

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

CONDUCTED BY DR. ROBERT P. FISCHELIS.

A good way of judging one's personal methods of salesmanship is to pay close attention to the methods of the salesmen who come into the drug store, and then draw comparisons. The chances are that the sales methods which seem distasteful to the druggist are also distasteful to his customers.

Persistence is an important factor in making sales, but it can be overdone. Never make customers feel uncomfortable by insisting on their buying certain merchandise. It is the surest way of keeping them away from the store. You have met the salesmen of pharmaceutical houses who insist that there must be something in their line which you need, in spite of the fact that you have informed them gently, but firmly, that you are well stocked with everything. The wise salesman, under these circumstances, recognizes that you are not in a humor to appreciate his persistence, and leaves; but the overly persistent chap hangs on until your gentleness disappears and your firmness turns to wrath. On the other hand, the salesman who takes "No" for an answer immediately, and makes no further attempt to interest the buyer, lacks an element which is absolutely necessary to successful selling. The average person is interested in something new, something startling, or in the new application of some well-known product. Persistence in bringing these things to the attention of customers in a different way each time you have an opportunity to meet them is sure to bring results.

Cheerfulness and enthusiasm are essential features in sales work. The retail druggist should cultivate both. More than any other class of storekeepers, druggists must maintain a cheerful spirit because of the sorrow surrounding the homes and disposition of many of their customers. An encouraging remark, a cheery greeting, and a sympathetic attitude when the occasion requires it, will make fast friends of many customers who are otherwise indifferent. Cheerfulness and enthusiasm are contagious. Nobody is in a buying humor in an atmosphere of gloom.

Tact is a necessary attribute to every salesman. Someone has defined tact as "the unsaid portion of what you think." Happy is the man who knows what not to say at the proper moment. How easy it is to make some remark which will start a train of thought in the mind of the purchaser that leads far away from the objective of the salesman. Druggists, as a rule, know more neighborhood gossip than other business men, because they enjoy the confidence of a greater number of people. A good motto is to listen much and say little. Above all, never let a customer know that you have the slightest knowledge of his or her state of health through filling prescriptions. If customers volunteer information, it is another matter, but if you are in the habit of deducing ailments from the ingredients of prescriptions, do not deduce out loud. Patients often try to get information regarding their condition from druggists by asking questions about the prescriptions they are having filled. Side-stepping such questions requires tact, but it is absolutely necessary to use tact to avoid embarrassing the physician in any way. Nothing can be more harmful in the relation between

doctor and druggist than to have the latter discuss prescriptions with the patient and attempt to either support or criticize the doctor's judgment.

Persistence, cheerfulness, enthusiasm and tact are all necessary attributes for the success of the man behind the drug counter, but the greatest of these is tact.

WORLD WAR VETERANS IN THE INDUSTRIES.*

BY TAPPEN FAIRCHILD.

"The World War Veterans in the Industries" covers so wide a range, that even if I had systematically gathered the data, it would be an imposition upon your time and patience and interest for me to attempt anything more than a brief consideration of one phase of it. Naturally, my thought turns first to the particular group of industries in which chemistry plays its vitally important part, since my special interest and my daily work are directed along these lines. It was owing to my chemical training also, that I was fortunate enough to have the experience which qualified me to become a member of the World War Veterans' Section. For I was one of the large number of men who volunteered for service and were enrolled in the various organizations which later were consolidated into the Chemical Warfare Service. The efficiency of the work of this Service is effectually demonstrated, I think, in the fact that, while its purpose at the beginning was purely defensive, directed toward finding some means of protection against the deadly poisonous gases employed without warning by the ruthless exponents of modern warfare, it finally enabled us to take the offensive, to meet and beat the enemy with his own chosen weapons. As an instance, I might cite the attack on Lens in the Spring of 1918, during which two companies of the first gas regiment fired 2500 60-lb. bombs, each containing 30 pounds of liquid phosgene, on the enemy in the middle of the night. Such an attack produces a very great concentration of gas and is correspondingly deadly. Had the war gone on for a few months longer the enemy lines would have been literally drenched in gas, some of it far more deadly than anything which had been used up to that time.

In many instances the men of this Service on their return to civil life found that the work they had left had passed into other hands. Just how they have been placed by the Personnel Division of the Chemical Warfare Service in Washington I have no means of knowing, but this Service was reversed for their benefit, that is to say, it helped return them to the industries from which it had taken them.

It is interesting to note the many heads under which these men were divided according to the chemical work they were qualified to do in connection with the various industries. Some specialized in agriculture, making studies of fertilizers, of plant life; others devoted themselves to fuels; to mining, to iron and steel; to textiles; to organic and inorganic chemistry; assaying; dyestuffs; glass, etc., etc. There is practically not an industry to-day that can get along without a chemist, or staff of chemists, and we all know how closely the work of the chemist blends with the work of the pharmacist.

These chemists, these World War Veterans, are now probably widely dispersed all over the country, working as units for the most part; they are not organized, but each man, let us hope, is doing his work with the attention, the precision,

*Parts of an address before World War Veterans' Section, A. Ph. A., City of Washington meeting, 1920.