

# COOKING FOR PROFIT

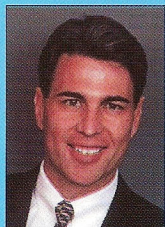
Cooking with Gas

May 15, 2005

San Francisco Oven  
Offers a Taste of  
the Bay Area

New Venues Unveiled  
at NRA Show

Fire-Up with Gas Broilers



## Grand Intentions to Greater Sales

by Jeff Mowatt

I learned a powerful lesson about selling from a 15-year-old. My wife and I had just picked up a dog from the humane society. On the way home, we stopped at a pet store to pick up some dog food, a dish and a leash. I'm figuring this stop will take eight minutes. That was before we met the store's teenaged employee, 'Tina.'

"Anything in particular you're looking for?" Tina asked. My wife replied that we'd just picked up a dog from the SPCA and needed a few supplies. The teenager's response: "Really? You adopted! That is so sweet. You know, I'm working here because this is more than just a job to me. I'm doing this because I love animals. So, no matter where you buy your pet supplies from, I want to make sure that we get all of your questions answered, so that your little dog gets the best possible care."

I glanced over at my wife and notice that she's looking at Tina with the kind of expression that says, "This-world-needs-more-like-you-and-of-course-we're-going-to-buy-all-of-our-pet-supplies-here-and-let's-not-even-discuss-anything-as-petty-as-price."

Fifty-eight minutes later, I'm pushing a cart out the door with over two hundred dollars worth of pet supplies. The dog was only seventy five.

### We get it!

Tina had done something refreshingly unique and convincing. She expressed what I call a "Grand Intention®." She shared that she was there not simply to make a commission or sell dog food but to help people take better care of animals. By expressing her Grand Intention, Tina demonstrated that she cared about *our* big picture. In other words, she proved to her customers that *she gets it*. The good news is that you can have the same impact when you bring this approach to your restaurant.

### Crafting your own "Grand Intention"

I'm sure that you care about your customers

customer that you understand not only their immediate need (food) but also their larger desire (relaxation, convenience, speed, etc.) A host greeting a family with toddlers might say to the parents, "Welcome! I see you've brought along the *important* family members (winking at toddlers). We'll make sure we bring you some crayons so the kids can have fun while waiting, and some drinks so Mom and Dad can be in their own happy place. Follow me!"

The Grand Intention can be used in other non-sales-type scenarios. An attendee of one of my training sessions, a manager of collections for a utility power company, said that he would urge his employees to use the Grand Intention for collections. So, rather than starting a conversation with a late-paying customer with a negative like, "We need to do something about your outstanding bill," instead, they would begin with, "Our goal is to help you to reestablish your good credit."

Grand Intentions also work well for enhancing trust and cooperation with internal customers. Picture being in the Information Technology Department and receiving a call from a stressed co-worker who's having computer problems. Early in the conversation, you say something like, "I understand how frustrating it is when you are in the middle of dealing with a customer and the computer crashes. I want to get you back up and running as fast as possible so that you can get back to those customers that pay all of our wages." Again the Grand Intention proves that you get it.

### Disarming the cynical customer

Today's consumer is better educated, streetwise, and, frankly, more cynical about other people's motives than ever before. Beyond telling employees to be friendly with customers, managers need to equip their staff with tools for establishing trust. Expressing your Grand Intention is an easy way to break through the barriers. Not a bad lesson from a 15-year-old.

