

# Advertising Secrets I Learned From The Kirby Vacuum Cleaner Man

By Karon Thackston

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Karon Thackston  
karon@ktamarketing.com

KT & Associates <http://www.ktamarketing.com>

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I was just sitting here at my computer (as usual) when my husband walked in and announced, "There's a man here to see you". What? I wasn't expecting anyone. "Who is it", I asked. "Some guy who wants to speak with my wife." OK, my husband was home so I knew I was safe. I ventured outside to see who it was.

I was promptly met on my porch by a smiling face who presented me with a free box of laundry detergent. This seemingly nice young man told me he was in the neighborhood and wanted to give me this free gift. Being the skeptic I am, my first thought was, "Oh yeah... and what kind of sales pitch?"

He proceeded to walk to his truck, then turned and asked if I had a minute. "Yep, here it comes", I thought. I said I was a little busy but asked what he wanted. The smile came back to his face as he said, "I want to make your life easier."

(Secret #1 - Give your customers something absolutely free of charge. This makes them appreciative and brings about a feeling of good will. It can be free useful articles, a free ebook, a sample or trial... anything free.)

He began to pull box after box from the back of his SUV. As he approached my door, loaded for bear, he asked if I would allow him to vacuum and clean my carpets... all free, of course. At first I was going to turn him down cold. I wasn't in the vacuum or carpet cleaner buying mood. But then I wondered if I might be able to learn something from this representative of one of the most successful vacuum cleaner companies in America. I decided to give in and allow the demonstration, hoping to glean some "secrets" I could use in my copywriting.

As he walked into the living room, he began to set up the vacuum. Small talk followed. He complimented me on the interior design of my house, asked what brand of vacuum I used, how I liked it, how old it was, if I had considered buying a new vacuum, if anyone in my family suffered from allergies and how much time I spent cleaning house.

(Secret #2 - Get to know your customers. By collecting this information, the salesman was mentally tailoring his "pitch" to suit me. He was making notes to include the elements of his presentation that would appeal to me personally, and leave out those that would not.)

Next, the Kirby man (who I'll call Roger), began to ask me questions that I would obviously have to say "yes" to. This is reminiscent of the Dale Carnegie style. Roger asked, "Would you like to be able to spend less time cleaning with better results?" He asked, "Would you like to know that the allergens AND the dirt are taken out of your upholstery and carpeting?" And finally, he asked, "Would you like for your new carpet to last twice as long?" Needless-to-say, the answer to all three was "yes".

(Secret #3 - Get them in the habit of saying "yes". Dale Carnegie made a point of this in his book *How To Win Friends and Influence People*. If you get someone in the habit of saying "yes", they are going to be more likely to agree with you when it comes to other questions (like, "are you ready to buy a new vacuum"!)

Roger asked me to get my old vacuum from the closet. I did. He asked me to bring him a box of salt. (Yes, I saw it coming but I did it anyway.) He began to pour the salt onto my carpet. Then (as expected) he ground it in with his foot. He took my old vacuum and asked me to let him know when I thought it had sucked up all the salt. On came the vacuum and the challenge began!

After about 15 passes, I instructed Roger to stop. He did. Then he reached behind him and rolled over the Kirby G6 - Limited Edition. He opened the latch where the bag goes and placed a black, thin pad over it. Next, he flipped on the "onboard transmission", put the vacuum into "drive" and began the first part of his demonstration.

Just 6 passes later, he stopped the Kirby, opened the bag latch and pulled out the black pad. It was covered with salt! It was also covered with dirt, sand, lint and hair. It was extremely gross, not to mention embarrassing!

(Secret #4 - Prove your point. Just telling someone that your product or service works means nothing. You have to prove that you can and will do what you say. If you can't offer an online demonstration; use testimonials, offer references that tell about before and after results. Or give a free trial period so the customer can check it out themselves.)

"I know you're busy, ma'am, but I just wanted to show you that. I'll finish vacuuming now and then clean your living room", said Roger. I knew Roger and I weren't finished yet, but I went back to my computer like a good little prospect and let him do his work.

Sure enough, about 10 minutes later, Roger asked where he would find our trashcan. I walked around the corner to see what needed to be thrown away and was immediately horrified! He had used those little pads while vacuuming the entire room! There were disks all over my living room just covered with hair, lint, fibers, dust, sand and who knows what else. The fear of creepy-crawly things in my house started to rise up within me. All this junk was in my carpet? How disgusting! My house wasn't as clean as I thought it was. "I'm sorry for the mess, ma'am, but we are only allowed to use these demonstration pads to vacuum with. I'll throw them away if you'll show me to your garbage can."

(Secret #5 - Play on emotion. By leaving all those little demonstration pads around the room, Roger was subtly telling me that my house wasn't very clean. He was reminding me of the initial conversation we had about allergens and getting my house cleaner in less time. It was working, too. I began to think about all the mess deep down inside my carpet, and drapes, and rugs, and upholstery.)

"Can I try to get these stains out for you", was the cry from the living room. "Sure, go ahead", I replied. Roger continued to work, as did I. A few minutes later he asked if I would come see if the

stains were still noticeable. They weren't! I'd tried to get the stains out before but had no luck. "Good", Roger smiled, "I'll clean the rest for you now".

I continued banging on my keyboard until I heard the whirring of the motor stop. Roger peaked around the corner and told me it would take an hour or so for the carpet to dry enough to walk on. "Do you mind if I get my gear together in here?" I agreed.

As he was putting up hoses and attachments, he began to explain the extreme versatility of the Kirby G6 - Limited Edition. The package he had with him that day came with a base vacuum which offered an "onboard transmission" so the motor wouldn't wear out. It also allowed the vacuum to be easier to push. It offered the ability to blow as well as pull suction. This, as Roger explained, was useful for blowing up pool toys or inflatable balls - and for deflating air mattresses, etc. so they would lie completely flat for storage. The carpet cleaner attachment would... Well, you get the idea.

(Secret #6 - Focus on benefits, not features. We've all heard the phrase before, however most don't apply it. I wouldn't care anything in the world about a vacuum with "onboard transmission" because I don't have a clue what it is or what it does for me. Once explained, however, I love the idea of a vacuum that "drives itself".)

Lastly, after the full tour of how easy the vacuum was to operate, how much cleaner my house would be with less effort, and how versatile the vacuum/carpet cleaner was... we got to the price.

Needless-to-say, with Kirby's reputation, I was expecting to pay an arm and a leg. However, Roger simply said, "All this can be yours for just \$3.00 per day". That didn't sound so bad. "For how many days", my cynical self asked. Roger laughed and pulled out his pricing sheet. To answer the question that you've had since the beginning of the article... Yes, I bought the vacuum.

(Secret #7 - Save the price for last. Get them to love your product or service and then - if possible - break the price out into as small an increment as you can. This saves the prospective customer from suffering "sticker shock" and makes the item appear more affordable.)

Was it worth it? Yes and yes. It was worth my time to find out how one of the most successful vacuum cleaner companies in America does its sales magic; and it was worth the price of the vacuum, too. I learned a lot from the Kirby vacuum cleaner man, and my house looks great!

Karon is Owner and President of KT & Associates who offers targeted copywriting, copy editing & ezine article services. Subscribe to KT & Associates' Ezine "Business Essentials" at [BusinessEssentials-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:BusinessEssentials-subscribe@topica.com) or visit her site at [">http://www.ktmarketing.com](http://www.ktmarketing.com)

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