

Selling Yourself in Three Seconds or Less

By Mark Joyner

(an excerpt from "The Irresistible Offer" available from Barnes & Noble or Amazon)

Selling is something we're all involved in all the time, so it should stand to reason that the core theory of selling one thing applies to the selling of something else. Yes, every sale has its own nuances, but the same "Big Four Questions" must be answered, whether you're selling pizzas or selling yourself as a prospective friend. Now, you may be thinking, "I would never sell myself! That's horrible! I think that's a very shallow way of looking at the world. I would sell a product, but selling myself?

Never."

Perhaps, but let's ask a few questions and see if that's really true.

Have you ever applied for a job?

Have you ever applied to a school?

Have you ever tried to win the favor of a member of the opposite sex?

Have you ever tried to talk your friends into going to the movie of your choice?

Have you ever tried to convince someone you were right?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, then you're in the business of selling.

If we're going to do it, why not do it well?

If we believe that whatever it is we're selling is good for the other person, is there any harm in learning how to sell it a little better?

If you agree with that, then the following pages in this chapter are for you. If not, then there's no point in reading any further.

THE IRRESISTIBLE OFFER AS A METAPHOR

Sometimes the metaphorical application of a seemingly unrelated theory can render some extremely useful insights. A popular one is the metaphorical application of military tactics and strategy to business. This approach is exactly why you'll see not only military leaders reading Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, but also Harvard MBAs. Much of my last book, in fact, used military metaphor to illustrate my business theory.

An example. One of the most important military principals is that of Surprise. That is, if you can surprise your opponent, you take away his ability to plan, and he must react in a befuddled state of mind. Elaborate deceptions are often planned in order to gain the tactical advantage of surprise. In World War Two, for example, we sent General Patton to command an imaginary tank division in

Dover to deceive the Germans into thinking that we'd attack France via the Pas de Calais, instead of in Normandy. Military history is full of such deceptions.

This very same tactical principle can be applied to business as well. If you look at the history of the Microsoft and Apple conflict, you will find a great example of Surprise. Microsoft began by creating the very first standardized Disk Operating System (DOS) for IBM personal computers. Well, they didn't actually create it, they bought it, but that's another story, which is truly worthy of study in its own right.

DOS was a command line operating system, which is very different from the graphical operating systems most of us are

accustomed to today. There was one competitor of note in the personal computer business called Apple. After a very skillful zero-cost acquisition of the mouse and Graphic User Interface (GUI) technology from Xerox, Apple thought that the IBM/Microsoft platform was no longer a threat.

Microsoft created software that would run on the Macintosh, and Apple felt they were in the position of power. Mac, after all, owned a GUI-based operating system and the computers on which it was run. Microsoft was just a software development firm who created, among other things, an inferior command line operating system to be run on IBM machines.

Bill Gates played his role very well as the little guy building software to be run on Macs. Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple, never thought there would be a threat. Secretly, however, Bill Gates was planning a major project: Microsoft Windows. This was a GUI-based operating system that would run on IBM machines.

Jobs didn't hear about this until it was too late. There is a famous meeting where, late one night, Jobs invited Gates to his office and asked him what he was up to. Gates explained how it really wasn't a threat. He didn't intend for it to be anything that could possibly compete with the Mac. After all, Windows wasn't really an operating system—it was just a little novelty that would run on top of DOS. And such was the deception that Jobs took hook line and sinker.

We all know the end result of this use of tactical Surprise: Bill Gates is the richest man in the world, and Apple is a computer with a relatively tiny niche market (artists, musicians, and people who want to feel special about themselves).

Now, no disrespect meant to Jobs. He is obviously a visionary, and the way he's kept Apple together through all of this (especially their plays with the iPod and iTunes) is truly impressive. However, Gates simply out-maneuvered (another military principle) and Surprised him. As you can see, the metaphorical application of military principles to business has rendered some stunning results. In this case, perhaps the most stunning result in history.

It works because world of business has many parallels to a battlefield. The act of selling something in the commercial world has a great number of parallels to the use of influence in other realms as well. That is, whether you're convincing someone to buy a product, watch a particular movie, or go home with you for sex, you are still convincing, and the same concepts apply on a metaphorical level.

Now, if you truly grasp these opening words of this chapter, you don't need the rest. Simply applying The Irresistible Offer as a metaphor to any type of "selling" will render some really interesting results. In fact, I highly recommend going back through the book and reading it in a different way. That is, how

interesting would it be, if you read through the book once with the metaphor of dating in mind? What kind of insights would you find? What if you read through it with the aim of learning to be a more influential parent to your children? How would you apply these ideas?

Here are some further clues you can use to make the translation easier.

THREE SECONDS

Just like a product or service, people are sizing you up in about three seconds as well. Within the first three seconds of meeting you, people will make thousands of little judgements and observations that will culminate in some conclusions.

Do you look like a good potential friend?

Are you a kind person?

Could you be their lover?

Can they trust you?

Will you give them a good deal on that car?

If you present yourself in the proper way, you can either make it or blow it in those three seconds. Very few of us know how to take proper advantage of this little window of time. We let the

chips fall where they may, and when they don't work out in our favor, we say, "It's not in our cards."

Yep, it is in the cards. Now, let's stack the deck.

THE BIG FOUR QUESTIONS

Do you remember the Big Four Questions? Let's imagine someone is meeting you for the first time and that they are running those same questions through their mind. None of us would like to believe that we are so shallow as to judge the people we meet by these criteria, but let's suspend disbelief long enough, at least, to understand what I'm saying.

If you don't think you judge people this way, just consider for a moment that you are better than the shallow people who think this way and that you are learning how to deal with everyone else. As for whether or not this applies to you, that's between you and your therapist. Between you and Mark Joyner is how to better operate with those who think this way. Okay, let's look at those Big Four:

What are you trying to sell me?

How much?

What's in it for me?

Why should I believe you?

Do you think those same questions apply? Let's take a look and see.

What Are You Trying to Sell Me?

Everyone has a list of criteria from which they operate. Unconsciously, people know this, and they are looking out for your game.

Some people are up front about what they want from a relationship. Sometimes people come to you feigning one thing ("All I want is to be your friend") and then you learn

later that they really wanted something else (“Hey, can you introduce me to your sister?”). If you are up front about what you want out of your relationships you don’t waste any time trying to be something you’re not.

If you’re a salesman and you’re up front about your product, you’ll quickly sort through prospects who aren’t right for what you’re selling and find the ones who are.

If, when you’re out on the town, what you really want is girls for casual sex and you pretend like you’re looking for a wife, you’re going to have to weave an elaborate deception and waste a lot of time to get what you want—and at what cost?

If, on the other hand, you were up front about what you wanted, you'd sort through the ladies looking for husbands and identify the ones looking for the same thing as you.

How many hours of your life have you wasted trying to pretend that you're selling something you're not? Deceiving people may make the first sale, but you certainly won't ever sell that Second Glass. If you did, it would be a miserable Second Glass for both you and your customer.

How Much?

You may not be asking for money in return for whatever it is you're selling, but there is always a cost. As an author, people

come to me all the time pretending they want something from my relationship that they don't. For example, one "NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) Expert" once came to me using all sorts of poorly crafted and clumsy language patterns to convince me that he wanted to help me promote my book.

Over the course of a long painful conversation where I tried to figure out what he wanted and he kept evading the question, it became painfully obvious that he had no intention of promoting my book at all, but really wanted me to promote one of his products on my list of subscribers. The cost of even talking to him was a whole lot of my time. The cost of the deal would have been high for me with absolutely nothing in return.

Maybe you are attracted to a beautiful woman who on the surface is everything you want. She seems to have a great heart, a bubbly way that makes you smile, she strokes your ego. Then, as you learn more about her, you discover that she has some deep emotional baggage that is going to cause you a lot of pain and suffering over time. You discover later that she's not really what she seems at all and that you've wasted a whole lot of your time.

The Offer Is the Antidote to Shady Persuasion

If you always analyze things in terms of an offer, you will prevent yourself from getting burned every time. Some people try to trick you into unfair deals with all sorts of clever language patterns and persuasion tactics.

If you simply look at any offer in terms of quid pro quo, you can see through this every time. A shady dealer will not be up front about what you get in return or what he intends to do. He'll try to get you to put your confidence in him and insinuate that you should just trust him. If you question him, he'll usually start to get offended. When it comes time to collect on the insinuated return, he might say something like, "Oh, you misunderstood. I never promised that." And on the surface of it, he's right. He never promised. You didn't ask for a clear offer, so it's really your fault for getting suckered in a way. It doesn't make the person any less of a scum bag for trying to take you, but it's your responsibility to defend yourself.

I always ask people one of two questions, or both:

“What is this deal exactly?”

“What is it you’re offering?”

If you don’t get a clear offer, don’t walk away— run!

Sometimes people who don’t have clear offers aren’t all bad— they’re just confused—and the impact they have on your business will be just as bad. Find out what someone is offering, and if it is not a deal that meets the following criteria, don’t take it:

1. *It must be a fair quid pro quo, or a win/win.* Sometimes, people are tempted to take deals that are one sided. If you ever enter into a deal where you benefit and the other party doesn't, you may think you're benefiting, but you're really not. One of two things will happen. Either your partners will feel sore about it and slander you six ways from Sunday, or they will feel sore about it and come back to you with a sense of entitlement. And they won't want something fair in return— they'll want more because their feelings are hurt.

2. *It must serve your objectives.* I used to feel obligated to take deals out of friendship or out of fear of hurting the other party's feelings. I'd always regret that move and I'd either end up

backing out or being so bogged down with excess work that I didn't perform very well.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with turning down deals. If the other people persist or are angry, that's their problem. You're not their psychologist. If what someone is offering you is a fair deal, but it does not further your overall life purpose or goals, it's not a fair deal at all—it's just a waste of your time. If you're happy doing favors that's something else, but remember not even favors are free. You'll probably expect something in return as well.

Now, if you don't know what your overall objectives or goals are, you'd better sit down and figure that out fast. You're going to get

taken time and time again if you don't know what you want out of life—in business, in friendships, everything.

3. *Your gut must tell you it is the right move.* You know, I don't really have a rational explanation for this rule. If you asked me to try, it would surely sound like a bunch of superstitious nonsense. However, I can tell you, without reservation or exception, that every time I've failed to listen to my gut it's gotten me into trouble.

Many of the genuine business experts I've spoken to over the years will tell you the same thing. Secretly, many of us are placing more value on intuition than we'd care to admit publicly. Learn to tune in to your gut and follow what it is telling you. Just

let go and give this a try some time. Try it with something small, and as you gain more faith in your own intuition, you can trust it more and more with bigger things.

That's the cost, my friend.

If you can lower the cost of dealing with you by not requiring so much emotional energy, perhaps that will make your offer more irresistible?

“What's in It for Me?”

How are you going to benefit someone as a friend or a lover? Okay, so you want to be someone's lover. Ask yourself, if someone on the street made this offer to you, what would

you say to yourself? You'd analyze and evaluate in terms of how you'd benefit.

Okay, so maybe you don't judge people on their looks or by other such shallow yardsticks. Maybe you prefer people who are genuine, honest, and stable. Well, guess what? That's how you benefit. That's what's in it for you. If they meet those criteria, you'll be more likely to accept the offer. If they don't, you'll reject them because there's nothing in it for you.

“Why Should I Believe You?”

Okay, so you are offering something they want. The cost does not appear to be too high. What's in it for you seems to be something

wonderful. Then they get that sinking feeling in their stomach that maybe this offer isn't exactly what it seems.

You may be giving off some credibility-defeating signals that will prevent you from closing many deals in your life.

THE TOUCHSTONE (THE ME MEME)

"Hi, my name is Mark Joyner, and I'll have sex with you in 30 minutes or less or it's free." Okay, maybe that wouldn't work. The Touchstone for selling yourself takes on a slightly different form.

If you're selling yourself as a consultant, a verbal Touchstone will work as it would for any other product. If you are the product in

the professional world, you can be a little more overt about your offer, and you can get away with it. Outside of the business world, your approach needs to be a bit less direct.

Maybe it's the inherent hypocrisy of the world. Maybe it's the arbitrary rules society has thrust upon us. For whatever reason, we need to communicate our offers a little more subtly when it comes to personal interaction. You can be up front about the nature of your offer, but you probably won't get away with throwing it in someone's face. (Depending on the context, of course.)

Your personal Touchstone is a mimetic one. When people first meet you, various pieces of information come together to form a mimetic expression of one idea: *you*.

When I first meet someone I'm aware that my appearance, my posture, my facial expression, my grooming, my clothes, the first words out of my mouth. All of these things come together to form the Mark Joyner meme. Depending on what you want, your Me Meme may or may not serve your purpose.

If your intention is to find a hot date, you may want to adjust your Me Meme from the

“trust me as your salesman” Me Meme. How you adjust these elements is a totally subjective thing. To me, the following elements make up the MJ Meme under ideal conditions:

Clean, pressed, fashionable clothes

If I’m out on the town, throw in “slightly funky.”

If I’m trying to make business contacts, replace that with “professional.”

Other Me Meme elements include

Impeccable grooming

Friendly smile

Confident posture

Outgoing and kind nature

My spirit shining through

First words: Something disarming and friendly

Over time, I've learned that is what I want to express to the world. Some people may read those words and want to vomit, and that's okay. Cynical and sarcastic people may not like guys like me, and that's cool. My Touchstone (the MJ Meme) will sort right through them. I don't want to be around them, and they don't want to be around me. No worries.

Guess what? Less time wasted. More signal—less noise.

I don't care what your Touchstone is, but you would be wise to ask yourself: Is it serving my purpose? If your Touchstone tells people you are a stuck-up snob who only cares about

appearance, and secretly you want to meet some very down-to-earth genuine people, then perhaps it's not serving your purpose as well as it could.

On the flipside of this, I have trained myself to be careful about how I allow people's Touchstones to affect my judgment of them. The image most people are projecting to the world is not a genuine one. Thank Hollywood for twisting our brains and injecting values in us that are not our own. At the same time, regardless of their intentions, the Touchstone they have chosen is theirs, and it will give some clues about what they're all about.

That is, no matter what the reason, if someone always looks like a train wreck, it might be indicative of greater levels of disorder in his life. Then again, the best-groomed guy in the world could end up being like a train wreck through *your* life!

THE HIGH-ROI OFFER

If you have read the last few pages that talked about how the Big Four Questions play out in relation to selling yourself, you already know what I'm about to say. If what you're offering people renders a great return for a fair cost, it will be easy to buy what you're selling.

Is this a shallow way of looking at things?

Isn't it manipulative to look at life in terms of selling yourself?

Not really. If anything, looking at life this way will allow you to operate under a much higher level of integrity than the alternatives.

BELIEVABILITY

Again, your offer must have some believability to it. If what you're offering is a deal that is too good to be true ("Hey baby, I just want to be your friend. I respect that you have a boyfriend. Honest!"), people will immediately treat you with skepticism.

Your mannerisms, your appearance—all of those elements that make up your Me Meme—they all play a card in someone's

evaluation of your trustworthiness. I once visited a company I was considering promoting a few years ago. Everything they did over the course of two days was perfect. The morning of my departure, the company president picked me up to drive me out to the airport. He said one single thing to me that threw the whole deal out the window. He offered me a few percentage points of the company for \$50,000.

Now, this immediately told me several things:

- 1.** The company was not as financially fit as I thought.
- 2.** Perhaps they weren't upfront with me about what they really wanted from our relationship.

One little tiny believability killer threw the whole deal.

Everything you say and do can have the same effect in your social interactions as well.

THE GREAT FORMULA

Remember the elements of The Great Formula?

The Irresistible Offer

A Thirsty Crowd

A Second Glass

If you follow the above rules and truly have The Irresistible Offer, your Second Glass is a done deal. Why wouldn't people want what you're offering again and again? Everywhere you go, there

are certain likely assumptions you can make about the people who are there.

For example, if you want to meet people whom you would like to support a charitable project you have in mind, would you go to the beach to find them?

If you're trying to meet a nice woman who might be a good mother to your children, would you go to a strip bar?

Do you get the idea? Figure out where your Thirsty Crowd is hiding, and spend your time there.

You can further sort through your prospects by being as upfront about your offer that social conventions will allow. Now, this may not apply when your customer is predefined for you.

Can you apply this to your children or your friends? Of course not, but you can get them to come back for a Second Glass when what you give in that relationship truly serves both of your interests.

The problem is that we're so tuned in to our own radio station so much that sometimes we are totally out of synch with even what those we love want in life.

WORD OF MOUTH

If people are getting the goods from you, whatever it is that you're selling, word is bound to spread. Now, the dynamic is a little different because there is no way people can spread your Me Meme around for you, but they can spread one piece of very portable information: your name.

Does this matter?

If your reputation precedes you, do you think that will help matters?

Perhaps this little sidebar will make that clearer.

The Greatest Persuasion Secret in the World

If you understand this one secret, you can dispense with just about every other book on the topic of persuasion and still get some great results in your life.

Keep in mind that I have been a lifelong student of persuasion, have written respected books on the topic, and have seen how persuasion plays out in many various contexts and battlefields. I can tell you, without question, that the following concept is the Holy Trump Card of all persuasion principles: The Frame.

The Frame is not your message—it's the message that precedes your message.

Huh? Stay with me . . .

Imagine for a moment that you are looking at a piece of art in a museum. What kind of assumptions would you make about it? The underlying presupposition is that the art is worthy of being in a museum. It must be good. What if you saw the same piece of art being peddled by a street artist? Do you think your perception of it would be different? mean, if he's any good, what is he doing selling art on the street, right? I heard possibly one of the best explanations of this principle from the most unlikely place once: a chick flick entitled *Never Been Kissed*.

Drew Barrymore played an undercover reporter who was sent back to high school to write about what life is like for teenagers these days. Barrymore's character was a real dork in high school, and she discovered that she was still just as much of a dork when she went back undercover.

Her brother (played by David Arquette), an otherwise unsuccessful guy who was a popular baseball jock in high school, decided to enroll in the school and help her out. He quickly became the most popular kid in school and began his campaign to save his sister's self-esteem. He told everyone that she used to be his girlfriend and that she dumped him. He spoke reverently about how great she was and within the

matter of a day, she was quickly accepted as one of the cool kids.

He summed this up with one line: "Josey, if you want to be cool, all you have to do is get one other cool kid to like you." When the other cool kid likes you, this pre-frames everyone else's opinion of you. Their contention was that even the cool kids were absolutely terrified of everyone finding out their secret: that they are just as dorky as you.

The other cool kids give something acceptance and the green light: It's safe to like it now without being found out. I think it's a pretty valid analysis.

I suspect that the Frame is so powerful because it is very subtle and almost unconscious. It is also because we have associated the pre-frame information with something in our minds that we have already allowed to enter unfiltered. That is, if we develop trust with someone, information we get from them bypasses our mental filter and penetrates deep into the core of our beliefs.

If you don't yet understand the power of this, I highly recommend paying close attention to your own mind. See how your beliefs affect your opinions.

What is your political affiliation?

When you hear a representative of the other side talking, how do you tend to respond?

Also, pay attention to how the pre-frame info affects the opinion of others.

For a fun experiment some time, try this with the wing man of your choice.

- 1.** Go to an area far away from where you live.
- 2.** Go to a bar or a club with your wing man five minutes behind you and strike up a conversation with someone.
- 3.** Half the time, before your friend enters the bar, tell the person to whom you're talking that your friend is a famous movie

producer. The other half of the time, tell them that he just got out of prison for assault.

4. See how that affects how they react to him. Wait a minute. Maybe you already know how this is going to play out without going through the trouble.

Do you now see the power of the Frame? With the proper pre-frame, do you really think you'll need any other persuasion tricks to attain your objective?

This is why Word of Mouth is the most powerful form of marketing in the world.

Warning: some people who first learn this principle use it to deceive people. When people find out you were lying, not only will you lose your Second Glass, but Word of Mouth will start to have the exact opposite effect on your life.

A Note to Salesmen

If you work as a salesman in any organization, you may feel helpless if you are selling a product that is not backed by The Irresistible Offer.

Yes, salesmen who are blessed with that luxury are going to have a much easier time of things. However, if are not one of them, do not despair. There are still many ways you can apply these ideas that will boost your results dramatically.

Let the following considerations be your guide.

1. Remember the first sale you make is yourself. Before your customers will buy a product from you, they need to be sold on *you* as a salesman. Go back and read the Chapter: “Selling Yourself in Three Seconds or Less.”

2. What is your Touchstone (your Me Meme)? Is it one that is conducive of the sale or not?

I once called a hair-replacement company (yeah, I’m going bald—deal with it) and was asked to come in for a consultation.

Generally, companies like this will not tell you too much on the phone, but will rope you in to the office so you can be influenced by their slick sales pitch. I went in expecting a very polished and professional piece of influence.

What I saw instead totally surprised me. I was greeted by a salesman with the most ridiculous looking rug of a hairpiece on his head. The deal was pretty much killed in that first instant, but I thought I'd stick around and give it a chance. Hey, maybe this was a bad example, and yeah going bald really sucks.

If you could imagine a used-car salesman trying to talk nicely to a five-year-old with a learning disability, that would be a little less insulting than the way this guy talked to me.

I hope that's not what you want to project to your prospects. I hope that you want to project honesty and respect, and I hope

that you really mean it. If you don't, do yourself and the world a favor and get out of sales.

What to Do If You're Selling a Product Marketed by The Irresistible Offer

If you're this lucky, feel blessed. Your job of selling is going to be very easy. In fact, you probably won't talk to many prospects who aren't ready to go.

Just answer questions honestly, be helpful, honestly ask yourself if your product will serve this customer, and communicate that fact clearly. If your product is wrong for your prospects, quickly sort through them, send them to someone who *can* help (that will

create some great Word of Mouth, believe me), and move on to the next prospect.

Yes, it's really that simple.

What to Do If You're Selling a Product without The Irresistible Offer

First, give a copy of this book to your Director of Marketing and your CEO. You probably won't see the impact right away, but maybe a year from now you will. Remember, it will take time for them to incorporate this into their marketing (more or less time depending on the level of bureaucracy).

You'll thank yourself for an easier job and more commissions later.

Meanwhile, remember to sell yourself first.

Next, see if you can create The Irresistible Offer on your own. Go through and create one for your product, and start using it on your prospects (if your organization is flexible enough to let you do what you want). Can you create some added benefit that will increase the ROI of your offer? Maybe as your sales stats increase, they will lead to a promotion and a raise.

Then again, maybe the increase in commissions alone will be enough.

