

# What 45 years in business have taught him about selling

William Hamlin Childs, Chairman of the Executive Board of The Barrett Company and Vice-President of The Bon Ami Company, is connected with a number of very large industrial enterprises. Most of these concerns are liberal and consistent advertisers. In a recent issue of "System" he pointed out some selling principles that, in his judgment, are vital to success. Therefore, the following excerpts from that article should prove of interest to every business man. He writes:

"I have been interested, during 45 years of active business life, in many enterprises.

"One business I began with the purchase of a trade-mark for \$5,000. We thought that the trade-mark and the product it represented were both good—although the actual business being done was very small. Recently we refused \$3,000,000 for that trade-mark; it now stands for a very large business. Another corporation at the time I joined it, some twenty years ago, had a volume of about \$5,000,000; now it has a volume of around \$80,000,000 a year.

"Out from them these larger principles stand forth:

"(1) There is no use trying to sell unless and until you not only have something better to sell than the next man, but can also give good reasons why what you have is better.

"(2) These reasons will not have a continuing effect unless your product is not only distinctive in quality, but also has a trade-mark which stands for that distinction.

"(3) No matter how good the product or how good the reasons, the public will not quickly recognize either. A solid business is slowly built.

"(4) The business building is never finished; one has to keep his product constantly—even doggedly—before the

public, especially during periods when the public is not buying. The memory of the buying public is short.

"(5) Trade-mark value is hard to establish and easy to lose. Once lost it will scarcely be reestablished. Established, it is more valuable than any material asset—it is the biggest thing in business."

It is Mr. Childs' judgment that: "A certain definite amount of the sale price has to be appropriated for advertising—that it is as much a part of the product as the container. Business will increase in satisfactory volume only provided the manufacturer furnishes the impetus for that increase by keeping his advertising appropriation always increasing in definite proportion."

How strong a believer Mr. Childs is in advertising is shown by his statement: "If the sales during a considerable period were to fall off, I would urge that the percentage spent for advertising be immediately increased. To decrease would be to start out of business. For, notwithstanding the great value of the material assets of any company, they cannot afford to jeopardize their greatest asset, which is the good will and demand which advertising has built up for them."

*In most of Mr. Childs' enterprises National Advertising has been used effectively, and in practically all of these campaigns the Curtis Publications have been an important factor.*

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