

It's not all sell, sell, sell— Remember to market as well

As appeared in ISHN's "FDO"

January 1998

During a recent sales meeting at United Sales Associates comprised of channel members—manufacturers (principals), distributors, and users, and reps—one of the main topics was, "How will our industry change most in the next five years?" Most of the energy of the discussion early on was focused on manufacturers, distributors, and reps. Then Dr. Rick Fulwiler, president of Technology Leadership Associates and formerly Procter & Gamble's director of health and safety worldwide, wisely asked us to define "end user." He urged our future discussions to include end user needs *first* and then work back.

A good lesson for us all! Back to the basics. Let's understand where the end user will be five years (or three or two years) from now, and let's include him or her in needs evaluations to determine where we must go from here to get to there.

Peter Drucker, management guru and author of "Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices" and "The Effective Executive" among others, states, "Selling focuses on the needs of the seller, marketing on the needs of the buyer (or end user)." He goes on to say

"Selling is preoccupied with the seller's need to convert the product into cash; marketing with the idea of satisfying the needs of the customer (or end user) by means of the product and the whole cluster of things associated with creating, delivering and finally consuming it."

I think Dr. Fulwiler is suggesting we properly market our products, not just sell them. Too many times we get wrapped up in what the competition is doing or what the distributor may want or what our needs are instead of going to the real source, the end user of products or services, to really understand their needs in order to build the solution for them.

Think about it.

George J. Hayward