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A JOB FOR REAL SALESMEN

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Not long ago, an exchange magazine contained a definition of salesmanship as "cooperative merchandising" and the coment that "the salesman is the connecting link between the source of supply and the source of consumption", emphasizing that salesmanship on this basis is as important to the producer as to the merchant and consumer. This definition indicates a big opportunity for the salesman in connection with the Simplified Practice movement.

There is salesmanship in every walk of life, though it may not be called by that name. The workman sells his skill and energy, the professional man his technical and scientific knowledge, the business or industrial executive an ability to "produce the goods". Sometimes this is mere order-taking, sometimes much more. We owe much of our progress individually to our ability to sell ourselves.

But buying is becoming more of a scientific matter. Thousands of purchasing agents are reducing the hazards of "guesswork" and doing their part to raise efficiency by reducing wastes in purchasing.

Waste, it is coming to be generally recognized, is so insidious, so prevalent, and so costly to the entire world, that every effort to eliminate it holds important potential benefits to every individual. One phase of that waste, and one which deserves the salesman's attention and support, arises from too much variety of sizes, types, and immaterial differences in every-day commodities. Simplified Practice is a group attack on such wastes, and enlists the cooperation of manufacturer, distributer and consumer. When cooperative action by these groups has resulted in recommendations to eliminate the slow-moving, seldom-called-for, obsolete, or "special" goods, the real job for the salesman begins.

He can point out to a prospective customer who asks for "something different" that the Simplified Practice Recommendations are based on surveys which showed what are the "live items"; that there are economies in producing and distributing such "live items"; that there are greater opportunities for quicker turnover of stocks of the simplified goods and hence better profits with smaller stock investment, and less liability of "frozen assets". He can also point out that while Simplified Practice Recommendations do not prevent the consumer from getting any "specials" he may desire, the consumer of specials should, in fairness to those willing to buy simplified lines, bear the added expense of producing such "specials".

As the immediate contact between the producer and distributer, the contribution which the salesman can make to the success of simplification and waste elimination is exceptional, both for the salesman's own firm and his client. The client is willing, and eager, to learn how to make his distribution more effective, to do business on a larger scale with small investments and quicker turnover.

Some of the industries which have applied Simplified Practice to their problems have found strong allies in their sales forces. In a few other cases the support has not been so enthusiastic. But the spread of the movement has been so pronounced on the part of industry that the salesman owes a duty to himself and to his company to investigate the application of Simplified Practice to his own work.

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The Southern Textile Association, meeting at Tybee Beach, Ga., the middle of last month, had as its principal theme, "Standardization of Textile Processes and Products". The viewpoints of selling agents were presented, also reports of sectional committees.

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The Purchasing Agents of Chicago, and of Rochester, N.Y., have formally endorsed the plan of the Bureau of Standards for the certification of commodities made under Federal Specifications. Similar action has been taken by the Educational Buyers Association.

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A reduction of $928,000 in stores investment and elimination of $232,000 in annual carrying charges for such stores has been achieved by the Boston Elevated Railway, according to that company's publication "Cooperation". Other economies have been brought about in use of fuel and in maintenance costs.

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Under the title "Sources of Waste in the Various Industries - The Most Recent American Conquests in the Scientific Operation of an Industry", the Viennese journal "Die Neue Wirtschaft" comments regarding Simplified Practice: that "the propositions extend not only to the great production possibilities, but America is now engaged in introducing order and highest efficiency into its smallest and most remote industries in accordance with processes tested by experience."

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"The important point in the program going forward" says the "Colorado Manufacturer and Consumer" published by the Colorado Manufacturers and Merchants' Association, "is the participation of all interests. Those who stay out deprive themselves of the economies and increased efficiency to be derived and deprive the industry as a whole of these benefits". The Association is one of a number of state organizations cooperating in boosting Simplified Practice.

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"Please render invoices on this form in triplicate * * No other form or sizes will be accepted" is the request made by sticker used by Hillyer-Deutsch-Edwards, Inc., lumber manufacturers of Oakdale, La., in behalf of the National Standard Invoice Form.

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Oscar G. Mayer, president of the Institute of American Meat Packers, told the Southern California packers, in a meeting at Los Angeles, that the Institute had cut 905 styles and sizes to 26 in eight items used by packers, with resultant savings to packers, manufacturers, producers and consumers. These included lard cans, lard crates, export boxes, beef and pork trolleys, hand trucks, sausage and lard cartons. One size of trolley supplanted 167 previously used.

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Simplified Practice applied to Self-opening Die Head Chasers has brought a number of advantages to the user, C. W. Bettcher, secretary of the Eastern Machine Screw Association, told the National Machine Tool Builders Association at a meeting at Providence, R. I. Some of these were: more prompt delivery; saving of extra charges for "specials"; better quality, closer tolerance and greater uniformity; reduction of chaser stock; better fit between screws and tapped holes; ability to use standard gages stocked by gage manufacturers for standard screw sizes; and assembly with standard thread instead of "mongrels".

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The Federal Specifications Board has issued a number of revised and new Master Specifications to become effective in government use on November 8, 1926. These include the following subjects: Pipe, brass seamless; Iron pipe size, standard and extra; Turpentine; Water-resisting spar varnish; Fire clay brick; Fire clay; Refractories, fire-clay plastic; Carbon paper, light weight and standard weight for typewriters; brass seamless tubing. These may be secured from the Chairman of the Federal Specifications Board, U.S. Bureau of Standards.

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The National Association of Purchasing Agents, it is announced, is to have a committee of six members to review Simplified Practice Recommendations, to simplify its own procedure and save the time of its membership.

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Under the heading "Waste of Human Energy", the London Times Trade and Engineering Supplement of a recent date contains a report of a meeting of the British Section of the Societe des Ingenieurs Civils de France, which considered the growing use of mechanical devices, and the influences of manual operation on machines to supplant such operations. The British attitude toward scrapping obsolete machines was contrasted by speakers with the American attitude of adopting every labor-saving device and of standardizing to eliminate wastes.

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The Government Printing Office issued Simplified Practice Recommendation No. 41, Package Sizes for Insecticides and Fungicides, on August 10.

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The Bronx Board of Trade "is doing what it can to make known to local manufacturers the benefits derivable from elimination of waste in manufacture", says its latest official publication.

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Construction of a cannery in Brazos County, to take care of surplus fruits and vegetables that form a big economic waste in this Texas region annually is one of the activities of Mrs Lee J. Rountree, newly elected head of the Bryan and Brazos County Chamber of Commerce in Texas.

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Use of a new type of magnetic device to separate iron and steel from Monel metal turnings is saving the General Electric Company $20,000 a year in its Schenectady plant, an exchange reports. The Monel metal brings $300 a ton as against $15 for the unseparated turnings before this waste elimination method was discovered.

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The "Clothing Trade Journal" in a recent issue, deplores, editorially, that only a few clothing manufacturers have applied simplification to a "limited selection of fabrics and styles within a one-price range", and comments: "Concentrating on a few styles and fabrics is only one of the many ways by which the clothing manufacturer can decrease the cost of clothing and meet the demands of the public for lower-priced garments."

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E.J. Curtis of the Wholesale Sash and Door Association has accepted an invitation to represent the millwork industry on the Central Committee on Lumber Standards. This is in keeping with other efforts to have a complete representation of all branches of the lumber industry on this committee.

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The Washington and Oregon Shingle Association, having adopted the American Lumber Standards for Red Cedar Shingles, is now carrying the news of its adoption of these standards to the secretaries of retail lumber dealers' associations through the issuance of a pamphlet embracing the standards as they define the grading and packing rules. The Central Committee on Lumber Standards says of this: "Shingles are lumber and the need and desirability of placing orders for shingles manufactured under the American Lumber Standards is as great as for boards, finish, flooring, etc. Your cooperation will mutually aid your members, their customers and the manufacturers in the same great extent that it did in the case of other forms of lumber."

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The National Association of Credit Men, recently adopting a resolution endorsing waste elimination, said in part: "The Association recognizes that waste is one of the big factors in high costs, and in order to reduce costs and to help the national income to go as far as possible in the absorption of production, waste must be attacked from every possible direction * * This committee has been instructed * * * to cooperate with organizations that have been organized especially for waste elimination or are cooperating with one another for this purpose.

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Last year one of the big Detroit automobile concerns saved more than a quarter of a million dollars by a surplus stores and salvage department for obsolete and scrapped materials. Lumber, cartons, scrap metals and other waste materials brought $390,000 instead of being burned or otherwise desposed of as was formerly done.

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Allotting to each workman the job of saving the company 5 cents a day, a steel company has met this quota, is saving $50,000 a year, has devised new methods and processes to cut operating costs, has reduced inventory items from 25,000 to 15,000 and has gained the satisfaction of being paid "splendidly for all our time and effort", according to an exchange.

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"Why wait for Management Week" asks the president of the Typothetae Cost Accountants Association, "to make a careful itemized survey of the causes of waste?" One of the pertinent questions which is asked as to organization is "Are the principles of standardization and simplification applied wherever possible."

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The Division has prepared a summary of recommendations developed by the Committee on Waste in Industry, the Committee on Business Cycles and Unemployment and the National Distribution Conference. This summary is entitled "Stabilizing Business through Waste Elimination" and may be secured without charge by writing to the Division of Simplified Practice.

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"Catalogs of National Standard Size Cost Less and Are Worth More", says a bulletin of the National Association of Purchasing Agents calling attention to the endorsement of ten national trade associations.

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In last month's Bulletin reference was made to new page sizes adopted by two great publishing houses. The page size was 7 by 10 type page, and is in keeping with recommendations of the Association of National Advertisers and the Bureau of Standards Committee.

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The Normenausschus der Deutscher Industrie, the German standardization body, is considering a program to standardize typewriters as to keyboards, wearing parts and width of ribbon, according to an exchange.

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The National Association of Foremen has pledged its willingness to cooperate in waste elimination. The importance of the foreman in any general plan of conservation is coming to be recognized, and this action on the part of the foremen's organization augurs well for the spread of Simplified Practice.

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Using a sticker in correspondence, one brush manufacturer is calling the attention of his clients to the simplification of paint and varnish brushes in the following terms: "Sponsored by the Department of Commerce. Desired by Brush Dealers generally. Approved by Brush Manufacturers. Simplification really practiced will lower Brush costs, increase Brush dealers' profits, speed up Brush deliveries. We are 'for it' one hundred per cent. We urge your friendly cooperation."

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The Bristol Myers Company of New York, in an exchange, reports junking all but seven of 4,000 products which were formerly made in some 8,000 different sized packages. They have doubled the previous sales volume in five years, over that of the former great range of items.

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One eastern company, manufacturing hot water storage tanks, has put its experiences in Simplified Practice on paper. The president of this company states that as a part of its cooperation the company questioned its buyers as to what they throught of the simplification. Over 98% of the answers were in favor of simplification. Following the adoption of the Simplified Practice Recommendation the company bought copies of the Recommendations and sent them to interested persons all over the country. Now they find that five of the 14 sizes contained in the simplified list represent 76% of the total business of the company. The Company's business has grown until night-and-day operation was necessary, and a new plant is being erected which will virtually double its former capacity, but which also promises to operate on a night-and-day basis. The president says: "Therefore, we, as a manufacturer, answer the question 'How is the Simplified Practice Program coming on?' with the reply "EXCELLENT".

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Nearly 40 more cities have joined the ranks of those who plan to observe Management Week. This gain is in less than a month, and is an indication that "Progress in Waste Elimination", the topic for this year's Management Week meetings, strikes a responsive chord in the minds of the business world. Towns and Cities, Chambers of Commerce, technical and scientific bodies, management organizations, service clubs, and others are showing that the improvement of management through waste elimination is still a goal worthy of the best support which can be given to it.

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Scores of companies selling a wide range of products are finding an efficient "Silent salesman" in the use of tags attached to their products. The Metal Lath and Woven Wire Fence industries are likewise finding tags calling attention to products produced under Simplified Practice Recommendations of value in spreading an understanding of Simplification. But there is room for further ventures of this sort, for salesmanship of Simplified Practice doesn't differ from that involving other forms of service.

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