

# SALES

## • Gupta pays attention to existing customers

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increase its checking account business, or a nursing home might want to fill its beds.

Gupta does research to find how other banks or nursing homes solved these problems. Then he searches through thousands of suppliers to find products that solve the problem.

The solutions might be as simple as Post-It pads, popcorn tins or chocolate bars imprinted with a customer's name. But they also might be unique, like a yellow jar-gripper shaped like a dog bone advertising the All-Star Mutts show at Sea World in Aurora.

Gupta credits several things to being successful:

- Sell more to existing customers.

Gupta keeps up with new products in his industries - printing and promotional products - by going to industry trade shows.

"That's where I collect my ideas, my catalogs and my samples," Gupta said. "That's where I talk to my suppliers."

Gupta uses this information to sell more to existing customers, such as Mike Panasiti, a field director at the Great Trail Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Panasiti needed an incentive product to give teen-age boys who recruited friends as Scouts. By looking through one of Gupta's

catalogs, Panasiti settled on small, high-tech flashlights. During a recent meeting, the two decided the color, imprinting and number of flashlights.

Quality products, on-time delivery and price are the three reasons why another of the local council's field directors, Jody Gildersleeve, orders all of his incentive products from Gupta instead of from four or five different salesmen, as he has in the past.

"What I've been able to do is get all the different incentive items I'm in charge of from Anup," Gildersleeve said. "So I deal with one person, which is nice."

- Make your product or service different.

Gupta believes a high level of customer service sets apart his promotional products and printing business from others.

"My customers buy from me because of my service. They buy from me because I'm Anup," Gupta said.

That's one of the reasons why Gupta said he doesn't want to take product orders over the Internet. To do so would take away his personality and make his products commodities that could be ordered from anybody.

"All you care about then is price," Gupta said. "You are getting no additional benefit."

- Keep in touch with existing customers.

Gupta regularly calls or visits his customers to stay in touch with their needs and to show them new products. He also rewards his customers with promotional products of their own.

"He gives good customer service," Panasiti said. "Even when

## A STELLAR SELLER

Good salespeople share several characteristics, said Jon M. Hawes, director of the Fisher Institute for Professional Selling at the University of Akron's College of Business Administration.

"One gentleman explained it to me this way: Be patient, polite, but persistent," Hawes said.

Here are some other characteristics:

- Enthusiasm - "They get the prospect excited about the product," Hawes said.

- Ego drive - "When you have ego drive, you really want to win," Hawes said. "You enjoy competition for the sake of competition."

- Ego strength - "The idea that when you lose, it doesn't bother you," he said.

- Empathy - "The ability to understand what the other person has in terms of needs and wants and interests."

we're not ordering anything, he calls every once in a while."

- Ask customers for references.

Gupta asks satisfied customers for reference letters or for references to business associates that might need promotional products.

- Go to places or events where your customers hang out.

Instead of selling his products door to door or through cold calls, Gupta goes to events that attract sales, advertising or purchasing agents in certain industries.