

3M Media/Sound Products Newsletter

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Sound of Music leads the band with major accounts



Rich, Dick, and Todd Cushing stand in front of the pond which serves as a focal point for the company headquarters. Situated on five and a half acres, customers are treated to a relaxed setting, devoid of the hustle and bustle of the big city.

Historic Mundelein, IL stands in sharp contrast to the colossal city of Chicago, its nearby neighbor. A pond, geese, ducks, and even goats create a country setting for the campus of the Sound of Music Company.

Three buildings serve as centers for service, administration, and sales. Years past, the buildings were a schoolhouse, a dairy, and a recreation hall.

Here history and the future come together with 18 incoming phone lines, 19 computer terminals, a DSI Pentium mainframe, and satellite dishes. This up-to-date communication technology has one purpose...customer service.

This customer service isn't ordinary. It's designed to communicate with sites across the country which subscribe to 3M services including music, messaging, video and data transmission. Close to \$500,000 has been invested to provide complete customer support.

A meeting and demo room has been redesigned to enhance the positive image clients receive when they visit. This is another example of investing to provide top customer service.

Since its inception in 1973, the firm has built a customer base that includes thousands of locations. About 50% of the customer sites are major accounts.

Dick Cushing, owner and president, said, "Selling to a major corporation isn't easy. We sat in the lobby of our largest customer for nearly five years before they bought a single piece of equipment."

Patience and building trust are two key selling maxims vital to gaining major accounts. To hold customers, Cushing suggests three actions dealers must take: service, service and service!

In deciding to serve large accounts, the Sound of Music team understands

(Continued on page three)

An interview with our new leader: Arnie Roese



Arnie Roese

A change in leadership can sometimes cause concern for dealers and 3M personnel. We met with Arnie Roese, pronounced "Royce," as in Rolls Royce, to learn more about him and his business philosophy. Editors.

Arnie Roese was born and raised in Staten Island, NY. As a youngster he lived and dreamed baseball. His dad encouraged him to pick an additional sport to help him stay active during the winter months and his love for basketball

(Continued on page two)

Inside this issue...

- p. 2 Dealer Advisory Council
- p. 2 Are you on target?
- p. 4 Alan Thompson joins team
- p. 4 September top ten dealers
- p. 4 Masthead change
- p. 4 GLP's training pays off
- p. 4 Technical tips

Patience and trust are key to selling major accounts

(Continued from page one)

they must first like what they are doing, and then be willing to pay the price. The price is in the form of investments, time, capital outlay, and lots of sweat equity.

Just like smaller businesses, major accounts have problems that need to be solved. Helping them find solutions to overcome their business obstacles is key in securing their trust.

The reason some companies are not successful in dealing with major accounts is that they are "too casual," according to Todd Cushing, sales manager/marketing director. He said, "Follow-up is everything. We back up every customer contact and request with either a phone call or written report, automatically."

"Our computer system allows us to track every verbal or written contact with every customer," said Rich Cushing, chief engineer. Rich understands the computer system thoroughly and he's often called on to help 3M dealers with the knowledge he's amassed. Customer service tracking takes place from the first sale through the most current invoice.

Dick Cushing is pleased he can work closely with his two sons. "We like to get involved in team selling with major accounts," he said, "and we each bring our different expertise to the meeting."

Sound of Music is often called on by dealers to lend a hand in selling 3M products to major accounts. They have answered many questions and made field trips to help with sales calls. Networking among 3M dealers is very important to deliver installation, needed products, and service at the local level.

"We are grateful for the teamwork 3M dealers provide," said Dick Cushing. "This enables all dealers to promote 3M products with major accounts. Dealer cooperation makes it possible to maintain quality service on a nationwide basis."

Music provides the impetus for their business as far as folks at Sound of

Dick Cushing enjoys taking his accordion to nursing homes to play for patients afflicted with Alzheimer's disease. He's always amazed at the positive reactions music elicits from patients he visits.



Music are concerned. Dick, a talented musician, led his own band. His favorite song being "Edelweiss" prompted him to name his company, Sound of Music.

"We need to remind ourselves we're in a special business. Music is a God-given gift touching everyone's life," he ardently stated. Dick knows the value of music.

Sound of Music employs 31 people, referring to themselves as a *business family*. Each staff member is encouraged to be cooperative, seek job contentment, and to create a working environment where they look forward to coming to work on Monday morning. The company offers seminars to enrich employee job skills, plus funds job related classes, motivational speakers, and training films.

Phil Earnest, recently shaped a vision statement for their service department: "The Sound of Music service department will become as efficient as possible, internally, so the efficiency created will be passed on to our most valuable employer, the customer, as good customer service."

Jerry Kitchen, account manager, focuses on providing full-time service for the Sears account. He believes you have to give before you get, from every major account. His 37 years experience is put to good use providing round-the-clock help to the Sears account.



Dick takes a moment to feed the pet goat. This is one of the attractions that makes Sound of Music a fun place to work and visit. Dick's wife, Ellen, likes to remind him, "When it comes to business, don't let anyone get your goat!"



(left) Todd, Dick and Rich in the trophy room.

(right) Phil Earnest, service manager, Laurie Winegar, satellite coordinator, and Mike Brandt, finance manager pose in front of the 3M satellite dishes.

