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Maintenance Supplies



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Honoring Our Profession and Improving Our Skills

Newsletter Exclusive



By [Mike Sawchuk](#)

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With 2006 coming to a close, this is an opportune time to reflect on the year as well as what an honorable industry we are part of and what challenging and rewarding careers we have. Selling Green cleaning products has been a big part of that; it has added dimensions and opportunities because it is clear now that we are selling products that protect the health of our clients and our world.

We help our clients much more than they often realize. As professional salespeople, we communicate information that persuades customers to buy from us, helping them realize how our products will improve the appearance, productivity, and operations of their facilities. We do this by examining their facilities' needs—some of which many of

our clients do not even realize they have. Then we suggest products that meet their needs, and we provide value-added services that build the bond between client and salesperson and help ensure long-term customer satisfaction.

We Are Unique

Distributor selling is unique and separate from many other types of selling. Instead of spending the bulk of our time seeking new customers and/or working with a customer once or twice and never again, our primary goal as jansan distributors, or manufacturers serving jansan distributors, is servicing existing customers over long periods of time.

At one time, some in our industry viewed us as "order takers." Even a great number of our customers saw us simply as marketing scores of products—many of which were not that different from any other—and then moving on to the next customer selling the same goods.

Today things are different, and I believe Green cleaning has had a lot to do with the change. For successful distributors nowadays are much more adept at understanding the needs of all kinds of facilities in a variety of industries, and these needs include going Green. The most successful distributors are skilled at time and territory management, have comprehensive product knowledge, and have what are becoming their most valuable skills, the ability to educate customers and their staff on why a product—especially one that is environmentally preferable—will serve them well and how to put it to use in their facility.

Characteristics of a Successful Jansan Salesperson

To help new distributors in our industry, provide a refresher course for established jansan distributors, and make 2007 even more successful, here are some of the characteristics of a successful jansan salesperson:

Make sales to existing customers. Tomorrow's sales come from selling more and more quality products to existing clients. Ask yourself: What is the average line item sold to an existing customer? How many SKU's do you have available to sell? Why do you allow your competition to sell items to your customers that you can provide? With this knowledge, it is easier to bolster sales to existing clients.

Build long-term relationships with customers. Long-term relationships are based on a positive attitude, professionalism, and trust. As mentioned earlier, we can no longer simply be order takers. Successful salespeople see themselves as "solution providers."

Create new customers. In time, and for a variety of reasons, we will lose some customers. To replace these customers, prospecting must be ongoing. Many distributors enjoy searching for new clients more than any other aspect of their work, while others dread it. Always view prospecting as a lifeline between you and your customer. For the new customers that prospecting creates, we can provide solutions to their facility problems; for ourselves, adding new clients allows personal and business success.

Offer value-added service. At one time, it may have been the products we sold that helped bond our relationships with our clients. However, in many ways, the value of products has been replaced with service. Handling problems, teaching cleaning workers how to use a product properly, and working with managers to improve the health and operation of their facilities is what strengthens the relationships of successful distributors and their clients today.

Take part in ongoing training. Success in sales requires personal training and properly applying the knowledge learned into developing skills that benefit customers.

Lastly, spend more time selling. You need to make more time to be 'belly-to-belly' with your customers and prospects. Find solutions to the admin burdens that take away valuable 'selling time'. Focus on increasing selling productivity.

People go into sales for a variety of reasons. Those that become very successful love what they do and the freedoms and financial rewards sales provides.

Professional jansan distributors need to be knowledgeable, willing to plan, and able create and use selling time wisely. They also need to be good listeners who provide exemplary service to customers. And on their journey to success, they never forget the importance of study and practice to continually enhance their abilities and the principles of their profession.

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