. You read the individual words on these pages at a single glance, without being obliged to stop and spell out the letters, because they are familiar to you. You will become just as proficient in your use of these sales principles. As you use them, you will soon learn to apply them automatically and adapt them to every sales problem you meet in the promotion of your business. Let's state them briefly again so that you can see their simplicity and how closely they are related to each other:

1. The customer buys ADVANTAGES based on four general buying motives:
   1. Gain and economy.
   2. Pride and self-respect.
   4. Protection and safety.
2. In selling you use the three-step selling process:
   - You offer an advantage based on a buying motive.
   - You prove that advantage.
   - You secure agreement.

3. In every sale the buyer makes five buying decisions.
   1. Decision 1. The Need.
   2. Decision 2. The Thing to Fill the Need.
   5. Decision 5. The Time—NOW.

   You help him make these decisions by presenting the advantages relating to each and giving them effect with the three-step selling process.

   These are all the fundamental sales principles you will be asked to learn throughout this entire sales-development program. They are all you will ever need in any sale, but you do need them in every sale that involves any degree of selling skill. You can see their value and importance, but you will cash in on their selling value only as you learn to apply them skillfully in every selling situation you face.

   Perfect yourself in the use of these powerful selling tools. Test them and practice their use. Imagine that you are selling a customer on Three Star or Marvelube instead of the competing cheaper brands he is using. Sell him an Atlas tire or an Atlas battery. Plan beforehand just how you will go about your sales in accordance with the three selling principles. You will find they are quickly and easily mastered, and you will rapidly reach the point where you plan your sales work on them just as easily and naturally as you read about them on this page.

**A SELF-CHECK**

You will remember that when you completed Section One, and before you started this Section, you stopped long enough to take an inventory of what you
had learned from the first unit of your sales-building program. Now, before you begin Section Three, do the same thing with the principles you have just finished studying, in order to fix them well in your mind. This will help you to apply the principles so that you will get the most out of your daily work.

Here are twenty questions, each counting five points. When you first read them through and answer them, put a check opposite those you are unable to answer. Then, to determine your standing, add the number of questions you checked, multiply by five, and deduct the result from 100. (If you answered them all correctly, your standing is, of course, 100.)

Then, and this is by far the most important feature of the Self-Check, look up the correct answers to the questions you are unable to answer. These answers will be found on the pages referred to in the questions. In this way, you will firmly implant in your mind the selling principles and features which will be vitally important to your work tomorrow and every day thereafter at your station.

Here Are the Questions

1. Forty per cent of all changes from one station to another are made for personal reasons. Can you recall what a progressive Imperial salesman said about the importance of seeing that the personality factors at your station are such that more changes are made to your station than from it? (Pages 4 and 5.)

2. Lost sales may be caused by too much friendliness as well as too little. Explain why this is so. (Page 9.)

3. A customer who splits his business may be transformed into a 100 per cent customer if he is properly handled. A customer who is buying Three Star from you regularly, but who admits he is sold on a competing brand of oil, may be handled in several ways. How would you handle the man buying oil similar in price to Marvelube? How would you sell Marvelube to a price buyer? How would you sell Polarine to the same buyer? What is a tactful method for handling the free-service customer? (Pages 12 to 16.)

4. Buying habits, you learned, may be competitors for your business. These habits are of two kinds, the habit of buying certain brands, and the habit of going certain places. How will you sell a customer on your Atlas tires, for instance, appealing to the motive of economy; of safety? How will you sell your customer on battery service, appealing to the motive of convenience? (Pages 17 to 20.)

5. Cut-price competition may be going on in your town, and you have often wondered how to meet it. What are some of the ways in which you can solve this problem? How will you handle the subject when discussing it with your customers? (Pages 22 to 28.)

6. In Section One you learned to state advantages appealing to one of the four buying motives (reasons-why) as the first principle of salesmanship. What are the four buying motives? State an advantage of Marvelube appealing to each of these motives. (Pages 31 to 35.)

7. This brings you to the second principle—the three-step selling process. What are the three steps? How does the first step tie in with the buying motives? (Pages 36 to 42.)

8. Advantages must be proved. Do you agree with this statement? If so, why? If you fail to get agreement with your proof, what is likely to happen? (Pages 35 to 42.)
9. There are five types of proof most commonly used at Imperial stations. Name them. Explain how to use each effectively. (Pages 43 to 50.)

10. Everyone who buys anything makes five decisions relating to his purchase. What are these decisions? (Remember them in order and by number because they will be referred to in that way throughout this sales-training program.) (Page 55.)

11. No sale will be made unless you gain Decision 1. Explain why this is so. (Pages 57 to 60.)

12. When selling the need, you may either give a positive advantage, which will enable the customer to enjoy added economy, safety, etc., or you may give a negative advantage which will enable him to avoid loss of economy, safety, etc. Give an example of a positive advantage; of a negative advantage. (Page 58.)

13. When selling the product to fill the need (Decision 2), you are likely to meet such obstacles as, “I’d like to buy tires from you, Jim, but I’m sold on Road Runners.” How will you build up your sales from contact to contact in order to gain this second decision? (Pages 60 to 64.)

14. Decision 3 is not difficult to gain when you have built up the personality factors of your station. What is this decision? Explain how you can make your service stand out so you can gain this decision more frequently with the motorists in your neighborhood. (Pages 64 to 67.)

15. Decision 4 occasionally involves meeting price cutting, competition, and price buying. How will you gain this decision when presenting the economy of buying such an oil as Marvelube, although it may cost a few cents more per quart than the oil a motorist is buying? (Pages 67 to 69.)

16. If you have studied the three-step selling process carefully, you know what is the third step. The fifth decision (to buy now) is closely tied up with this third step. What is the third step? How do you make it? How does it aid you in closing the sale? (Pages 69 to 74.)

17. Although the five decisions are numbered and put in a certain order, you learned that they are not always made in that order. Suppose a man were to say, “I need oil and lubrication right away, but I guess I’ll stop at my regular station for it.” What two buying decisions are made? What three are unmade? (Pages 74 to 76.)

18. If you have been trying to make a sale week after week and have failed, you must check to find out which of the buying decisions are missing. How will you check each decision, using the three-step process? (Pages 76 and 77.)

19. Once you have received acceptance of your advantages and their proof, a quick way to recheck is to ask a single question on each decision. Can you give examples of how this is done? (Pages 77 and 78.)

20. As a short review, state the three selling principles you have learned in the two Sections of this training program—and then use them tomorrow in your work. (Pages 80 and 81.)

A Look Ahead

Now that you have sharpened your selling tools, you are ready to use them in developing your skill in the actual sale of products and services at your station. Gasoline is usually the entering wedge into the confidence and patronage of the motorist. The following
Section, therefore, is devoted to the selling advantages given you by the outstanding leadership of Imperial Three Star Gasoline and Esso. The title of this next Section is

*Increasing Your Gasoline Sales.*
Memoranda
Here are some sales methods--even the words you can use.

Time will be equal effective.

Application of these basic principles to product or service offered customers will influence selection throughout the diagonal explanation throughout. To think of an exception, will help you increase.

For personal increase.