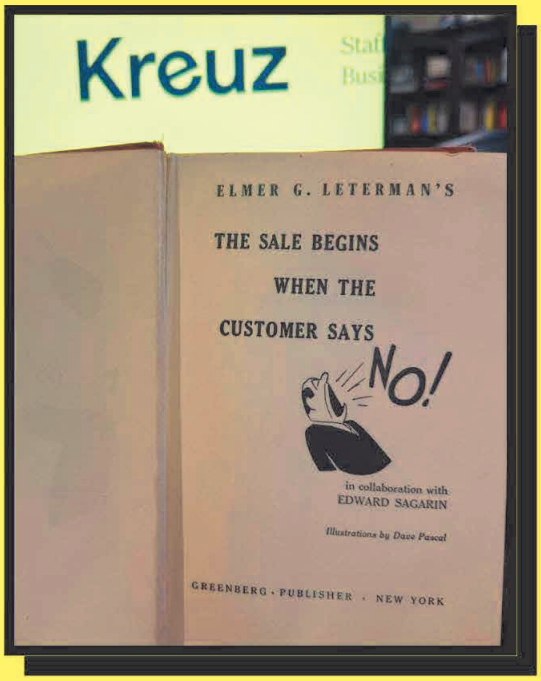
SELLING

Everything I Know About Selling Started at 5:45 A.M.

A paper route, a rigged television, a pen, and my father's 1953 sales bible.

BY JOE KREUZ



Dad's bible, in front of the yellow and black I later chose for my own firm.

At 5:45 every morning, Sundays included, I was out delivering the Courier-Express. I did it for five years. I had 100 houses on my route, and collecting from them took every Monday and Tuesday, because you couldn't do it in one day.

Collecting is where I learned to sell. Every house was different, and at each door you honed your personality and your relationships, working for the weekly tip. In December you delivered the customer's calendar in person and hoped for something bigger, your Christmas bonus. I liken it to working at a zoo, where every animal requires different care and feeding.

I didn't have a name for it then, but I was following my dad.

LIKE MY DAD

There were six of us. Four of my siblings became engineers and business people. My sister and I took after Dad, and I always knew I wanted to be in sales the way he was.

Dad honed his skills at L.M. Berry and White Directory, in the Yellow Pages business. His bible was a book called *The Sale Begins When the Customer Says No*, by Elmer G. Leterman. His copy is what got me thinking about all of this.

> *"Every animal requires different care and feeding."*

FIRST, I GOT SOLD

After the paper route came fine dining and tableside cooking at Romanello's Prime Rib and the Lancaster Country Club. Cooking in front of a table is its own kind of selling.

My first job out of college put me on the other side of the desk. I was a purchasing agent at Watson, and seasoned, old-school salesmen came to sell me steel, extruded rubber, hardware, nuts and bolts, and chemicals. I got to watch the pros work, and I was the one they were working on.

One day a call came in: I had won a television at a trade show, courtesy of one of our biggest suppliers. I was too naive to realize it was most likely rigged. My wife and I were flat broke, though, and a brand-new color TV came in handy.

THEN I SOLD

Paychex gave me my first sales job. In my first interview, Jerry Reynell asked me to sell him a pen. That was long before *The Wolf of Wall Street* put "sell me this pen" on a movie screen, or *Glengarry Glen Ross* told salesmen to "always be closing." I was doing it for real.

Next came a rigorous six-day training program with sales trainer Bob Evans. It ended with a dinner with Tom Golisano, the company's founder and CEO. Today his Golisano Institute builds selling and relationship building into its curriculum.

Paychex measured everything, every week: cold calls in person, cold calls on the phone, new payrolls delivered, and CPAs taken out to eat. The goal was two CPAs a week. Between breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, I basically ate for free. And I knocked on doors through all four seasons. I tell people my cold calling was right up there with the Fuller Brush man.

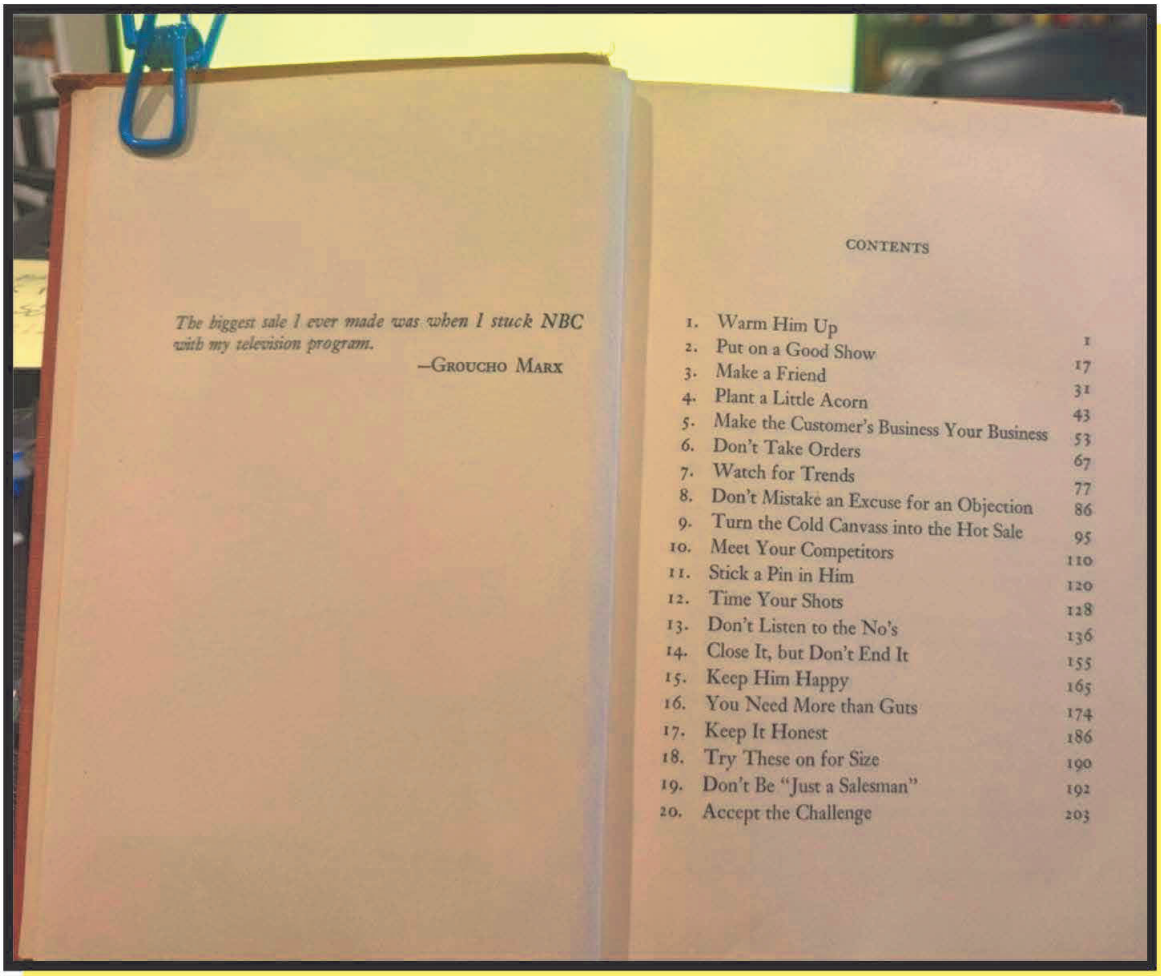
THEN I TAUGHT IT

At Robert Half and Accountemps, I got to train salespeople in the firm's London offices. At my own firm, AP Professionals, relationship building was the job. Our people built relationships with active job seekers and with candidates we recruited. They prospected constantly for new business, and they honed our land-and-expand strategy with current clients.

Sales comes in many forms: direct B2B, large-account sales management, inbound calls, outbound calls, and customer service reps who improve the customer's experience. The paper route taught me what they share. Every customer needs different care and feeding.

"Sell me this pen."

My first interview question at Paychex, long before the movies made it famous.



The biggest sale I ever made was when I stuck NBC with my television program.

—Groucho Marx

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The epigraph and contents page of Dad's copy. Twenty chapters, starting with "Warm Him Up."

WHAT DAD KNEW IN 1953

Dad's copy is a 1953 third printing from Greenberg, written by Leterman in collaboration with Edward Sagarin.

The chapter titles still hold up: "Make a Friend." "Make the Customer's Business Your Business." "Close It, but Don't End It." "Keep It Honest." They were ahead of their time. Harvey Mackay's *Swim with the Sharks* did not arrive until 35 years later.

WHAT AI CAN'T REPLACE

I've gone to the AI trainings, read the books, and watched the videos. They all share one common denominator: AI will never be able to replace the one-on-one human relationship and the trust earned behind it.

When I chose my company colors, I chose yellow and black. They mirror Dad's L.M. Berry Yellow Pages business card.