

The Making of a Master: No. 4 in Series

Bhaskar Pant brings international background to Tek sales position

If you like dealing with customers who want state-of-the-art in broadcast technology, and you're proud to represent Tektronix, you have things in common with Bhaskar Pant (Senior Sales Engineer, TV Division), working out of the Long Island Field Office.

Bhaskar, one of many Tek sales engineers in the New York City area, has achieved Masters status three years in a row (FY 300, 400 and 500), so last August he was one of four to be honored as an Executive Master.

Educated in elementary and high schools of Zambia, Africa, and Wales in the U.K., Bhaskar has a truly international background. He earned degrees at the University of Rochester (B.S., Electronic Engineering, 1972) and Indiana University (M.S., Radio-Television Broadcasting, 1973).

Upon completion of university studies, Bhaskar went to Bombay, India, where he was a producer/director of Bombay Television, also serving as an instructor in television production at Sofia College in Bombay.

In 1974 he returned to Zambia, where he was an advertising/public relations executive with an ad agency. He also served for a time as technical consultant for Television Zambia.

Bhaskar, how did you happen to get into selling?

With an academic background in electronics and broadcasting, and having worked in broadcasting and later in advertising, I was attracted to selling broadcast equipment specifically. I decided to find a job that would allow me to combine most of the different elements of my background when I emigrated to the U.S. in 1976.

What do you like about your job?

1) Interacting with and responding to customers who are at the forefront of broadcast technology, and 2) representing one of the most respected names in the broadcast industry with state-of-the-art products.

What do you dislike about your job?

I don't dislike anything, really, although I don't particularly relish times when we make customers wait months for some of our products, especially when the products are crucial to start-up of import projects.

How do you approach your job each day?

With knowledge that it will be different from the



Bhaskar Pant, Senior Sales Engineer, TV Division, Long Island.

previous day; each day brings a new set of applications, problems, attitudes for me to handle in ways that are almost never routine.

I like to leave enough flexibility in my schedule each day to be able to respond to customer emergencies or a higher priority situation that may arise at short notice.

What's your secret in being a successful salesperson?

1) Not to make customers feel that I am there to sell them something; rather to make them feel that I am there to provide solutions to their problems—to help them.

2) To want to remain in touch with the customer after the sale is complete for any after-sales support that may be necessary.

3) Never make commitments that I cannot or will

not keep (most important).

4) To have gained the trust and confidence of major customers as an intermediary between them and the factory.

What advice would you give to a college student considering a career in sales?

First and foremost, you must like to deal with people, and have good verbal and written communication skills. You must be able to operate, for the most part, unsupervised, and you must like to travel.

Is there any help or advice you can give to other Tek salespeople who would like to achieve Masters status?

- 1) Don't upset your manager, because he or she is the one who has to nominate you first to start the process.
- 2) Try to show a consistently good performance from year to year.
- 3) Make sure your significant achievements (especially those that cannot immediately be measured in dollars) and efforts leading up to them are known and recognized by your management.

How difficult do you find the competition vs. a few years ago?

Until a few years ago, television products had little competition to speak of in the U.S. In recent years, a few Japanese companies have attacked us head-on at the lower end of our product line with good reliable products at a lower price.

In turn, we have responded with more innovative products at lower cost than before, offering more for the money to the customer and maintaining our market leadership. The presence of healthy competition makes selling our products much more exciting and satisfying.

Finally, is there anything you'd like to say to the Tektronix workforce?

Without their continued commitment to excellence, there would not be the kind of quality products and product support that we in the sales force have the privilege of representing.

And so I have two things to say to the workforce: Keep up the good work and Thank You very much. □