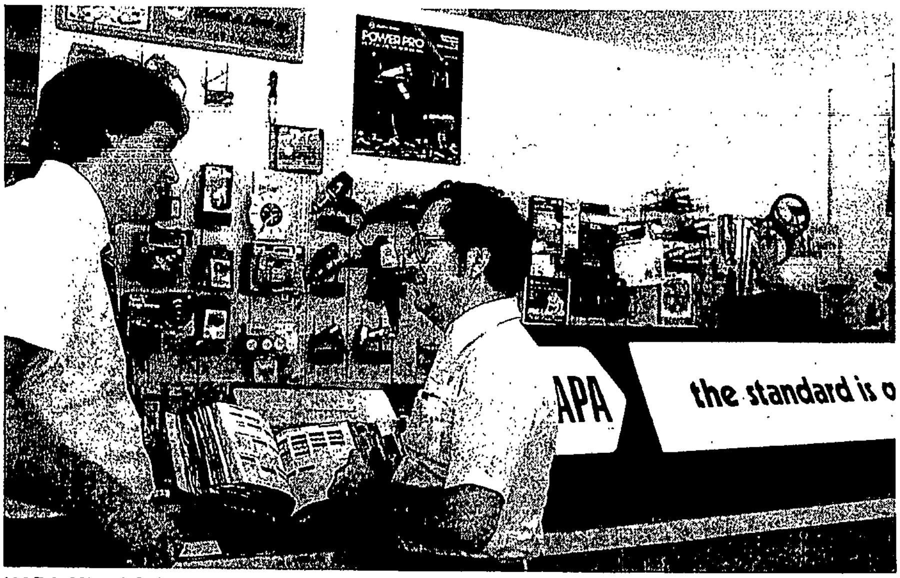

NAPA Miami Sales Manager Greg Robert (left) confers with M&H Auto Parts owner Howard Dayringer.

stitutional purchasing agents are accustomed to receiving regular sales and service calls by their suppliers, and come to count on them as a sort of business consultant. And there's no substitute for this kind of service.

Your guarantee to these prospective customers of regular service calls by a reliable and knowledgeable salesperson can pay off with large, loyal accounts you can depend on for regular orders.

Checklist for Gaining the Business Through Outside Selling

1. Inventory surveys are an effective way to make inroads to servicing both fleet and industrial/institutional accounts. Your outside salesperson should request permission to conduct a survey of the prospect's inventory and then, based on the results, make suggestions as to how doing business with your store could be of assistance.

For example, Howard Dayringer, owner of M&H Auto Parts in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, does a good fleet business and is a firm believer in the value of performing these surveys. "We use fleet surveys to try to show the manager that with today's increasing cost of inventory and the increasing cost of doing business, it's more and more important to have the dollars that he does have invested in inventory turning over, that he has no parts lying on the shelf. And that's one of the benefits we sell for doing business with NAPA. If he buys a part through M&H, we will take that part off his shelf if it doesn't turn.

"For example, we had one rental car agency in our trading area that had been buying parts from a source other than NAPA because he could buy them cheaper. So we made a survey of his inventory and of his fleet, and found that he had $2000 worth of belts which fit nothing he had. At that point, of course, he said, 'Gee, why don't you go ahead and help me get rid of these surplus belts?' So we worked out a program with him. We told him that, based on his purchases, at the end of each month we'll allow him a 5% credit on his old belts so that, hopefully, we can turn his belt surplus into plus sales for us."

Similarly, surveys can be used effectively to sell the industrial/institutional prospect. Your outside salesperson should offer to make a survey of all the parts, equipment and supplies they need. Then he can assure them that he will make sure these items are always on hand for immediate delivery.

2. Make sure your outside salesperson calling on these accounts is familiar with their needs and problems. For this reason, it can be very beneficial to hire a retired truck driver or fleet manager to call on industrial/institutional accounts. Once again, Howard Dayringer of M&H Auto Parts has found this to be the case.

"We have one man who calls on no one except fleet accounts. He was a fleet superintendent for about twenty years, but the pace of the work was wearing down his health. So we hired him to call on fleet accounts for us. When he calls on these prospective accounts, it's immediately apparent that he knows their business inside and out and because of this, we usually get a shot at the business."

3. Before calling on a prospective fleet or industrial/institutional account, have your outside salesperson do some "homework" as to who actually makes the buying decisions. For the fleet account, this may be the fleet maintenance superintendent, the fleet manager or the mechanics. (It's generally a good idea for your salesperson to get to know the fleet drivers as well, as 71% of repairs are initiated by the driver's report.)

This ad, appearing in two leading fleet magazines, will help you to capitalize on this enormous market.

For the industrial/institutional account, possible buying decision-makers other than the purchasing agent include contractors, shop supervisors and master mechanics — i.e., the people who actually use what you've got to sell.

4. When trying to sell the fleet account, your salesperson must be prepared to sell NAPA's benefits in light of the fleet manager's needs: availability saves downtime, quality protects against breakdowns, a single source of supply saves paperwork, etc. He should also sell cost per mile, reminding the prospect that dollar considerations include downtime, labor and fuel efficiency.

The same applies with selling the industrial/institutional account: coverage and 24-hour delivery are big selling points for making these types of sales. Your outside salesperson's presentation should first point out your coverage, followed by NAPA's overnight delivery system. He should remind him that cost includes being able to get what he needs, when he needs it. And if he's got a breakdown, he'll get

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