

Son of a Salesman

By: Jake Voll, President, SS&Si Dealer Network

For a lot of us who have made the jump to starting our own business, there's a foundation of knowledge that came from those who mentored us before our journey began. When reflecting my own journey in the alarm industry, it's abundantly clear that my foundation is my father. I'm the proud son of an alarm salesman.

My dad sold alarm systems door to door, and he sold a lot of them. Aside from being a very personable guy, Dad knocked on more doors, walked into more papered storefronts, and chased more U-Hauls than anyone else I know. He hustled hard and he built lasting relationships along the way. It was not only a recipe for success, but also an example of a stick-to-itiveness for me and my siblings to follow.

As kids, we would sometimes watch from the backseat as Dad "walked up deals" whenever a new family or business moved into the neighborhood. He'd walk right up and introduce himself, and would always smile and listen along with caring, thoughtful eyes. It never seemed like a salesman pitching to prospects. It was like he was talking to new friends. When he was invited to go inside the business or home, we would wait in the car with anticipation. More often than not, he returned with a signed contract in hand and the whole family cheered for his victory.

It wasn't uncommon for us to run into those same folks at the local grocery store, church, or a restaurant and he would go out of his way to greet them warmly--never missing the opportunity to introduce us kids with a proud smile. His interactions with his customers outside of their normal business dealings were always returned with warmth—there were lots of hugs, back pats, and double-handed handshakes. Not only were they his customers, but more importantly to him they were friends, too.

Our favorite restaurants who were also his clients always welcomed our family on Friday and Saturday nights. Dad often paid the check with gift cards the restaurateurs traded for their alarm system and cameras. He was always sure to tip the waiter separately in cash.

Over the years, Dad sold thousands of alarm systems and along the way, he demonstrated to me how to build a successful business through strong relationships, extraordinary service, and an outstanding reputation.

Dad also taught me that doors open for those who knock. Throughout the years, the lessons he taught me about persistence, integrity, and relationship-building have helped me in my own career.

While I long ago decided not to join the family alarm business, I did become an alarm salesman. Today, I own a security distribution company where we sell alarm systems to thousands of nationwide alarm dealers. Like my dad with his customers, many of mine have become great friends, some of which I consider family.

When people ask me why I didn't join the family business, I explain that if I was to stand any chance of selling more alarm systems than my old man, I knew I'd have to sell them wholesale!

Jake is the Founder and President of SS&Si Dealer Network, an independent distribution company that offers competitive pricing, private labeling, fast shipping, marketing support, vendor programs, and funding options. He also serves as the Associate Director for the Integrators Association of Florida (IAF) as well as the on the Marketing and Communications Committee for The Monitoring Association(TMA). He completed his Bachelors of Arts from Rollins College.



EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
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