



Art of Selling...

By Art Waskey

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS — HANDLING THE DIFFICULT CUSTOMER

Recently, a rep called asking for assistance in dealing with a rude customer who was demanding immediate attention and constantly verbally attacking our employees. Not surprisingly, this customer was also extremely slow pay on our invoices!

What is the best way to handle a childish customer who is demanding, verbally abusive and also slow pay? When do you decide he could be the best customer for your toughest competitor?

Author Eric Berne made complex interpersonal transactions understandable when he recognized that the human personality is made up of three “ego states”: **Parent, Adult and Child.**

Each state is an entire system of thoughts, feelings and behaviors from which we interact with each other. The Parent, Adult, and Child ego states, and the interaction between these states, form the foundation of *Transactional Analysis* theory.

In the sales process, **HOW** we stimulate the customer can be critical in influencing the customer’s response. A thorough understanding of *Transactional Analysis* helps maintain control throughout the sales process.

Within the three ego states, there are six *different behavioral patterns* that can materialize: The Parent can be either **NURTURING** — understanding, caring and giving yet firm, or **CRITICAL** — demanding, suspicious and requiring accountability. The Adult tends to be reasonable and objective and gives and receives information straightforwardly. The Child can be either **NATURAL** — resembling and sounding like a normal child, expressing legitimate emotions; **ADAPTIVE** — tentative, needing reassurance; or **REBELLIOUS** — looking and sounding defensive and defiant.

To use *Transactional Analysis* properly in the sales process, first identify the behavioral pattern of the customer; then shift your behavioral pattern to the role of either **NURTURING PARENT** or **ADULT**. The experienced sales rep refrains from becoming the **CRITICAL PARENT**; he assumes the role of a **NURTURING PARENT** and becomes assertive, supportive and counseling. He may also utilize the **ADULT** ego state, seek additional information, and become emotionally involved.

The customer above was a **REBELLIOUS CHILD**. The trained sales rep remained in the **ADULT** ego state, did not get emotionally involved, and objectively sought information and conformity to our policy and procedures. When the customer became increasingly belligerent and his payables became seriously delinquent, we turned over the account to a collection agency. Although his initial response, “If you sue me, I’ll sue you,” was predictable, he called a day later in a more civil manner and reluctantly complied with our standard payment terms.

Transactional Analysis works for difficult customers and challenging situations! For more information on specific sales applications, contact Garry Duncan, *Leadership Connections*, www.LeadershipConnections.com.

Art Waskey is VP of Sales and Marketing for General Air Services and Supply Company in Denver, Colorado. He can be reached via e-mail at awaskey@generalair.com. □

2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 27-28, 2006

AiIGMA 28th National Seminar of Industrial Gases
New Delhi, India
Web: www.aiigma.org/home.htm

February 1-2, 2006

EIGA Symposium 2006
Dusseldorf, Germany
Web: www.eiga.org

March 12-14, 2006

2006 International Seafood Show & Seafood Processing America
Boston, MA
Web: www.bostonseafood.com

March 12-16, 2006

National Hydrogen Conference
Long Beach, CA
Web: www.hydrogenexpo.com

March 12- 17, 2006

PITTCON 2006 - 57th Conference
Orlando, Florida
Web: www.pittcon.org

March 19-21, 2006

CGA Annual Meeting
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
Web: www.cganet.com

March 22-23, 2006

Medtrade Spring Conference & Exposition
Las Vegas Convention Center,
Las Vegas, NV
Web: www.medtrade.com

April 9-11, 2006

GAWDA Spring Management Conf.
Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL
Web: www.gawda.org

May 15-19, 2006

ACHEMA 2006
Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Web: www.achema.de

May 31-June 2, 2006

WeldMex 2006
Cintermex, Monterrey, Mexico
Web: www.weldmex.com

July 10-14, 2006

SEMICON West
Moscone Center,
San Francisco, CA
Web: www.semi.org

July 17-20, 2006

Conferences at Purdue
International Compressor
and Refrigeration
Purdue University,
West Lafayette, IN
Web: www.ecn.purdue.edu/Herrick/Events/2006Conferences

July 17-21, 2006

CryoPrague 2006
Praha, Czech Republic
Web: www.icaris.info/CryoPrague2006/

September 13-15, 2006

IG CHINA
International Exhibition on
Gases
Beijing, China
Web: www.china-gases.com

September 19-21, 2006

Medtrade Conference
& Exposition
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia
Web: www.medtrade.com

October 15-18, 2006

GAWDA 62nd Annual Convention
Walt Disney World Swan Dolphin,
Orlando, FL
Web: www.gawda.org

October 30-Nov. 2, 2006

GAWDA at FABTECH/ AWS
Atlanta, Georgia
Web: www.gawda.org

October 31-Nov. 2, 2006

2006 FABTECH/ AWS
Atlanta, Georgia
Web: www.aws.org

November 4-8, 2006

International Oxygen
Manufacturers Association (IOMA)
Los Cabos, Mexico
Web: www.iomaweb.org

November 13-17, 2006

2006 Fuel Cell Seminar
Honolulu, Hawaii
Web: www.fuelcellseminar.com

Secure, Fast, Convenient.
Subscribe online at
www.cryogas.com