

THE QUARRY

How to Sell a Baby

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Have you ever wondered how salesmanship works in 2089?

Well, my friend, you're in for a surprise. Gone are the days when you could buy groceries from a store without a salesman breathing down your neck. Gone are the days of free browsing. Gone are the days when you could adopt a puppy from a local pet shop just because you feel like it.

These days, everything is a sales opportunity. And when I say everything, I really do mean it. This, my friend, is your user-friendly guide on how to sell a baby.

STEP 1 – THE BIG THREE:

First and foremost, you're going to need to know a history of the three major corporations in the baby business.

Back in the day, new laws were put in place. Humanity was becoming riddled with diseases—each generation had different issues to the next, and nobody was doing anything about selective breeding to eliminate these issues. People wanted security—a child that would be healthy, guaranteed. And so, the baby business boomed.

It started with Firstborns, a company that was once just a small corner shop selling baby accessories in London. The founder, Isaac Lenning, was one of the first to jump on the baby bandwagon in the early days and built his company into a billion-dollar success story. Firstborns, once based solely in London, now operates across Europe, the Americas and the CIS as a luxury baby brand.

Then, there's Babybarn. This company, once a billion-dollar pet industry, shunned the sale of pets once the baby industry looked more profitable. Nobody wanted to buy dogs anymore—what's the point of a companion animal when babies are so accessible? It's a family, without the gestation period. That spells profit. Their bright yellow branding is now a pale, butter-yellow, and their warehouses, dotted across Asia and the Middle-East, are far more successful.

The third company is the discount baby warehouse, simply called Baby Warehouse. This global company, made successful by the same thing that had created dollar shops and discount chemists, took advantage of the high prices for babies and made it a budget-friendly experience for working-class couples.

Those are the big three corporations in the baby-selling business. With trillions of dollars between them, it's no surprise that boutique baby stores are a thing of the past; babies are sales. Babies are \$\$\$\$. Shares are a reasonable price and steadily rising. It's an industry worth investing your money in, but don't tell anyone I told you that. Insider trading and all.

STEP 2 – THE PRODUCT:

History of the corporations is boring. Let's move on.

So, there are many different types of babies. Long, short, skinny or fat like the Michelin man. People like different things. We've got to cater for it all.

Babies are shelved by tier, and then by category (other than the discount babies under the bright red clearance signs—those are for desperate sales. Yes, we need to get rid of them, but everyone else on the floor will totally judge you for selling a *clearance* baby. That just screams financial trouble).

Bronze-tier doesn't have 'specifics' within categories; you've just got the essentials. Ethnicity, predicted talents, and academic potential. Do they want blue eyes on a mathematics genius? Sorry, unless there's one there, that customer's going to have to look at silver-tier.

Push that. Make them spend more dosh and get yourself something nice. Maybe a new shirt? That one's hideous.

Silver-tier does have more options, but that comes at a price. Bronze-tier babies are between five-thousand and ten-thousand dollars (cheap, I know)—with that price, you get pretty much nothing. The baby. Maybe a muslin cloth and a bib. That's it. Silver is *so* much more beneficial to the customer. It's easier to sell—even with the fifteen-to-twenty thousand-dollar price tag.

Sell yourself. Repeat after me: I'm a silver-tiered baby. Mummy and Daddy bought me because I have pretty, blue eyes (Yes, with silver-tier you can even pick the eye colour!) and am a creative genius when it comes to painting pretty pictures (Shame they forgot to think about how much that wouldn't earn you, isn't it, Sunshine?). Look, here are some pictures of my raw, unfathomable talent. Want your future child to have such impressive abilities? Buy a silver-tiered baby now!

Gold-tier is brilliant and definitely the choice for anyone who parks a bright-red Porsche in the carpark. They might need a bigger car for their newly-purchased child, but they can afford it for the privilege of reserving the baby that suits their every desire before it's even born. That's right, you can pre-order your future child for the small cost of thirty-thousand dollars! Delivery costs are extra.

Now, platinum-tier? That's a beautiful thing. Platinum-tier babies are *custom-made* for the customers. The waiting period can be *years* for the right child to come along. The

customer hand-picks the sire and dam out of a catalogue of breeders provided to them. They meet with their consultant four times to make sure they're getting the best of the best, and then they *interview* the sire and dam prior to the conception of their child.

Then, if the child isn't up to scratch in the preliminary tests twelve weeks into the pregnancy, they scrap it and start again.

All this, for the perfectly reasonable price of fifty-thousand dollars. Delivery is on us. *How generous.*

STEP 3 – THE CUSTOMER:

Yes, yes, you've heard it all before. The customer is always right.

Do what they say, make them happy. Happy customers spend money. Money means your average sale is higher. Higher average sales mean that your manager is happy. Happy manager means promotion. Promotion means more money. You get the gist.

Usually, you'll be dealing with happy-go-lucky customers brimming with excitement at the thought of starting the next stage in their adult lives. Parenthood is a brilliant thing. Use it. Sell it. Make them spend money.

These customers are easy. They'll listen to what you say. They'll list their requirements and their budget and what they've already purchased. You'll be able to convince them to buy a silver-tiered baby instead of a bronze-tiered baby for peace of mind. If they're wearing a fancy watch or stilettos on a Sunday, take a stab at gold-tier. Save the platinum-tier babies for more experienced salesmen, though. You're a trainee, not some sales extraordinaire.

Other customers are sceptical. Questioning. Difficult. God forbid, you sell them the wrong baby! It's not like there's a thirty-day-guarantee on everything silver-tier and above. These are the ones you should watch out for. They'll buy the cheapest kid on the shelves and throw your sales average into thousands. Which is despicable, by the way. You want tens-of-thousands.

Honestly, you trainees are all the same. Dollar signs in your eyes when your average is three grand. Pitiful.

So how do you deal with such *annoying* customers?

Easy.

Ignore everything they say and tell them they're wrong. *Politely*. You've got to be crafty about this sort of thing. List the benefits of silver-tier over bronze-tier. Talk about that thirty-day-guarantee. Market the shit out of that stuff. *Own it*. Well, make them own it. Don't go accidentally selling yourself a baby. You don't get commission for that.

STEP 4 – MAKE SURE THEY'RE NOT A MURDERER:

Do orphanages let any old couple adopt a child without a thought?

Yes, they do.

Why?

They're desperate. They've got our offcuts. The dregs of the baby industry; clearance stock that hasn't sold in weeks, grown too big for their standard-sized bassinets and become such a liability that they've been deemed unsellable.

Do these orphanages care for the welfare of these children? Of course not! They're products, not people... yet.

The real question here is, *should* orphanages let any couple that walks in their damp, creaky facilities adopt a child without concern for that child's welfare?

They don't have a choice. They don't have the room, and they need to get rid of the same stock that we offloaded to them. Sucks to be them.

We have that choice. If a baby doesn't sell and we have to send it to the orphanage, that's fine on our end. The business claims half back as damage liability, and the baby's chucked on the weekly truck out to the grotty 'burbs. After that, it's no longer our problem. Out of sight, out of mind.

Don't just sell any old couple a baby. Make the sale, then do a background check. We have a reputation to uphold, and we'll have the press on our backs if we sell a silver-tier child to a shady woman who's been on the run from the cops for three years running. It's happened

before—poor Sandy. She got fired then tried to rob a bank because she had no money. She's on the run from the cops now, too.

Don't serve her. She's bad news. Probably a murderer.

Or a cannibal. Some people like expensive, illegal delicacies. Think Hannibal Lecter, and watch out for it. Gold-tier customers aren't the only ones who drive fancy red Porches.

Basically, take their license or passport or whatever form of identity they have on them, as long as it has an address and a picture. Scan it on the machine and stall for fifteen minutes. Talk about the baby—do they have a name picked out? Oh, it's so exciting! Talk about the lead time—they can pick up the baby between five and seven business days after their payment goes through. Talk about shipping costs if they can't pick up the little kiddo. We'll send through a confirmation email when it's ready.

Most of the time, you'll see a big green tick on your screen, and they can pay. You've made the sale. Brilliant. Good job. Go make another.

Sometimes, you'll see a big red cross. Don't let them buy the baby. They're bad news. If they take it badly, get security or let your wonderful, caring manager sweet-talk them into buying a clearance baby instead. Nobody cares about clearance babies. Not even the press.

STEP 5 – WEEKLY PROCEDURES:

As a salesman in any store, at some point, you're going to have to open shop.

There are a few things to remember here. Wait for the other staff member to arrive. We open shop in pairs, not alone—too many people have tried to steal a platinum kid that's ready for collection.

I know, I know, some people are despicable. One of them even punched me once. I had a black eye for over a week.

Once you're in, you need to turn on the computers, get the tills ready for the day... all that good stuff. Someone should sweep the floor because those shmucks who close the night before always do a disgraceful job of it.

Someone will have to turn on the lights—not just the warehouse lights, but the ones that light up each pod for the customers, too. Can't sell a baby if you can't see the poor thing's face.

And yes, before you ask, someone does look after them through the night. They're the people who walk around the store wearing pink. The nannies. They're the ones who change those nappies all day. Yeah, I don't envy them either. It's a shit job.

The first time you open, someone will probably walk you through the procedure in a sleep-deprived daze, with their hand over their mouth to cover their yawn. This is *not* the time to make a gun with your finger and shoot an elastic band into their eye. Learn from my mistakes.

Now closing would be an absolute chore if anybody did it properly.

Instead, you just wait for that one customer who's taking eight million years to make a decision, end up closing forty-five minutes *after* when you're supposed to and then do a half-hearted sweep of the warehouse just to say you did it. Someone else counts the tills. Someone else walks around with a clipboard and double checks that all the babies are still alive, marks off the ones that aren't and then writes them off electronically.

If you really want to, you can clean each of the little plastic windows that customers look through to see the babies in their bassinets. Please do. Someone forgot to for three weeks, and we didn't realise that one of the baby's nappies hadn't been changed in two weeks. It stunk pretty bad, but nannies don't bother if they can't see the problem.

Soon-to-be-parents are pretty messy, so make sure you clean up all of the baby accessories too. There will be dummies strewn across the floor of the store and cute little Yoda costumes draped across the bassinet of a sad, lonely baby that a couple decided against buying. You might even find a puddle of vomit from where a nanny was burping a kid and neglected to clean up. It happens a lot.

As I said, they have a shit job.

We close at seven every day (Except Sundays, we don't work Sundays), but you'll probably find you'll be there until nine cleaning up after all the customers who haven't heard of putting things back where they found them.

Oh, by the way... check the clearance babies regularly throughout the day. They don't keep well.

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STEP 6 – DON'T FUCK UP:

If you do, I'll write you a dismal review, and your next job will be at the stinky orphanage we send all the out-of-date babies to.

Is that what you want?

Didn't think so.

But seriously, lose that shirt. It's revolting.