

## Selling Dreams

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Most of us are selling something. Whether you work in a big company or by yourself, whether you are an accountant or working on straight commission, most of us have a facet of our job that involves sales. If I am an employee, I have to sell to my boss and company that I am a valued employee and should be retained or promoted. If I am in professional services, I have to sell my clients that I am worthy of their trust and that they should engage me to help them. Most of us who aren't directly paid and responsible for selling day to day probably don't think enough about this aspect of our career. Anyone that has dealt with a high pressure salesperson can easily develop a negative connotation of the idea "selling." This is because a poor salesperson sells you something that you don't necessarily want or need. In contrast, a real salesperson understands your needs and helps you achieve your goals through his or her product or service.

I visited recently with Lynda Jungkind, owner of Premier Bride of Mississippi, to learn more about her successful career in sales and as an entrepreneur. Jungkind is a Little Rock, Arkansas native and graduated from Southern Methodist University in 1972. She has a gift of creativity and for a number of years worked in Dallas and back in Little Rock in the advertising industry as a copywriter. As she began to hit a glass ceiling professionally, she saw an opportunity to transition into sales full time. In reality, she had been successfully selling for years. In high school, she worked in a family owned department store where she first learned the power of persuasion and how to help people find what they were looking for. As a successful freelance copywriter, she had created demand for her creative services. However, she had the courage to leap into the world of full time advertising sales for a talk radio station. Her first sales job was a "sink or swim" job. No training provided, just a phone book as her list of people to call. Fortunately, she "swam" and outlasted both her boss and hiring manager. As she noted to me, "the average tenure of a new sales rep was 90 days. None of the other sales people would really talk to me until I had been there long enough to prove I would make it."

After the opportunity to work for a new boss who really took the time to train her on how to sell, her sales career took off and she hasn't looked back. After moving to Jackson with her husband Johnny, Lynda spent fifteen years in radio and television sales building a successful career while also raising three daughters. In 2001, she decided to make a career shift and purchased the *Premier Bride* franchise for Mississippi. This new venture combined her love of sales and weddings. She had been involved in her church for years in helping people with their weddings. There are about 20,000 brides each year in Mississippi and many of them are guided through the process by *Premier Bride's* two annual publications. Jungkind along with her dedicated team of employees also have been putting on The Premier Bridal Shows since 2004. In 2011, they will host two shows in Jackson, one in Tupelo, and one on the Gulf Coast where thousands of brides will plan their wedding day.

Jungkind has developed a loyal base of advertising customers for her business because of her approach to the selling process. As she noted, "too many salespeople oversell because they are thinking about their own pocketbook instead of the customer." For a quota driven salesperson or anyone trying to make a paycheck, this can be a real challenge. In reality, it is shortsighted to ever put your own needs above your customer. She views her advertisers as partners and truly tries to

understand their goals for their business. Jungkind pointed out, “Not everyone is a fit. Sometimes I have to tell a prospective customer that I can’t help them.”

Jungkind also emphasized the value of really listening in business. She explained to me that her business has evolved significantly from when it started because she has listened to her readers and show attendees as well as her advertising partners. I have found that truly great salespeople are the best listeners. Instead of the painful “show up and throw up” technique of selling, they instead listen attentively and ask thoughtful questions to understand the customer’s needs. As Stephen Covey pointed out in the *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” This is a real maxim of communication that can be easily overlooked.

Jungkind referenced one of my favorite Zig Ziglar quotes “**You can have everything you want in life, if you help enough other people get what they want.**” Her success in business is a great application of this principle. As she prepares for her 21st Bridal show and her business enters its 10th year, I am sure that Jungkind will continue to use her skill and talents to help brides around Mississippi have a special day and help her advertising partners achieve their goals.

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