

A DIVERSE GUIDE FOR A DIVERSE WORKPLACE

INSIDE CORPORATE AMERICA

Wilson Simmons III

Mae Jacquet Publishing
Los Angeles, CA

INSIDE CORPORATE AMERICA
A Diverse Guide for a Diverse Workplace

Copyright © 2005 by Wilson Simmons III

Mae Jacquet Publishing
3404 Centinela Avenue, Suite 16
Los Angeles, CA 90066
Telephone: 310-636-2755
www.maejacquetpublishing.com
info@maejacquetpublishing.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

ISBN 10: 0-9772557-0-0

ISBN 13: 978-0-9772557-0-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2005933822

Printed and bound in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

Book Design: Dotti Albertine

*To the village that shaped me,
mentored me, and molded me
into the individual that I have become,
I dedicate this book to you.*

*It is my desire that as people of color,
we cherish each day and never forget
the true meaning of success.*

Success

To laugh often and much;
to win the respect of intelligent people
and the affection of children;
to earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;
to appreciate beauty;
to find the best in others;
to leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child, a garden patch
or a redeemed social condition;
to know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

CONTENTS

Part I—Inside the Doors of Corporate America

- 1 Chapter 1 — CORPORATE CULTURE
The Dirty Dozen | Keeping Secrets | Dating On the Job |
Drinking With the Guys & Gals | Politics & Religion | Chain
of Command | From Anger to Sabotage | Fraternalizing |
Résumé Fever | In Headhunters You Trust... Not Always |
Mentors | Burnout | Racism
- 23 Chapter 2 — FIFTEEN IMPORTANT FIRST STEPS
Research | Résumé & Cover Letter | Affirmations | Relaxation
Techniques | Health Tips | Dress For Men | Dress For Women |
Interviews | Questions & Answers | Interview the Interviewer
| Thank You Notes | References | The General Application |
Interviewing Rules | Tips From the Pros

Part II—Making the Team

- 79 Chapter 3 — SALES TRAINING, EVEN IF
YOU AREN'T IN SALES
Problem Solving | Asking Questions | Handling Confrontation
| How to Sell Anything | Dog & Pony Shows | Promotions
(Selling the Sizzle) | Co-op Advertising | Selling the Event |
Closing the Deal | Excuses | Getting Past the Gatekeepers |
The Art of Listening
- 109 Chapter 4 — TELEMARKETING
The 21st Century Is Here | Outbound & Inbound
Telemarketing | Tele-Trickery: Inbound Telemarketing |
Telemarketing At the Top (UNCF, Sony & Michael Jackson)

- 133 Chapter 5 — SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS
Set Realistic Goals | Develop A Burning Desire | Practice Time
Management

Part III—Survival Is More Than Instinct

- 145 Chapter 6 — CORPORATE GAMES
Intimidation | Piggyback | The Slowdown | Home Games |
Early Morning Breakfast | Five-On-One | Going To the Mat |
Letter of Resignation | Age | The Downsizing Game |
Thinking In Military Terms
- 161 Chapter 7 — REACHING FOR THE CORNER OFFICE
Mentoring | Goal-Setting | Promotions | The Ten
Commandments of Business Survival
- 167 Chapter 8 — SELECTING THE RIGHT COMPANY
Top 30 Companies For Diversity
- 195 Chapter 9 — SPORTS FRANCHISES
Season Tickets | Group Sales | Getting Promoted | Sports
Franchise Directory
- 215 RESOURCES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Deb Louis, Lori Givens, Saman Wright, Cecelia Simmons, Sydni Morgan Lee, Joe Louis, Vhonda Simmons, Osagie Obasohan, Phillip McAllister, Eboni Wright, Maria Dobrovolny, Michael Durantes, Sandra Johnston, Sarah Presley, Janine Goobee, and Doyle Taylor.

TELEMARKETING

*Life is like riding a bicycle.
You don't fall off unless you stop pedaling.*

[Claude Pepper]

| THE 21ST CENTURY IS HERE |

THE TIME HAS COME TO FEEL the righteousness of today's forms of communication. Yesterday we went through our days communicating on the rotary dial. I can still remember living in Compton, California when the exchange prefix started with the letters NE. Area codes were simple.

There were some tricks of the trade even in those simpler times. Example: If a relative were coming to town on the train, they would call and ask for themselves. You could hear the operator pass the message back to the caller as to the best time to call back. You could hear the conversation, including the time that your relative would be coming in on the train. One phone company for the country. Life was so simple then. Communication was so simple then. If someone tried to call and you were on the line, the caller got a busy signal. If you were not home it just rang and rang.

Today we have answering machines, voicemail, call waiting, three-way calling, caller i.d. and so many long distance carriers it

is impossible to keep up with them. A call today across country goes through four to six carriers, and may bounce off a couple of satellites in between. I can remember the first time I saw someone with a phone in the car. It was like something out of the space age. Then I saw a guy pull a phone out of his briefcase. I just knew that this guy worked for some kind of government agency. How else could he be hooked up to such technology?

Since I've spent most of my business career in sales and marketing, the phone has played a key role in how I've done business. As a street salesman I always called ahead to make appointments or to confirm them. It is the way that you do business. I received what I called my Doctorate in Selling when I became an Executive Recruiter. Why? Because you don't make money until you make a sale — no stipends or base salaries or draws to provide a safety net. I had a lot of ideas about how to do the job. Most of those ideas were idealistic.

My mentor in the recruiting business was Dan Levy. He was the Headhunter Extraordinaire. He was the Phone Man. He became the General Manager because he closed at least three deals a week. Most people can't close three deals in a month. He told me something very simple one day when I was struggling: Make a minimum of 100 calls a day and speak to at least 50 decision-makers and you will make money. I learned a lot from that piece of advice and carried it with me the rest of my career.

When I met Dan I had already been in sales for a dozen years. The one thing that I had going for me is that I was never afraid of work. My mother had instilled in me the kind of work ethic that stays with you for a lifetime. I can still remember standing on a stool to wash dishes. Never mind the age. I could barely see over the damn sink *with* the stool! We had a backyard with very large Eucalyptus trees and it was my job to rake the leaves every Saturday. I can remember some of the neighborhood thugs laughing at me working. I envied them, and wondered why my mother was not as understanding as their mothers. I sold *Jet* magazines and the *Sunday Los Angeles Times* on the corner. Thanks to Mom,

to this day my work ethic is very strong. And because of it, I was able to turn Dan's advice into an operational strategy for success.

It is not enough to have a good mind; the main thing is to use it well.

—Rene Descartes

| OUTBOUND AND INBOUND TELEMARKETING |

The job market in the next twenty years will focus on telecommunication. You will no longer have to visit department stores or grocery stores. You will simply go online and order what you want—delivered when you want. It's actually being done right now on a comparatively small scale. Make no mistake about it, E-commerce is the biggest thing since color television. Soon it will be how most of us live our lives, like the telephone and television. It will very soon be one consumer-friendly system of buying and selling goods and services. Both nonprofit and profit business today in the year 2005 are doing billions of dollars in transactions on dial-up and wireless personal electronic devices. You can already shop, pay bills, transfer funds, wire money, make reservations, send packages, and file your taxes without ever having to go to a store, bank, post office, or Western Union—all you need is a keyboard or keypad. E-commerce will rule. They are all merging into one industry as you read these words.

Thinking back to the days of the early 60s when the rumor was that pay television was on the horizon, I was like everyone else who thought: No way I am going to pay for any television programming! It's now the 21st Century and I have a satellite dish, the complete movie package, NFL Sunday Ticket, and I order almost every professional fight. So much for my having a clue.

The telemarketing industry is so wide open it's a shame. It has not changed from the number of calls—or the smiling-and-

dialing as it is known in the industry. If you can talk in anything close to a reasonable manner, you can get a job. Many industries use prisoners to sell products over the phone. Even incarcerated felons have figured out that it's the easiest gig around. The pay ranges from \$7-20 an hour. Many offer all kinds of bonuses. Make no mistake about it, the industry is here to stay.

Yes, you can get the telephone zapper, caller i.d. or have your name put on a *do not call* list. The *do not call* scheme started with the very small community of Littleton, Colorado, and is now a federal program with millions of people listed. All it does is shorten the list of those who are allowed to call you.

Let's face it—the communication industry is by far the biggest abuser of calling consumers at home. They call you to ask about how good the service is and then try and sell you on another feature that SBC Global, Verizon or AT&T is offering. If it's nothing more than increasing your minutes, the moment you say, "Yes," they've made a sale—by telemarketing in the guise of "customer service!" The fact is they have the largest Call Centers in the world. Their call volume is so large that most companies in telecommunications farm work out to vendors.

American Express, *Sports Illustrated*, Bank of America—the list is long. Real long. People don't mind telemarketers if they feel they know them. And of course the rising sector of the industry is Collections. They don't give a damn about your zapper. So putting your name on a *do not call* list cuts the calls in half. Maybe.

Twenty years ago you could scarcely find an ad seeking experienced telemarketers. Now they practically take up a full page in most newspapers. It really is the future. Ten years from now the market will double in numbers. Those that resist will be left behind. All the discounts and deals will be via interactive communication.

Now that you know that telemarketing is here to stay, let's talk about working in the fastest growing industry in the world. Getting a job today is a snap. What is it that you are looking for? Are you looking for part-time work until your ship arrives? New

York, Chicago, Phoenix and Los Angeles are the markets where the business is most abundant. If you are looking for full-time, it's there.

The low end jobs of telemarketing are easy. They hire almost daily. Part of that is because of the high turnover. No real sophistication needed. Most customer service Call Centers are inbound. You call in with a question or a problem and the customer service representative handles it for you, and tries to sell you something else along the way. The most successful seem to be in their late twenties and early thirties. Women seem to do better than men with inbound calls.

Outbound is a different story. Men seem to excel at the selling end of telemarketing. Outbound is mostly sales. Money is to be made selling outbound. Stockbrokers are nothing more than telemarketers.

In telemarketing outbound, you are dealing with numbers, after all. Pure numbers. If you have the discipline to make over 200 calls a day and the fortitude to stay positive after receiving 190 "No's," you can make a *lot* of money.

A dear friend of mine received his MBA from UCLA and he ventured off into the business world with the swagger one would expect. Walter Rigard's first stop was Shell Oil as an assistant to the Director. Walt did not last long and soon found himself working on Wilshire Blvd, in Los Angeles as an assistant product manager for Carnation. Three trips back east a year and twelve- to fourteen-hour days were not quite what he had envisioned. "Where's the money?" he kept asking. Finally, after a couple of corporate mainstream jobs, Walt decided to venture out.

Walt studied and passed his real estate exam and was all ready to work for one of the largest real estate offices in Beverly Hills. They specialized in multiple dwellings. You sell a property and bam!—you make a nice profit. Walt was out for the gold ring. He and I talked two or three times a week, and then I did not hear from him for almost nine months. The next time I saw him he had a big smile and a new Mercedes with a personalized license

plate. We looked at each other and we hugged. He picked me up like a rag doll. “Talk to me,” I said. We went into a corner bar and had a couple of beers.

He said that it took him three months to figure out what to do. Once he figured it out, he was off and running. His first commission was \$60,000. It took him exactly six months to do that. Figuring that he blew the first three months off, trying to get friends and acquaintances to buy multiple units, I wanted to know how the hell he did it. He said: One day the owner himself asked Walter if he was serious about making money. He said “Yes.” The owner pulled out a big book and gave it to Walter and told him to start calling. It was a book of owners of multiple units. So he made cold calls all day long, asking the prospects if they were interested in buying or selling. He averaged 200+ calls a day. Walter was shocked when the first person said that he was interested in buying more units. He built his clientele from the list and never looked back. That is one of the highest levels of telemarketing—and make no mistake: It is telemarketing!

TRAINING AND COACHING

A lot of what I talk about in this book compares the military to the corporate arena. It's not only because I am a veteran, it's because it's the lingo and mindset you will be dealing with for the rest of your life, if you opt for a career in corporate sales.

Working in an outbound Call Center is the top of the line in pressure. You are either making sales or you're not. It's as simple as that. If you are not making sales, then what the hell are you doing? Are you making the prescribed number of calls? Is there something wrong with your pitch? Are you reading the script verbatim? Are you talking *to* the person, or *at* the person? Are you upset from the last call?—all to be considered in evaluating a telemarketer.

Telemarketing experience is a great training ground for whatever your next step is. You gain a lot of strength from becoming proficient at selling over the phone. If you just graduated from college, it is the ideal thing to do before you decide for whom you are going to work.

*You can either complain that the rose bushes have thorns,
or rejoice that the thorn bushes have roses.*

FEELING DOWN

The toughest part of the job is when you are feeling down. You have gone all morning and made not one sale. You start thinking about quitting. You start wondering what the hell you are doing in this business. That is when you break through the wall. Until you understand the wall, you will never have success. The wall is about attitude. Attitude is everything. You cannot let “No’s” affect how you make the next call. And you must avoid the desperate pitch. The consumer can tell when you are desperate. Instead of closing, you start begging. And you make it easier for the person on the other end to say “No.”

Mentally, you have to be like Bob Fossi in *All That Jazz* when he looks in the dressing room mirror, puts a dazzling smile on his face, and says, “Showtime!”

BASIC PITCH

Stay with your pitch. If you have developed a pitch that has been successful, stay with it. The problem with most callers is that the first time they run into a slump, they panic. Panic is the beginning of a one-way slide—down. It is so difficult to get back on track. Every single call they say, “No.” You hear all the excuses as to why they can’t talk to you: I am eating lunch. I am eating dinner. I am walking out the door. I just walked in the door. I have the baby in my hands. I have company. It always happens that when you are going downhill, someone else that you know you are sharper than is having the day of a lifetime, closing deals left and right. It’s just what happens in the business. You know it will. That’s the time you stay upbeat, and approach every call with the mindset that “here is the next sale.”

A pitch generally has three parts:

1. The opening, which allows you to introduce yourself, the company that you are calling from, and on whose behalf you are calling. You explain the reason that you are calling and build rapport.
2. The sense of urgency, when you explain further the need for help or participation, or why they need to buy the product NOW.
3. The close, when you ask for the donation or order—the critical part of the presentation and more often than not overlooked. The good closers ask for the donation or order at least three times before they hang up the phone.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

What you read here will actually bring you enough money to live on while you are chasing your dream. “Be careful, success is habit forming.” This information was taken from some of the best callers in the world.

*I just walked in the door!
I am just walking out the door!*

Answer #1: “I understand, and I’ll be very brief. In a nutshell, we’re just calling...(cut to essential point).”

Answer #2: “Then I’ll get right to the point. We’re just hoping that all of our supporters can help us with (Key Point), with a special (gift/membership) renewal. Consider the critical timing of this issue, some supporters are helping with as much as (high ask). Is that something we might count on at this time?”

*I don’t give over the phone.
I don’t respond to phone solicitations.*

Answer #1: “I understand that. Actually, we may have mailed you something about this in the past few months. We’re following up on our mailing lists right now because we really do need to move quickly...”

Answer #2: “Oh, I understand and I can see to it that we send you something in the mail. Can we count on you for what you did last time?”

I just started a new job and I don’t have any money.

Answer #1: “I certainly understand. It’s just that this issue is so critical at this time. If it works better for you, we can put your gift on a credit card so you can pay it at your convenience.”

Answer #2: “I understand. Obviously, the money we raise is crucial to the work we do, but the main thing is keeping you with us.”

Answer #3: “Congratulations on the new job. That can be a difficult transition. We wouldn’t be calling if we didn’t need the help.”

Answer #4: “Congratulations on the new job. I have good news also...(and pitch).

HARD CORE

Some companies don't give you a lot of time to succeed. The training is simple and direct, particularly if you have a one-page script. You find yourself in training in the morning and out on the calling room floor in the afternoon. Many of them see training as an extra expense, while some have a week-long training period. My assessment is that it should be somewhere in the middle. A two- or three-day training is more than adequate. One company that called nonprofit organizations for donations would take you off the phone if you didn't make a sale in the first two hours of a four-hour shift. A supervisor comes up to you and tries to coach you through the rough spots. If that doesn't work, they send you home. In some cases they will allow you to come back and try on another shift. More often than not, the job of outbound sales is not for that person.

MONITORING

Monitoring is an absolute necessity for outbound and inbound callers. It is generally the responsibility of a supervisor to monitor the callers to listen to the pitch or presentation. How are they handling the objections? Can they transition from the "No?" Are they courteous and respectful? And most importantly, are they trying to cheat the company?

Why would they cheat? New callers learn the tricks of the trade from old callers. There's always some shortcut to circumvent the process, to get credit for calls or sales that aren't real. If you have done this at all, you can pick out the cheaters a mile away.

While managing a fundraising Call Center, I always made the walk to listen to the callers. I wanted to listen to the presentation. You can tell a good presentation as well as a bad presentation, and the difference doesn't necessarily match up with figures or checkmarks on paper. When a new person would be making sales left and right, I wanted to know how he or she was doing it. I would go right to the supervisor and ask directly: Is the caller really that good? If the answer were "Yes," I would listen to the pitch. If the presentations were weak, I would monitor.

It doesn't take long to figure out if someone can sell. If the presentation is weak, it means that the sales being registered are weak or non-existent. To check, I would have someone call back the donors under the guise of quality control. If it weren't a solid deal, I would go over it with the caller. If the caller just made up the deal and no verifier was available to confirm it, it was a simple solution: It wasn't the job for them.

The call-back was simple: The donors were asked if they were comfortable with the gift they had given. If my suspicion were correct, the donor would say: "What gift?" At which time the employee was terminated. Nine out of ten times, if I thought the donors should be called back, they were bogus pledges.

VERIFIERS

All outbound sales organizations have a verifier—someone who comes on the line after the prospect has agreed to pledge or buy. It is generally pretty simple: "Mr. Garcia, we have your address at 4000 Don Luis Drive in Los Angeles. Is that correct? We also have you giving a pledge of \$50.00 to Metropolitan Museum of Art. Are you comfortable with the pledge of \$50.00?" The verifier has confirmed the address and makes one last pitch to have the donor put the pledge on a credit card, which is the trickiest part of the presentation.

THE PRESENTATION

The presentation varies from campaign to campaign in the case of fundraising. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art script changed all the time. Sometimes the presentation was for membership, but most of the time it was for donations. The script goes something like this:

Hello, may I speak with Mrs. Nohara? My name is _____ and I'm calling from Ridley and Company on behalf of Metropolitan Museum of Art.

We hope you will have an opportunity to visit the museum this year, but if not, we will keep you thor-

oughly informed of the museum's activities through the bimonthly calendar and the quarterly bulletin. We also want you to know that we recently launched our new website, at www.metmuseum.org, which is a great new resource for our members to find out about upcoming exhibitions, or order products from our online Met stores. It's another great way to take advantage of the 10% discount on all Met merchandise that is part of your membership.

This promises to be a very exciting year at the Met. Along with our outstanding permanent collection, now through January we are presenting PAINTERS IN PARIS—an extraordinary collection of more than 100 works from masters including Chagall, Matisse, and Picasso. The exhibition traces the development of painting in France, from its impressionist roots through the aftermath of World War II.

Along with our fabulous exhibitions, the Met will also be hosting a series of educational programs for adults and children, including school group visits, teacher trainings, gallery talks, film screenings, lectures, concerts, and more. So your support helps the Met exhibit world-renowned art, and offer important education and outreach programs. And, if you renew at the FRIEND level, you will receive two membership cards, free admission for four guests, and use of the elegant trustees dining room with a grand view of Central Park.

So, can we count on you to renew your Metropolitan Museum of Art Membership at the FRIEND level for \$225? And of course, you can put that on your VISA, MASTERCARD, or AMERICAN EXPRESS, whichever you would prefer?

IF YES: CLOSE

Great! We are processing on VISA, MasterCard,

or American Express, which do you prefer? [It's the Alternate of Choice Close—see Page 94.] Let me confirm the spelling of your full name as it appears on your card. Are you still at 66 Forrest Avenue, Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts? [Confirm credit card type and confirm pledge dollar amount again.]

IF NO TO A CREDIT CARD:

I can mail you a pledge packet, but as a nonprofit we are asking all members to place their donations on a credit card. It puts the greatest majority of your donation to work right away and saves us time and paper cost. Could you reconsider? It does help.

IF THE ANSWER IS NO TO THE FIRST ASK:

I understand, Mrs. Nohara, that these are tough times for our members as well, so it may be easier for you to renew your membership for two years at the ASSOCIATE level for just \$90. And you will still be entitled to all your benefits, including a 10% discount on all items purchased through our stores and catalogs. So, can we count on you to renew your Associate Membership tonight (today) for two years for just \$90? OK? And you can put your gift on your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express, which would you prefer?

ONE MORE NO TO GO:

I understand Mrs. Nohara that \$90 may be too much right now. But your membership is not only a value for you, but it means so much to the museum. Let me make one last suggestion, could we count on you instead to renew your membership for just one year at the ASSOCIATE level for only \$45? You will receive the 10% discount, free admission to the museum, and special museum publications. Would that be better for you?

OK? And you can put that on your Visa, MasterCard, or American Express, which would you prefer?

IF NO:

Well Mrs. Nohara, I really appreciate your time tonight (today). Have a nice evening.

HARD CORE CLOSERS

The scripts are all designed to take the listening parties out of their comfort zone and put them in a place where they are forced to say, “Yes.” Or at least feel bad about saying, “No.” As human beings of the Western World, we just don’t like hurting people’s feelings. We don’t want to say, “No.”

Scripts either ask you for money or get you to buy something. If it’s a cause that you identify with, it is generally not that much of an intrusion. Hard core sales closers are an entirely different group! The hard-core closer sells copy toner over the phone. Home improvement is another big one. Aluminum siding. Calling the consumers and asking them to change long-distance carriers. That’s a very hard sell. Selling the *Los Angeles Times* is a hard sell. The rejection is harsh. Selling burial options is another tough one.

CHOICE

Do telemarketers intrude? Yes. Am I intruding if you are a donor to my organization? And if you are a donor, does the *do not call* list apply to the organization or the contracted calling party? If you are a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and your membership has lapsed, is it fair if I call you and ask if you would like to renew at this time? Observe the presentation. Is this offensive? Intrusive?

Hello Mrs. Torres? This is Sydni, calling from The Wilson Group on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Thank you so much for your membership support. [*Beautiful stuff—yes?*]

We hope you will have an opportunity to visit the museum this year. But if not, we’ll keep you thoroughly informed of the

Museum's activities through the bimonthly calendar and the quarterly bulletin. We also want you to know that we recently launched our new website, at www.metmuseum.org, which is a great new resource for our members to find out about upcoming exhibitions, or to order products from our online Met stores. It's another great way to take advantage of the 10% discount on all Met merchandise that is part of your membership!

| TELE-TRICKERY: INBOUND TELEMARKETING |

Inbound telemarketing is where you get into multiple levels of fluff, free gifts, and worthless gadgets. When you call in for that too-good-to-be-true deal you just saw in the newspaper or on TV, you will have a whole litany of perks repeated back to you, "You know, Mr. Jones, you will receive a free trimmer with that hedger, two extra bags of weed-whacker string, and a little perfume for the Missus. Now are we going to put this on your Visa or MasterCard?"

*You've got to get to the stage in life where going for it
is more important than winning or losing.*
—Arthur Ashe

| TELEMARKETING AT THE TOP |

In its most sophisticated form, selling the marketing strategies that lead to increased sales of the cause or product follows the same rules that govern front-line smiling-and-dialing and utilizes the same telecommunications network—it just reaps substantially greater income for the salesperson and the company he or she works for.

In 1987 I was recommended to the United Negro College Fund in New York as the man who could go to the major corporations in America and get money. A daunting task for anyone.

The truth is that Corporate America cared very little about the College Fund then. That is a fact. And little has changed. It is the reason that many of the member colleges have gone under, and many more are having financial difficulties.

I was excited about the opportunity to assist young people in getting an education. I met with Chris Edley, then President of the College Fund. Chris had a few words about what he expected from me representing the UNCF. The interview lasted about fifteen minutes and he was out the door to another meeting. He hired me.

To say that I was anxious would be the understatement. I was nervous, excited and downright scared. I went to work with a fervor I have never had before or since. I worked seven days a week and enjoyed every minute of it. I averaged over 100 calls a day. I talked to everyone that I knew in the business world and everyone that they knew. I made cold calls and followed warm leads. What I knew from experience is that if you push and press long enough and hard enough, things will happen for you on the positive side.

It's the timeframe that you work in that creates the pressure. I reported to the Senior Vice President. The next step up in the chain of command was Chris Edley. Time was of the essence. The buzz around the New York office was about the new guy on the block who was supposed to make things happen. Who is this so-called hotshot from Los Angeles? Pressure. The real world is, and will always be: What have you done for me lately? Show me your stuff NOW!

I was brought in specifically to get corporate sponsorship for the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars Telethon. The expectation was that I would hit the ground running. I was given an office and a telephone and I shared a secretary with the VP. My first day on the job I made over 100 phone calls. I was the hired gun. My job was to bring on new sponsors and keep the ones that we had happy.

The major sponsor for the Telethon was Anheuser Busch. AB underwrote the production costs, which meant they had a lot of

control. I called every friend and old acquaintance I knew from the corporate world, looking for an opening.

Of all the selling that you can do, nothing works like making the Big Sale. Selling being the art that it is, there is a great deal of satisfaction when you get the big score, the grand slam to win the game. You can't knock the ball out of the park if you don't get a pitch to hit. It is of paramount importance, if you are aiming for the Big Sale, that you are addressing an audience that can make it happen.

Before you walk in the door you must ask yourself these questions: *Can this person sign on the dotted line?* If they like what I have to say, can they say "Yes?" And if not, can they take the message to the person who *can* say "Yes?" If you have the right audience, there is only one question left to be answered—bottom line, the question the decision maker will always ask is: "*What do I get out of this?*" If you have the answer before you meet with the decision-maker, you will have done your job. Anything else is a waste of time.

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.

—W. Nance

ON WITH THE SHOW

Michael Jackson is the world's greatest entertainer. To have worked with Michael Jackson behind the scenes was very exciting. Apart from his enormous talent, Michael Jackson is a black man who really cares about his brothers and sisters. Forget about what the press has to say. Michael Jackson is still the single largest donor in the history of the College Fund. That fact alone made my involvement that much more exciting. W.E.B. DuBois talked about "the talented tenth" of black Americans—those who were most educated, most industrious, and most well off—to take it upon themselves to uplift those of our color who were less fortunate. Mr. Jackson is a shining example of how black people helped one another at the turn of the 20th Century.

The United Negro College Fund was honoring Michael Jackson at its 44th Anniversary Dinner, March 10, 1988 in New York City. Mr. Jackson was being honored for his major philanthropic contributions. Mr. Jackson received UNCF's Frederick D. Patterson Award and an honorary doctorate from Fisk University. The event was not only historic, but it was the biggest and best in the history of the College Fund. As you might expect, it was star-studded with Mr. Jackson's closest friends. Elizabeth Taylor, Liza Minnelli and Quincy Jones were among the many guests who paid special tribute to Michael. Others who served as vice-chairs of the dinner were Whitney Houston, Christie Brinkley, Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson. It was a fundraiser at a thousand dollars a plate, and there was standing room only.

One week prior to the dinner, Mr. Jackson performed a benefit concert at Madison Square Garden, which raised over one million dollars for the College Fund. The *Bad* concert was sponsored by Pepsi-Cola, but to the surprise of some, Pepsi declined to underwrite the dinner.

ANATOMY OF A DEAL

The United Negro College Fund had hired me on the recommendation of an old friend and former colleague, Michael Thompson. The next step was to develop a strategy to open up some of the doors in Corporate America. I made up my own title: National Marketing Manager. I compiled a list of corporations placing priority on the ones that I could call immediately. Consulting with some of my former colleagues, Earvin Thompson in particular, we made a list of our own contacts that were in positions to make things happen. At the top of the list was Edward H. Barker, Jr. who was the Vice-President of Special Market Sales for Sony Corporation of America.

Ed Barker and I had worked together at Polaroid Corporation, and strangely enough we were hired at the same time in 1974. In less than a month after being hired by the College Fund, I was sitting in Ed's office in Park Ridge, New

Jersey. We laughed about all the fun we had on our Bahamas trip in 1976 at Polaroid's expense. Ed took me into the office of Jeffrey S. Brooks, Vice-President of Advertising and Promotions. The three of us talked for about an hour, with the focus of the conversation being about the Reverend Jesse Jackson and the fact that Sony Corporation had already given him \$500,000.

Ed and Jeffrey were not that excited about the money going to Rev. Jackson, but it was not their decision. As the story was told to me, the Premier of Japan had made a derogatory statement about black people in the United States. Rev. Jackson went personally to Hirohito, and his visit resulted in Sony's advertising in *Black Enterprise* and *Ebony* magazines. In addition, Sony Corporation made the commitment to use a black advertising agency in New York.

The message was clear: We think what you're doing is noble, and we would love to give you some money, but we have given our allotment (you get that a lot in this business). Before heading back to New York, my last words to Ed were that he and I were destined to do something big together.

My strategy was much like that of a distance runner in maintaining contact with the lead runner. You want to be close enough to take advantage of any opportunities. It wasn't more than a month after my visit with Ed that I came up with another excuse to call him. The marketing department was developing a catalogue as a fundraising tool. Sony products were ideal, and Ed Barker was more than willing to cooperate. He mailed four Sony items for the College Fund to use in the catalogue.

A few months later Ed and I met for breakfast on one of his business trips. I pitched the idea of making some T-shirts with "A mind is a terrible thing to waste" on the front, and just above it the same thing in Japanese. It took Ed more than a week to have "A mind is a terrible thing to waste" translated into Japanese—and still the literal translation sounded something like: "Someone wants to learn more—if they have it please give them a chance!" On one sleeve we would print "Donated by Sony Corporation"

and on the other sleeve we would display the UNCF logo. Again, it was something that was easy for Ed to do, and in less than a month, we had a few thousand T-shirts from Sony. Best of all, I was able to maintain weekly contact with Ed just following up on the design of the T-shirts.

In November of 1987 *The Wall Street Journal* ran a story about Sony Corporation's buying CBS Records. The unique thing about CBS Records was that Michael Jackson was recording under CBS's Epic label. I called Harriet Schimel (VP Advertising, UNCF) for her thoughts. She explained that at present it was her understanding that Pepsi Cola was going to sponsor the *Bad* concert in New York as well as the Anniversary Dinner. If anything changed she would give me a call. The next day Harriet called to say that Pepsi had pulled out of sponsoring the dinner. She ran the details of the event by me, and I promised to get back to her as soon as I talked to Sony.

Having Ed Barker's home phone made making contact with Sony easier than it would have been otherwise. I ran the idea by Ed, explaining that I would bring Harriet Schimel to New Jersey to discuss the feasibility of Sony Corporation's tying in with UNCF to honor Michael Jackson. At that particular time, Sony's acquisition of CBS Records had not yet been consummated, so bringing anyone down to New Jersey was premature.

A lot of things were happening, and by December, Sony had acquired CBS Records (Sony Music). We set up a meeting for January 4th in New Jersey with Ed Barker and Jeff Brooks. After half an hour of Harriet's filling in the details of what the invitations would look like, the location, and so forth, Ed said, "*This all sounds great, but what do we get out of this?*" Harriet and Ken Harris and I had been role-playing in the limo on the way down to Sony about this very same question. I had told Ed that we would get back to them with a grocery list that would include photo opportunities for Neil Vanderdussen (President, Sony of America) and Walter Yetnikoiff (President, CBS Records) with Michael Jackson, and international publicity, the like of which you couldn't buy at any price. "Why don't we get back to you in

the morning with a full grocery list? How does that sound?” Ed was smiling.

PROPOSED SHOPPING LIST
FOR SONY CORPORATE EXPOSURES
ASSOCIATED WITH UNDERWRITING OF
44TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

1. Honorary co-chairmanship for SONY VIP. This name and title will appear on official dinner invitation and programs. It will be mentioned in all news releases.
2. SONY logo and sponsorship will be mentioned on official dinner invitation, which is mailed to 12,000 individuals and corporations.
3. SONY logo and sponsorship will be highlighted in a dinner program, with full-page description of SONY's involvement.
4. SONY T-shirts featuring the UNCF slogan “A mind is a terrible thing to waste” will be given to each of 2,000 dinner patrons. [The T-shirts were nixed in lieu of Tyvak jackets.]
5. SONY VIP representative will sit on dais with CEO's of other major corporations.
6. SONY representative would make check presentation of underwriting gift during dinner, so that audience would understand that SONY is making it possible for entire proceeds of the dinner to go to the Michael Jackson Scholarship Fund. [It was the first time in the history of the college fund that the dinner had been underwritten.]
7. SONY will receive tickets for 3 tables of 10 in the “Golden Circle” at the dinner. This will include invitations to the

post-dinner VIP reception and 30 tickets to the Michael Jackson Bad Concert, March 3, 1988 at Madison Square Garden.

8. SONY participation will be highlighted in the video review of the dinner that will air during the United Negro College Fund's "Parade of Stars" telethon in December. This is seen in more than 70 major markets.
9. SONY logo will appear on the UNCF/Michael Jackson video that will be shown during the dinner.
10. Mention of SONY and its involvement in the video news release UNCF prepares on the dinner.
11. UNCF will issue a news release announcing SONY's commitment prior to the dinner. It will be distributed to all black press, business media, and general market media.
12. SONY and CBS Records will have the opportunity to distribute products at VIP receptions.
13. SONY's involvement will be written up in the UNCF Journal, a newsletter that is distributed to 35,000 UNCF major donors.
14. SONY will be highlighted in narrative and listed among major donors in the UNCF Annual Report 1987-1988.
15. Opportunity for a SONY representative to briefly address 42 black college presidents the day of the dinner.
16. SONY representative will be introduced to key representatives of other major corporations during pre-dinner and post-dinner receptions and during dinner.

POSSIBLE EXPOSURES FOR SONY

1. Photo opportunity for SONY VIPs with Michael Jackson and other key celebrities attending the dinner.
2. Presence of SONY representative at press conference announcing the dinner.
3. Presence of SONY representative at pre-event press conference, which is expected to be attended by hundreds of media reps from around the world.
4. Creation of a limited edition Michael Jackson poster in honor of dinner, which will include the SONY logo.
5. Will project slide of poster with SONY logo on screen during entire dinner.
6. Arrangement of media interviews for SONY spokesperson.

The rest, as they say, is history. There were a couple of things that needed approval from Michael Jackson himself, and since the UNCF legal department had a relationship with Solders, Michael's agent at the time, we were able to handle that with a phone call. We faxed the information to Ed, and it took exactly three long weeks to get the YES. Sony and CBS Records split the underwriting tab of \$800,000, one half in cash and the rest in-kind services that included a Michael Jackson jacket commemorating the 44th Anniversary of UNCF for distribution at the dinner. The poster was also made and Sony/CBS Records' name was on everything. The event raised over 1 million dollars.

Good fortune and being in the right place at the right time, are the things that enabled me to get the underwriting dollars for the dinner. But the most important parts of the puzzle were 1) my commitment to making something happen, including working

nights and weekends if necessary, and 2) *appreciation and skillful use of the telephone as a primary tool of the trade*. As the Chinese say: “Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.”

Be prepared.