

MEGA- SELLING

s e c r e t s

of a

**Master
Salesman**

DAVID COWPER

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Praise for David Cowper's

MEGA-SELLING Secrets of a Master Salesman

"This book has everything to offer: to the beginner to light his way to success; to the 50 year plus experienced veteran, to show where he could and should have been. Every positive adjective and description falls short of its meaningfulness."

***—Nicholas Wise, President,
NILA Financial & Insurance Services Inc.,
20 year Top Of The Table Qualifier***

"I would like to congratulate you on an absolutely outstanding book. I have read *Mega-Selling* three times, cover to cover, picking up new ideas each time. Your book has been inspirational and motivational. Your art of writing is as eloquent as your fluency in public speaking. I am now waiting for *Mega-Selling*... The sequel!"

***—Peter Lantos,
Peter Lantos & Associates***

Mega-Selling is certainly a well chosen name for your book. Most literature developed for promotional concepts lacks the real-life drama and excitement that yours has plenty of. It puts life back into life insurance with an easy flowing narrative, which the reader wants to explore to the end."

***—Peter Flatt,
Peter Flatt Insurance***

"You are a true visionary in our business. Your superb intellectual mind has enabled you to make analogies that are hypnotic to the prospect. This book is a great read for all salespersons, but it is a must read for those selling life insurance."

**—Paul W. Fincham,
Executive Planning International Life
Insurance Limited**

"It was with great pleasure that I read your latest book. It was far and away the best book on selling insurance that I have read. Most books deal with 'cutesy' ideas or read like textbooks; whereas yours reads more like a novel, making it fast paced and highly readable."

**—Walter C. Barclay, BA, CFP, CLU, CH.F.C.,
Walter C. Barclay Insurance Agency**

Well done! Your book is a real winner. I could not put it down until I finished it. It captured my mind from the first page to the last page."

**—Keith Coles, CFP, CLU, CH.F.C.,
The Coles Group Inc.**

"*Mega-Selling* is a most unusual book. At first I thought I was reading a James Bond spy adventure. This is such a pleasant change from the usual type of sales book. It is like reading a novel you can't put down."

**—David Baird,
Ten Star Life Insurance Brokers Inc.**

"I started to read your book and couldn't put it down. If I had to categorize it, I would put it under suspense."

**—Frank DeFederico,
Financial Directions**

"I enjoyed your book. It certainly depicts the power of love and conviction for one's chosen occupation. I am a firm believer in being whatever you want and committing to be a top performer in that field."

**—David Pozer, B.A., L.L.B.,
Assistant Vice President & Chief Underwriter,**

Manulife (International) Limited

“Your book was a fascinating read. I thoroughly enjoyed your examples. Everyone who reads your book will be inspired, undoubtedly, to stretch just a little to reach for his or her own next plateau.”

***—Lyle Manery, CLU, CH.F.C.,
Chimo Financial Services Inc.***

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THE 8 BEST PRACTICES OF HIGH- PERFORMING SALESPEOPLE

by Norm Trainor, with Donald Cowper and Andrew Haynes

MEGA- SELLING

s e c r e t s

of a

Master Salesman

DAVID COWPER

with Donald Cowper and Andrew Haynes



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About the Authors

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David Cowper, CLU, entered the insurance business in 1958, becoming one of the highest performing insurance brokers in the world and a founding member of the Top of the Table. He was a Main Platform speaker for the Top of the Table and the Million Dollar Round Table, a former member of the Faculty of Life Underwriters Association, former member of the Directors of Life Underwriters Association, and former Chairman of the Taxation and Legislation Committee of Life Underwriters Association of Canada. He was a tenor, an avid reader of history, and an aficionado of thoroughbred horse racing.

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Acknowledgments

For nearly 20 years, people have been asking me where my book is. I would always reply, “It’s coming—soon.” Now, thanks to the help of my son Donald and Andrew Haynes, I can at last say that it is here.

I am indebted to Ann Margaret Oberst for her expert editing, Christine Rooney for her insightful suggestions, and my daughter, Dara Cowper, for her astute comments. However, I take full responsibility for any errors that still remain in the book.

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David Cowper

To Teri, who has always been the wind beneath my wings.

"He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small,
That puts it not unto the touch,
To win or lose it all."

*James Graham, Marquis of Montrose
(1612-1650), to his mistress*

Mega-Selling

In this book, I outline the strategies I have developed during my career to take my business and sales to the top. I am an insurance broker, but the strategies are universal, applicable to all fields and all businesses.

Throughout this book, I sometimes refer to products, concepts, and laws that may or may not apply to your particular area.

All the cases I describe in this book are based on real events; however, in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of my clients, I have changed all their names and all the telling details of the stories. I have also changed the names of everyone else in this book, except for my own, and those of my wife, Teri, and my first manager in the business, the late Huss Breithaupt. I have also not referred to any particular insurance companies, except the company where I first learned to sell: The New York Life Insurance Company.

Part I

The \$100,000,000 Case

1

The \$100,000,000 Conversation

At 7:15 it would all be over. There were two possible results:

*I would either realize my dream, or it would vanish.
Either way, my life would be forever changed.*

I passed the turnoff for the highway and slowed down, easing my car onto the shoulder, the tires crunching gravel. It was 6:45 AM and the traffic was light, but steady—brief intervals of silence punctuated by the occasional rush of a car roaring past. I hadn't had much sleep, but my nerves kept me awake. Fifteen minutes to go, and as the seconds ticked away my heart rate accelerated. I needed to relax; everything would depend on my ability to stay focused, controlled. At 7:15 it would all be over. There were two possible results: I would either realize my dream, or it would vanish. Either way, my life would be forever changed.

I looked ahead through the windshield, my eyes following the lines of the highway to the vanishing point, where I fixed my gaze. Everything else—the panorama of cars, clouds, low-lying buildings—began to undulate like a large tapestry. The traffic sounds faded. I closed my eyes, and meditated. I felt myself relaxing, my mind clearing. When I opened my eyes, I glanced at the clock. It was 6:59. He would arrive any second now, and I was ready.

In the rear-view mirror, I caught a glimpse of a long, black limousine. It approached stealthily like a submarine, passed me, then pulled onto the shoulder. My heart jumped, and I slowly inhaled a deep breath to regain my calm. I reached

for the slim leather briefcase on the passenger seat then got out of the car.

The morning air was crisp. I marched over to the right side of the limo, and stood there. I could see his imposing silhouette in the back seat. I had met him only twice before in person. He was a massive man, not overweight, just massive—over six feet tall with a broad face, and deep blue eyes beneath a prominent brow. The driver's door clicked open and a small mustachioed man got out and padded around the car. He walked slowly, or so it seemed. It was like everything was happening in slow motion. I looked down at my watch and gazed as the second hand, paused then stuttered forward, paused then stuttered forward again. An eternity later, the driver opened the back passenger door for me and ushered me inside.

I slid along the cool leather, and settled into the seat beside him. "Good morning, Rolf," I said, reaching for a handshake.

He snatched my hand, tugged at it quickly, "You have fifteen minutes."

I opened the clasps on my briefcase and removed a set of six proposals, each one a variation on a \$2-million insurance policy. As far as Rolf was concerned that was why I wanted to meet with him—to discuss the \$2-million proposal. In truth, I had an ulterior motive, and I needed a couple of minutes at the end of the meeting to discuss the real reason I wanted to see him. I prayed he would make up his mind about the \$2 million quickly.

"Rolf," I said, "here are six proposals based on the zero-cost concept I discussed with you over the phone. The death benefit returns the original face amount, plus the premiums, plus what those premiums would have earned had you invested them elsewhere."

Rolf took the proposals from me, and studied them, spending about twenty seconds on each. The fifth proposal would be my recommendation. The premium stream and the interest rate involved best suited his needs. If he selected the fifth proposal, I would have time left to discuss the real reason for my visit.

I prayed hard. While Rolf continued to look at the proposals, I placed my hands on my lap and concentrated on steadying them. I have a tendency to tap my fingers nervously, and now would be a rather untimely occasion to indulge in a distracting habit. I turned to look outside and watched as one bird chased another around in the air. Perhaps the pursuer was trying to sell the other insurance.

After two minutes, Rolf looked up. "Proposal number five," he declared.

"That is my recommendation."

"Fine, then, thank you, David."

"Rolf," I said, "I still have eleven more minutes of your time—"

Rolf looked at his watch.

"So you do," he said. I knew Rolf was a man of his word.

"Rolf, I would like to meet with you and your lawyers and accountants. I want to develop a package of insurance for the new partnership—based on this zero-cost plan. Can we arrange an appointment to discuss this?" I asked.

Rolf was the de facto head partner of a packaging company that was undergoing a massive restructuring. I had done insurance for the original partnership years before when they bought out an international company. It was my biggest case—a total of \$42 million of insurance. But since then, the company had grown tremendously. Now the insurance need would be around \$100,000,000—and I

wanted a shot at the business. The fact that I had done the original insurance would help me—but not as much as I would like. Each of the 10 partners would be bringing in their own agents and the competition would be fierce. But I knew Rolf was the kingpin, whoever had his support would likely win the business. I needed him to agree to an appointment. His eyes turned and he looked me straight in the face, as though he were probing my mind for any weakness. If I flinched, he would say no. It was as simple as that.

I stared back unblinking. Rolf said yes.

Break through to selling megacases

As I drove back home, barely aware of the road and the increasing traffic, I wondered how in the world I had found myself in a position where I was asking a client for an appointment to discuss \$100,000,000 worth of insurance. Thirty years earlier I had arrived in Toronto as an immigrant—virtually penniless. And somehow, since then, I had managed to rise to the top of the insurance business. As I thought about it, I realized that the answer was not really a mystery. In fact, the meeting with Rolf was an inevitable milestone on the path that I had chosen and created for myself. Since those first days in Canada, I had dreamed that I would meet people like Rolf, earn their confidence and do business with them. This book is about the strategies I developed to help me realize those dreams.

I have written this book in the hope that others might be able to use some of my strategies to realize their own dreams. The truth is, if I can do it, so can you. I have never felt I was a natural salesperson. When I was a young agent, I would marvel at the ease with which the other new

salespeople seemed to sell. If they made it look easy, I made it look difficult. But, because I wasn't a natural, I was forced to develop strategies to help me sell, first small insurance policies, then larger and larger ones, until I eventually broke through to selling megacases—cases where the insurance amount is \$10 million or more. In this book, I will show you all of the strategies I used to take my business and sales to the top. And, yes, I will tell you how the case with Rolf turned out—but first, the lean years.

Part II

How to Lay the Foundation for Taking Your Business to the Top