

# \*MANAGING THE SALES FORCE

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## A. Introduction

Maximize profits! When executives hear that rallying cry, they typically respond by cutting production costs, downsizing staff, overhauling the product and marketing mix, and doing anything else they can to enhance the bottom line.

Well, almost anything. Even seasoned managers often overlook one proven way to grow profitably - managing the sales force wisely.

Companies of every size can maximize profits by doing a better job of hiring, training, compensating, motivating, and evaluating their sales people.

Of course, the sales force is only as good as the sales manager, who must be an expert in all these areas and more. Whether you are new on the job or simply in need of a brush-up, you need to sharpen your skills in the fundamental management activities of the sales force.

Sales Reps often have their own unique character that resists organisation and management. But the work that they do deserves scrutiny that will improve their productivity (and compensation) and enhance their profitability of your firm. It is a good bargain for you both.

Let us take a common sense look at management of sales force, from the sales managers' point of view, and then examine the management of sales force through fresh eyes.

If you compare your present practices with the ideas presented here, there is every likelihood, you will discover ways to revamp your existing system into a more effective and efficient one than you could have imagined, a system that will help you compete with anyone in today's market place.

## B. Creating the Sales Force

Before you can have a sales force to manage, it must be created.

As theater professionals know, casting the play correctly makes directing much easier. Hiring effective sales people begins with two important documents called:

The Job Description, and  
The Job Specification.

### Job Description

Because you cannot go shopping for a job candidate until you know what you need, start the process by writing out a description of the job. This description should summarize the sales persons duties, which in turn reveals what kind of person is right for the job.

Sales people are not interchangeable parts. The person who excels selling industrial robots may be a flop selling life insurance. That is why the job description is so critical. It is a multipurpose tool that helps you:-

- (i) Clarify the kind of work that your company's sales force does.
- (ii) Train new employees more effectively, and
- (iii) Evaluate your sales people fairly and accurately.

The more detailed your job description, the better chance you will have that the search will succeed. Be sure to cover all the areas shown below:-

**Selling:-** How many calls do you expect Reps to make each week? What kind of call?, new or old accounts?

**Servicing:-** Discuss the quantity and quality of service necessary to effectively respond to a customer's requests or complaints.

**Community Involvement:-** List clubs or organisations that will enable the sales person to develop a higher profile and cultivate a network of contracts.

**Organization:-** If you expect sales people to plan each day, to dress well, and to present a professional image, say so.

**Company Relations:-** Discuss the level of participation you require in sales meetings and in coordinating with related departments.

**Reporting Requirements:-** List reports you require, along with content and deadlines.

Be flexible, because different territories may require different job descriptions based on the nature of the competition, economic trends, and new-business

potential. Involve your current sales people in writing a job description by asking them to list their duties, rank them in order of importance, and estimate what percentage of their time is spent on each one.

### Job Specification

The second important document to create is the job specification. It lists the basic skills, experience, knowledge, and personal qualities that applicants must have to do the job well.

Job specifications may address such factors as product, customer, and territory knowledge; communication skills, ability to travel; self-motivation; education; enthusiasm; self-confidence; and an ambition to succeed in sales.

Perhaps the best way to test the validity of your job specification is to match it up with actual profiles of your top notch sales people. The specifications should reflect the traits of your best producers.

### C. Screening Candidates

Screening starts by comparing applicants resume against the job specification. By ranking your present sales force according to strong, average, and weak performers and analyzing them, each group's background (including personal interests) can pinpoint the characteristics responsible for current Reps success and screen candidates more accurately.

### Interviewing

Interviewing is a challenge, but can be productive if you know what type of person you want and gather enough information on applications to evaluate them effectively. The following guidelines will sharpen your interviewing techniques:-

1. After building rapport with small talk, state the purpose of the interview and how much time it will/should take.
2. Discuss the job description and ask the applicant why he or she feels qualified to handle the job.
3. Ask why the applicant changed employees in the past and why he/she wants to change now.
4. Tailor your questions to each candidate.
5. Use probing requests and open-ended questions like these: Can you give an example of a difficult decision you made? What motivates you to do your best? How would you describe your selling skills?
6. Listen at least 80 percent of the time; don't

interrupt or criticize applicants.

7. When candidates give vague answers, return to the subject later with a rephrased question. For example ask "Why did you leave your last job?" If you don't get a good answer, try rephrasing it: "What sort of a person was your last boss?"

8. Jot down important information as soon as the interview ends. Mark each of them with a plus (good), minus (bad) or zero (indifferent) depending on how it affects the candidates desirability.

9. Generally speaking, be suspicious of:

- Frequent job-hopping
- Compensation that has been static for several years
- Family or financial problems.

### Reference and Background Checks

After personal interviews, reference checks may be one of the most important screening techniques. If you discount the value of references listed on a resume, why not check references that applicants have not provided, just like previous employers customers or competitors. Ask former supervisors to comment on work habits, strengths, weaknesses, responsibilities, and accomplishments, general performance and their willingness to rehire the person.

If you call in finalists for a second interview, ask specific questions based on information gathered from the first interview and background or reference checks. All finalists should possess the job specification's "must have" qualities, so your hiring decision should focus on the "nice-to-have" qualities mentioned in the job specification.

### Hire Quality People

First rate people hire the best people. Second rate people tend to hire third-rate people. If no clear choice emerges from your present applicant pool, resist hiring the best of a mediocre group. In the long run, weak sales people cost more to employ than no one. It's cheaper to keep on looking than to hire, fire, and search again.

Good people have always been hard to find, and that's especially true in sales. Surveys show that just 20 percent of sales people are well matched with their work and are doing a good job. It's hardly surprising that this 20 percent accounts for 80% of all sales.

Successful sales people display empathy enthusiasm, confidence, and a strong drive to succeed. You

can teach selling skills and product knowledge, but it is not easy to teach empathy, enthusiasm, confidence, and a strong desire to succeed. They are, therefore, the most significant characteristics to look for in candidates.

#### D. Training

Training is your second most important challenge after hiring. Start with quality people, train them well, and you will simply have the best of your job.

Your training program should cover several principal areas that affect trainees' success and the company bottom line. Teach them:-

(1) *Selling Techniques*: Improve selling skills by teaching them yourself or through seminars, or through joint trips with seasoned representatives.

(2) *Product Knowledge*: People who are equipped to give in depth answers to every reasonable question earn the respect and confidence of customers. Communicate product knowledge through field trips, factory tours, models, photographs, video tapes, and samples. Make sure sales people see the product in operation; the first-hand experience adds credibility to what they will say to customers on the field.

(3) *Knowledge of Competing Products*: Your sales force must know competitors products every bit as well as their own. Give them one-page information sheets that outline the strengths and weaknesses of the products or services they sell against. Include data on cost, ease of operation or administration, guarantees, durability, service problems, and other pertinent factors.

(4) *Customers Knowledge*: Have a profile card with such information as personality traits, topics of major interest to customers, the best time to call, likes and dislikes, corporate culture, competing products purchased, special business problems, and credit worthiness.

(5) *Pricing*: Your sales force must be prepared to field all price-based objections, especially those about price increases. You will have to sell your Reps on a price increase first so they can be convincing with their accounts. Make sure Reps explain the reason for your price increase while pointing out similar actions both by competitors and by the customer who is complaining.

(6) *Company Policy and History*: Teach sales people about your company's and competitors policies on

merchandise returns, advertising allowances, freight charges, credit terms, minimum orders, and other pertinent subjects. Your policy in one or more of these areas could be a major competitive advantage and a pivot point on which to close sales. Make sure your Reps appreciate that fact and use it for all it is worth. (7) *Route Management*: Good route management can increase sales by 10 to 20 percent and decrease expenses. For example, if improved routing permits one additional sales call per day, the increased number of calls in a year will lower your pre-call expenses significantly. Make good use of Route Sheets and Call Reports to help your salesmen allocate their time efficiently. Be flexible because your best sales person may hate paper work.

(8) *Supplementary Training*: You can fill in gaps between formal training sessions by using sales meetings, bulletins, audio tapes, and video tapes. These devices lend continuity to your efforts and make sales training a continuous activity.

#### E. Compensation

Sound compensation helps you attract, retain and motivate the best sales people. Review your compensation at least once a year to ensure that it meets the needs of your employees and your firm.

A sound compensation plan should be made up of:

- Objectives
- A compensation mix and
- Establishment of a policy on expenses.

#### Objectives of a Compensation Plan

Generally speaking, a compensation plan for sales force should:

(1) Reward accomplishments by rewarding those that are central to your company success and are making efforts to achieve company objectives through additional efforts.

(2) Be easy to understand, because complicated plans are hard for sales people to understand and cumbersome to manage.

(3) *Reflect fairness*. Compensation should acknowledge differences among territories, while trying to pay equal commissions for equal sales volume. For example, it would not be fair to pay a sales person in an undeveloped territory a straight commission just because you pay colleagues in established territories that way. You can use a combination of sales volume,

target achievement, and growth to develop a matrix of commission.

(4) Reward superior performance, by ensuring that your top performers receive top pay. Keep earnings potential open-ended.

(5) *Provide stability.* Guarantee sales people a minimum monthly income to pay their basic bills. They must be able to survive bad times so they will be around to bring in new business when things pick up.

#### Selecting a Compensation Mix

You can combine salary and benefits, commission, and bonus into a plan that meets the objectives outlined above. Your choice should reinforce positive results, encourage productivity activity, and complement both your product or service and the calibre of sales people you want to hire.

Your compensation mix communicates the activities and results that you believe to be important. Reps will set their priorities based on those implied in how they are paid.

Plans that combine salary, commission, and bonus are usually better because they reward results quickly. They can be designed to encourage performance in specific areas, and they couple financial stability with motivation to excel.

#### Expenses

Give your Reps an incentive for keeping their expenses under control and budgeting their money productively and efficiently. Otherwise, sales people tend to use their expense account as a supplement to their regular compensation.

Expense plans, like compensation, can come in several varieties. You have a choice of:

- (1) Making sales people pay all their expenses (often the best method, because people spend their own money wisely).
- (2) Having Reps and the company split expenses according to a stated ratio.
- (3) Having company pick up the whole expenses.
- (4) Giving sales people a monthly expense allowance to use as they see fit, or
- (5) Giving them a flat amount for certain expenses (e.g. N1,000 for lodging and feeding per day).

Whatever expense plan you choose depends on the size of the overall compensation packages or, sometimes, the size of the company (larger firms can often

be more generous with their reimbursement plans).

Whatever you do, make sure to acknowledge how expenses vary among territories. Certain areas cost much more money to cover than others.

#### F. Organizing the Sales Force

How much does it cost to put a sales person on the road? Add up annual compensation, company paid expenses, and fringe benefits and what do you get? An excellent reason for organizing your sales force effectively.

If you want a shock, figure out your costs per sales call by dividing a sales person's total compensation and expenses by the average number of calls made in a year.

#### Organizing Methods

There are four basic ways to organize a sales force. Choose the method best suited to your customers, the nature of your sales people, and overall profitability:

(1) *By Product Line:* This approach works well if you sell a variety of products or services, because it gives each one individual attention. You don't for instance, want a sales person selling fridges to cold stores as well as balm to pharmacy stores. Selling by product line may run up higher travel expenses, though, and you may have to hire more sales people to represent your full line. Purchasing agents may also be confused and resent dealing with several sales people from the same company.

(2) *By Customer:* A customer-oriented organisation method can be excellent if you sell to just a handful of companies or national accounts, because it ensures that each customer group receives adequate attention. However, this method may result in higher travel expenses than if your sales force was organised geographically.

(3) *Geographically:* This option is good for companies that sell similar or related products or services to far-flung customers within their territory and cultivate local markets better by knowing their problems and people.

(4) *By Function:* If your product requires considerable service after the sale, this organizing technique enables you to field one type of sales person to sell new account and another to service them. This functional approach may work well, if your sales people like to get new business but disadvantaged at working

on account after the sale. However you organize your sales force, fix territory boundaries large enough to support each Rep but small enough to be severed adequately without traveling excessively.

### G. Motivating Your Sales Force

Motivation is an internal process that is affected by a host of external factors including money. Your sales people may respond to the following:-

- (1) *Money*: The statement "money is not a motivator" appears far from the truth, based on over 12 years of practical and professional experience in marketing. Although one will agree that "money is not everything" Sales people have big appetite for money. As much as you can place a huge monetary reward behind a big task or challenge and see a sales person work as if his entire life depends on the achievement of that seemingly impossible task. Money is particularly an important external factor which affects motivation in a developing economy like ours in Nigeria.
- (2) *Recognition*: Sales people seem to possess an unquenchable thirst for recognition. Praise them publicly and sincerely. Acknowledge their performance by every appropriate means, from a thank-you call to a formal awards dinner.
- (3) *Challenge and Achievement*: Winners like to solve problem and take calculated risks. Give them opportunities to fulfill these needs and feedback on their success so they can compare current performance with previous levels.
- (4) *Personal Growth*: Most sales people want to enhance their skills from year to year. The training techniques as well as frequent visit to workshops, seminars, conferences, etc. will help them reach their full potential.
- (5) *Esteem*: Some days sales people feel like not working at all because of very little things you may consider insignificant. Satisfy them with Praise, recognition, status symbols such as cellular phone or a better car, and of course, money.
- (6) *Belonging*: Many sales people have a strong need to belong. They join clubs and community groups, and they often have strong family ties.
- (7) *Sales Contest*: Contests can reinforce sales people's need for recognition and status better than many other motivational tools. Well-conceived contests generate momentum beyond their deadlines and motivate Reps to cultivate work habits that improve their productivity all year long.

The worst contest put sales people against each other. Half won't even try, believing the odds are stacked against them. And even those who do try, will lose spirit once the front-runners break away from the pack.

The most effective contest are of two forms:-

- (a) *Team Competition*: Good for generating esprit de corp, cooperation, and peer pressure. Every one wants to exert extra effort, because no one wants to be responsible for the teams loss. Unfortunately, prizes are share by a group. That won't motivate star performers who prefer to shine alone. Your best people may therefore perform well below their capabilities.
- (b) *Individual Goals*: contests that reward meeting or exceeding individual goals usually work best. Everyone gets involved, because everyone can be a winner. Goals acknowledge each territory's potential, which levels the playing field and gives every one a shot at a prize.

Justify how you set quotas so sales people will accept them as fair. Also, it is fine to give more valuable awards for higher levels of achievement, but make prizes equal at each level regardless of territory or quota size. And while most firms still use money as the prize, it is better to capture their imagination by offering something sales people would not normally buy for themselves, like a special trip to a new holiday location (Spain, Florida, etc)

### When to Launch Sales Contests

You can generate maximum enthusiasm by launching the contest at a sales meeting. Pick a catchy title or theme that complements the goal or prizes. Report results in weekly or monthly bulletins and remind everyone of the prizes involved.

Make sure everyone knows the opening and closing dates. Contest objectives, and other information they need to complete successfully. And award prizes PROMPTLY, otherwise a successful contest may create a lot of disgruntled sales people when prizes are not received for months.

### H. Sales Meetings

Well-planned sales meetings provide an excellent way of communicate, motivate and train. The sales

meeting also offers an opportunity for sharing problems and success for recognizing superior sales people; for introducing sales people to top managers, and for passing along policy information. The best meetings have specific objectives that reinforce your marketing plan.

Sales meeting can take a sizeable bite out of your budget you should minimize travel costs by holding regional meetings.

When you do meet, make it interesting. You must include factory tours, vendor presentations, motivation filing a report on the company's activities beside an address by the CEO, or seminars by sales people on topics like time management, how to respond to objections, etc.

Allow time at the end of each meeting to hear complaints about company-wide issues. Individual concerns should be discussed privately. It is better to openly discuss why some things cannot be done, and resolve to correct major problems as fast as possible. End meeting on an upbeat note by presenting awards for outstanding performance.

#### 1. Sales Forecasting

Whatever the size of the business, you will need to forecast sales so that the management team can schedule purchases; establish employment, production, and inventory levels, and predict cash flow.

Begin the process by sending everyone a forecast from several months before the end of the fiscal year. Ask Reps to predict orders monthly, quarterly or seasonally for each customer or industry and each product or service group. This effort helps Reps get involved and motivated.

Simultaneously prepare a preliminary total forecast with a similar format and compare it against the forecast that comes in from the field. Reconcile the two through conferences with individual sales Reps and produce a final company-wide forecast.

To make the best forecast, look carefully at past sales and current trends for product lines, customer groups, and your overall industry.

Make sure to include changes inside your company such as adjustments to your sales force, upcoming contests, and changes in product mix, pricing, distribution, packaging, or advertising.

Incorporate, as best as you can, external changes that may occur in your market segment, customer base, or competitors marketing plans, as well as

demand trends and the overall business and economic environment.

You may want to bracket your forecast with worst-case, and best-case scenarios. Clarify the assumptions behind each, along with their probabilities, risks, and contingency plans. This takes the fear out of forecasting.

When you have completed the process, share the forecast, with other managers. The revenue projections are important for every decision maker.

#### J. Performance Appraisals

Though most managers dislike sitting in judgement of others, it is an important task and one that can actually save the sales program (or individual sales people) from going down hill. Appraisal also establish an important dialogue between you and your sales people.

Appraisals simplify your job by helping you clarify objectives, assess results, and decide what corrective action in performance, if any, is needed. Quarterly appraisals work best.

#### Creating a Rating System

Decide which performance factors to appraise - the activities or skills you deem critical to doing a good job (remember your job description and job specification) and set up a rating system. It might be numerical (1-5 or 1-10), verbal (poor, fair, expected very good, excellent), or alphabetical (A,B,C,D,E.) Consider removing the middle grade in whatever system you use. It forces you to make a real performance assessment.

For best results, divide the appraisal list into twelve categories:-

- Sales results
- Sales quality
- Sales activity
- Selling skills
- Job knowledge
- Self organization or planning
- Participation
- Paper work
- Expense control
- Customer relations
- Company relations and

- Personal characteristics

The appraisals in each category should indicate whether the sales person improved or fell behind performance for the same period last year.

### The Appraisal Interview

Much of the success of appraisal process hinges on how well you prepare for, organize, and handle the actual interview. Explain the appraisal procedure to your sales Reps in advance and give them a copy of the appraisal form so they will know which qualities are paramount.

Some managers send their people a blank form before the interview and ask them to evaluate themselves. Then, when the two sit down together, they can skip over points of agreement and address performance factors about which they disagree.

Do your homework. Review previous quarterly appraisals and note recurring problems and trends. be prepared to discuss each topic thoroughly. Cite specific incidents, facts, and figures that document and support your ratings.

### Reflect and Follow-up

After the interview, evaluate how well you handled the process itself. What did you do well? What would you say or do differently next time? What new things did you learn about the sales person, the job and yourself?

Follow-up on specific performance issues throughout the next quarter. This underscores the concern you expressed on the evaluation as well as your commitment to help the sales Rep improve. In essence, follow-up starts you on the path toward, the next appraisal.

### Critical Self Appraisal

You also need to do self evaluation of yourself on regular basis, even though your own direct supervisor may not call for your self appraisal till the end of the year. This will determine if you consider yourself a good leader or not.

A sales force is seldom more motivated or competent than the sales manager. The best sales managers understand that their job is to make heroes of the sales force, not themselves; that their job is getting work done through other people; that their behaviour is consistent; and that they believe in what they do.

They prevent rather than manage crisis. They are proactive instead of being reactive. They are strategic

in approach rather than reacting daily to tactical issues.

How well do you lead? Take inventory of yourself by answering these questions:-

- (1) How motivated do I appear to the sales force?
- (2) Do I believe in what I am doing?
- (3) Am I consistent in my management style and my policies?
- (4) Do I attempt to get work done through other people, or do I just do it myself?
- (5) How much time do I spend training sales people?
- (6) Do sales people have trouble understanding what I want from them?
- (7) How often do sales people in my division quit?
- (8) Is each sales person showing increases in revenue?
- (9) Are the sales people self-motivated or must I prod them continually?
- (10) What percentage of my time do I spend on administrative duties? Personal selling? Time with sales people? Other things?

### K. Conclusion

A successful sales manager is not really a mystery, but he is, and must be, a person of diverse talents. He must be an effective leader, analyst, innovator, communicator, teacher, organizer, controller, motivator, and recruiter. Most important, the sales manager must have a deep and sincere interest in human beings. First, last, and always he is a salesman.

A successful career in sales-management can be challenging and rewarding as well. Money cannot buy the thrill that comes from making a sales organization good, or the feeling of pride in seeing sales trainees from a variety of back-grounds mature into professional sales people or managers.

The secret of success in sales management can be summarised as:

- Doing the things that other people just don't want to do.
- The harder you work, the luckier you get.
- Teach your sales people what you get.
- Be open minded and receptive to new ideas.

Re-examining fundamental sales management issues produces immediate savings that flow straight to your company's bottom line. If you don't remember when you took a comprehensive look at your sales management function, there is no better time than right now.

health environment "which we enjoyed between 1985 and 1992."

"I need to emphasise that because of the size of Nigeria, the constitutional concurrence of health and the limitation in resources available for the amount of work to be done, weakness can very easily arise from management. Yet, WHO played a catalytic role to the best extent that its advisory role permitted," he noted.

At a technical presentation in his honour, the Ghanaian paediatrician pointed out that Nigeria would continually have to contend with ravaging epidemics of yellow fever, meningococcal meningitis and onchocerciasis until it assumed its leadership role of fighting the endemic diseases in West Africa through a common sub-regional strategy "since the vectors know no boundaries".

"I see that with peace, unity and stability, Nigeria will once again become economically buoyant and educationally assertive so that it can rightly assume its position as the Mecca of African education, technology and research and the reference for human development research," he declared.

Brew-Graves expressed belief that under the leadership of a reawakened Nigeria, the Economic Community of West African States would become an economic force and the African answer to the continental blocs that have recently emerged as the markets for African raw materials.

"I envisage a democratized Nigeria in which men, women and children of Africa will see health as human investment for productivity and development," he added.

He dreams of the country emerging from its present difficulties to show the world "that we, have the men and women; we have the doctors and engineers; we have the leaders and gifted minds, we have the dedicated motivators and poli-

ticians who will orchestrate us in singing the battle hymn of victory for socio-economic development in which health is the important base".

### **OHUABUNWA, TAYO, UDEALA RECEIVE FELLOWSHIP - 22 OTHERS HONOURED AS WELL**

The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria has announced the conferment of fellowship on 25 deserving members of the Society who have contributed very significantly to the PSN and Pharmacy over the years.

These pharmacists who were announced during the recently concluded 67th annual national conference included the Chairman of the editorial board of the Nigerian Journal of Pharmacy (*NJP*) Mr. Sam Oluabunwa and the immediate past first deputy President of PSN, Mr. Celestine Duze, plus Mr. Paul Enebeli, one-time Publicity Secretary of PSN.

Others who are to receive the fellowship award are Prof. O.K. Udeala, Vice Chancellor University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Mr. J.K. Tandoh, Prof. Fola Tayo, Alhaja K.O. Sunmonu, Mr. Daiti Selena, Mr. J.O. Paul, Dr. (Mrs.) S.O. Otuyemi and Prof. I.U.W. Osiogun.

Nominated also were Mr. Tope Olowoye, Mr. J.B. Ogundare, Mr. Rufus Obi, Deacon Biodun Longe, Hon. J.A. Jamabo, Dr. Benjamin Ekpo and Chief J.E. Ekpeyong.

There are Mr. B.A. Bamigbola, Mr. L.O. Anyafulu, Chief M.C. Anohu, Hon. Dr. M.C. Agulana, Mr. Jimi Agbaje, Mr. Jimi Adesanya and Mrs. M.J. Adekanye.

The new fellows who form the 1994 set will be invested with the Fellowship at a later date.

### **UNICEF APPEALS FOR WIDER USE OF ORS**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has implored the Federal Government to urgently facilitate widespread use of Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) by mothers at home to avert the avoidable death of Nigerian children from diarrhoea.

UNICEF'S Chief of Health for Nigeria, Dr. Valarian Kimati, made the appeal in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, in a lecture on "Oral Rehydration Therapy" as part of the activities at the one week 67th National Conference of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria.

Kimati said liberalisation of the use of ORS by mothers at home would help to save at least 150,000 lives out of the 200,000 yearly deaths of children under five years in the country caused by diarrhoea.

Noting that all countries except Nigeria, now used ORS more than Salt and Sugar Solution (SSS) as first line treatment of the disease at home, Kimati pointed out that ORS was more effective because it contains the right proportion of sugar, salt and potassium vital in cases of severe diarrhoea and cholera.

He said until last month, the nation's official policy had insisted that mothers be taught to use SSS at home, while restricting ORS to health facilities in the belief that 50 per cent of under five children had access to the facilities.

He however said, recent household survey showed only 20.3 per cent of mothers used SSS with 78 per cent preparing the solution wrongly to the detriment of children.

"One lethal effect is putting too much salt leading to hypernatraemia, giving rise to brain damage. Putting too much sugar in SSS will lead to harmful effect as well" he warned.



# \*Standards for Quality of Pharmacy Services

by

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**S**tandards are an important part in the measurement of quality of pharmaceutical service to the consumer. The F.I.P. which constitutes the Pharmacy World Congress recognises this phenomenon and accordingly adopted the guidelines contained in the August 1991 "Stockholm Letter On Good Pharmacy Practice" and approved of "The TOKYO DECLARATION" on the subject on Sunday Sept. 5, 1993 in Tokyo, Japan. The guidelines for Good Pharmacy Practice (GPP) are based on the pharmaceutical care given by pharmacists. "The Tokyo Declaration" thus recommends that National standards be set for:

- i) The promotion of health.
- ii) The supply of medicines and medical devices.
- iii) Patient self care.
- iv) Improving prescribing and medicines use.

Structure to include the new trends of pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, pharmacotherapeutics, clinical pharmacy, nuclear or radio-pharmacy, pharmaco-epidemiology, agro-veterinary pharmacy, Pharmacopathology, biopharmaceutical, and pharmaceutical technology. I regret, however, to observe that the quality of some of our younger pharmacists in recent times has not been higher or their ability greater. This gives cause for the P.S.N. to

revisit THE ATUEYI COMMITTEE REPORT on reinstating the 5-year post-call condition to register a pharmaceutical business. The P.S.N. through its statutory agency, the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (P.C.N), should take action to ensure that pharmaceutical education is designed to equip pharmacists for the roles they have to undertake in hospital and community practice. This means that within the necessary base of pharmaceutical sciences there must be adequate emphasis on the action and use of medicine; there should be a reasonable introduction in the training programme to the relevant elements of the social and behavioural sciences, and at all stages, the development and improvement of communication skills should be given due emphasis. Education programmes for entry to the profession should appropriately address contemporary and foreseeable changes in the practice of pharmacy. For those in practice, may I take the opportunity to remind you that pharmacy is a lifelong continuing education. A practitioner of pharmacy who takes pride in excellence, must avail himself of an orientation to learning and to drugs within the context of today's dynamic medical and pharmaceutical care system. Pharmacists must therefore regularly take part in continuing education

programmes. The Pharmacy world congress (founded 1912) holding in Stockholm Sweden on August 27 - september 1st 1995 makes provision for a two-day continuing education forum for community pharmacists. The 1996 and 1998 congress holds in Jerusalem Israel from September 1-6, and the 1997 and 1998 congress in Canada and Egypt respectively. The Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association conference (founded in 1970) holds in Harare Zimbabwe on April 24 - 28, 1995 while the conference of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain holds in Glasgow 1995. And, of course the Garden City '94 - the national conference of the P.S.N., in the Black Gold City of Port-Harcourt, comes up in November 1994. These and others are avenues for updating pharmacists' knowledge and skills to make them independent, confident, comprehensive, objective, and current in information about therapeutics and medicines in use. Pharmacists in each field of practice should be able to accept personal responsibility for the maintenance and assessment of competence throughout their working lives. Perhaps it is not superfluous to inform you that the Dept. of Pharmacy at the Keele University in Staffordshire in England runs 3-year part-time programmes for M.Sc. Clinical pharmacy, 2-year Diploma in Clini-

cal pharmacy, Agro-Veterinary pharmacy etc. There is also the One-year full time programme for the masters degree. Some of these courses including Master of Business Administration (MBA) are also available in our Universities in Nigeria.

All Practising Pharmacists are therefore obliged to ensure that the services they provide to every patient are of appropriate quality. GOOD PHARMACY PRACTICE is a means of clarifying and meeting that obligation. The vital element is the commitment of the profession, throughout the world, to promote excellence in the practice for the benefit of those we serve. The public and other professions will judge our profession on how we translate that commitment into the practice they observe in the community and hospital settings.

OUR sacred MISSION OF PHARMACY PRACTICE is to provide quality medications and other health care products and services to humanity and to help the people and the society to make the best use of them. A comprehensive pharmacy service is an institutional involvement of activities to secure good health and avoidance of illhealth in the population. When the treatment of illhealth is necessary, the quality of each person's medicine use process, should be assured to achieve maximum therapeutic benefit and to avoid untoward side effects. This, therefore, presupposes the acceptance by pharmacists of shared responsibility with other professionals and with the patients for the outcome of the therapy.

What then are the requirements of a good pharmacy practice?

i) A Good Pharmacy Practice requires that a pharmacist's FIRST CONCERN must be the welfare of the patient in all settings. Professional factors therefore should be the main philosophy underlying the practice, although it is accepted that economic factors are important.

ii) A Good Pharmacy Practice requires that the core of the pharmacy activity is the supply of medication and other health care products, appropriate information and advice to the patient, and monitoring the effects of their use. The Pharmacist should accordingly be aware of the essential medical and pharmaceutical information about each patient. Obtaining such information is however simplified if the patient chooses to use only one pharmacy or if the patient's medication profile is available.

iii) A Good Pharmacy Practice requires that an integral part of the pharmacist's contribution is the promotion of rational and economic prescribing and appropriate medicine use. There must be Pharmacist's input to decisions on medicine use. The pharmacist should be able to assess the therapeutic aspects of the appropriateness of the prescription for the individual patient and the social, legal, and economic aspects of the prescription. The ongoing relationship with other health professionals, particularly the physicians, should be seen as a therapeutic partnership involving mutual trust and confidence in all matters relating to prescriber and the pharmacist results in a proper balance

between the cost of therapy and he clinical, therapeutic and economic consequences, thereby, meeting the key interest of cost-effective and beneficial therapy of the patient.

iv) A Good Pharmacy Practice requires that the objective of each element of pharmacy service is relevant to the individual, is clearly defined and is effectively communicated to all those involved. The relationship with other pharmacists should be as colleagues, each seeking to improve pharmacy services, rather than as competitors. Hospital and community care should ever be more distinct. We must continue to look for ways of exploiting technology to ensure adequate communication between hospital and community pharmacists so that continuous pharmaceutical care will be provided to patients as they move from one sector of the health service to another. The patient's concern is not who provides the care but that it is provided effectively. Emphasis should also be placed on how health professionals generally can work together, as this will result in the erosion of professional boundaries and unhealthy acrimonies.

v) A Good Pharmacy Practice encompasses:

(a) establishment of arrangements with other health professional communities for health promotion activities at population level, including minimisation of the abuse and misuse of medicines.

(b) professional assessment of promotional materials for the print and electronic media advertisement of medicines and other products associated with health.





