

The Gentle Intrusion of Alzheimer

3-12-2012 by Harry Zirkelbach

The Company, if it could be considered that, consisted of an owner, his son and two other commissioned Salesmen. Generally they covered metro Denver, with the newest representative having interests in Western Colorado. Otherwise there was no assigned territory, and generally any account belonged to that Salesman. No intrusions. Write an order for another Salesman, put his name on it immediately.

The product was lighting fixtures, residential, some commercial. Most providers limited their product to for sales within Colorado. It was late 20th Century and Colorado business was healthy, with a pleasing annually growth.

On occasion a line represented would be lost, and at other times a new product line would become available. New product could be very valuable whether the line was established, switched from another Colorado distributor, or even better, that product was being introduced to the Rocky Mountain Region.

The owner was advised that a manufacturer was expanding his sales to Colorado and asked to interview our group. He had friends in Commercial Lighting, who recommended our group. The owner was made to believe this was a formality, introduction to his product, philosophy, terms and a contract.

The appointed day arrived and that owner and his Sales Manager met with our group in what was a jovial, hour long introduction.

About the time this manufacturer began opening boxes containing product, the owner's wife enters the spacious Office and begins to tidy things as was her habit.

None paid attention to this ritual until she produced a large watering can and began to empty the content into the oversized pot containing the life-like artificial ficus tree.

The owner of the visiting Company suddenly stopped in mid sentence when he was aware of just what was happening. This was so abrupt that each home towner became quickly aware and one took the bait. As gently as panic would allow,

he began "That's all right Mom, you don't have to do that now.
I watered the plants this morning."

This somewhat added concern to the situation, for while “Mom” obligated and went onto other chores, the damage had been aggravated because the rug around the ficus had been water stained from previous well intended attentions.

The interview mood changed for all six in the room. The locals first exhibited nervousness at the prospect of losing a fine new opportunity, and the Manufacturer and his Sales Rep began rushing through explanations with absolutely no interest in their being accepted by these loonies.

At the farewell, sincerity abounded, on both sides. Yes, half was faked. The other half accepting in good humor for the owner’s gentle wife was their Mom at work. And each knew of her need of love and affection more than ever as her grasp of reality slipped off into that most pleasant world she kept to herself.

The four locals laughed at retelling of this visit, regretted the loss of what seemed a fine account, a product that conflicted with none they represented, and had a growing appeal nationally.

These four men became more of a family that hour, ended selling more of their existing products in the coming year.

And the fresh stain around the ficus tree came and went as the owner’s wife daily came to care for her four boys and their office.