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Master 'Stagehand' Zenn Kaufman Puts Serio-Comedy Action Into Sales Lecture

Anti-Climaxes Illustrate Points

By RALPH BRADY.

Zenn Kaufman, master "stagehand," led an audience of "heroes and heroines" through 75 minutes of smooth-running serio-comedy containing thirty-one laughs and three exciting anti-climaxes Tuesday night in Columbia Auditorium to illustrate his contention that "Showmanship In Business" is the difference between a cash register that rings sweetly and one that is just a nifty ornament.

The occasion was the annual sales clinic sponsored by The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times for the purpose of bringing to the sales organizations of Louisville firms the latest information on how to sell the public and make the public like it.

Mr. Kaufman, former New York advertising man, is author of the books, "Showmanship In Business"; "Profitable Showmanship", and "How to Run Better Sales Contests."

Says Selling Is a Drama.

"The one common denominator of successful showmanship, 'I believe,' declared Mr. Kaufman, 'is the amplification of the crack of Vaudevillian Joe Cook, who said, 'of all my wife's relatives I like myself the best.'"

"The American public spends about four million dollars a day to go to the movies. And what do we get? We get the right to sit down there or up there and put ourselves in the position of the players.

"The star is the individual in the audience in any form of entertainment," Mr. Kaufman asserted.

"When Robert Taylor takes the feminine lead into his arms, it isn't the movie star he's embracing, it's your wife sitting right next to you and, that's not all, it isn't Taylor who's doing the embracing, it's you.

"Indeed, selling is a drama, but the salesperson isn't the hero—he or she is just the stagehand. The hero is the buyer, and you've



A section of the crowd at Zenn Kaufman's sales clinic.

—(C.-J. Photo.

got to keep him in the spotlight," said the speaker.

Action Louder Than Words.

Toying idly with a revolver, Mr. Kaufman told the story of the Marshall County, Ohio, Sheriff, who won eighteen elections hand down, but never made a political speech.

"Each election year, the day before the balloting, he marched into the Court House Park with his wife, put a cigarette between her lips, backed off 50 feet and (Mr. Kaufman's pistol belched flame at his startled audience) bang—he shot it out of her mouth. Yes, action speaks louder than words."

Throws "Hammer."

"You've got to sell in the terms of what the purchase means to the buyer," declared the speaker, patting the head of a hammer into the palm of his left hand.

Suddenly, he threw the ham-

mer out into the fifteenth row and the man who lunged to catch it as it descended toward the head of a cringing woman became a "hero," but—you guessed it—the hammer was made of balsa wood and weighed an ounce.

"A balsa wood salesman used a variation of that little stunt to illustrate forcefully to harried purchasing agents the advantages of his product," he said.

The yardstick of showmanship, Mr. Kaufman said, holding up a colored paper strip, consists of these twelve inches: mystery, realism, simplicity, life, motion, timeliness, pictures, color, conflict, sound, beauty and sex.

Showmanship Extolled.

Newspapers are the greatest medium of showmanship in the world, he said, because every Page One carries the story of a fight, or conflict, and everyone loves a fight.

Showmanship, the speaker de-

clared, is a great universal force, as powerful as the law of gravity, if properly used, and while a person can't click on every try, the law of averages enters the picture when attempts are numerous and varied.

"High pressure methods of salesmanship have no place in my scheme of things. Use the Golden Rule of showmanship—give to every man the same break you'd like to have yourself.

Waves "Yardstick."

"Remember (waving the 'yardstick') the twelve elements in this stick make all the shows, whether burlesque, Barnum & Bailey, Belasco, bull-fighting, ballet, boxing, Benny—or business," Mr. Kaufman cried.

"Now, if any of you want a supply of these 'yardsticks,' just detach the stub (the 'stagehand' prepared to wind up his talk) and send it in with a mark in the last square, because if you don't, you'll be buying one of my books."