

# Selling through History

By **VRUNDA PATHARE**, Godrej Archives



At Godrej, great importance was attached to the Sales Force and the Sales & Service network even in the pre-independence era. Let's revisit the past...

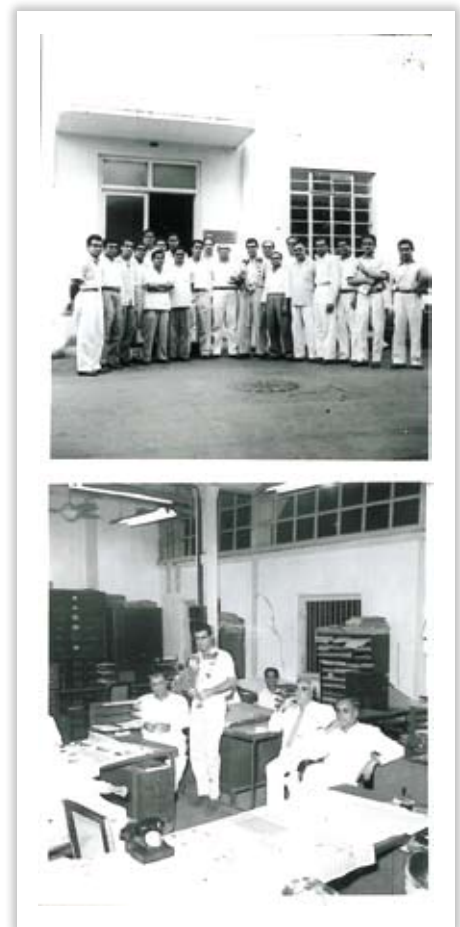
Right from inception, both Ardeshir and Pirojsha attached an equal importance to selling. Besides direct sales, Godrej also started participating in industrial exhibitions as early as 1902 and demonstrations and fire tests were regularly conducted to promote sales. In Mumbai, sales were carried out through two showrooms at Kalbadevi and Fort. To cover all India sales, branches were set up all over India. In the year 1926, Kolkata branch — which was the first branch outside Mumbai — was opened. Later, branches at Delhi (1930), Madras (1931), Hyderabad and Kanpur (1939) came into existence. 1939 onwards, for 27 years no new branches were opened.

During Pirojsha's time, much emphasis was laid on nurturing this network of branches. For tapping the unexplored market, wholesale dealers were appointed across the country. In the year 1936, Pirojsha appointed Sanat Kumar as the dealer of all Godrej products in Rajkot. The SRS Bros in Madurai, B. N. Rama and Co. in Allahabad, N. P. Vyas and Co., Asansol were the earliest dealers appointed prior to independence. The network of dealers continued to grow in the years that followed. The dealers were accorded much respect and were treated as partners for the company's growth. The close relationship that ensued was significantly responsible for Godrej's growth and success ever since.

Godrej owes its success to yet another force- its Sales Force. The Godrej salespeople- through their constant interactions with customers- created a favourable market for Godrej products. Here it will be interesting to mention Gandhiji's son Hiralal offered his services to sell Godrej soaps and worked as a Godrej salesman for a considerable amount of time during 1920s-30s. During pre-independence period, selling was more instinctive and intuitive.

Our Sales Office was located in Lalbaug till 1970s and R. K. Sanjana, the sales manager, used to spearhead the sales team that included talented sales personnel like Mr. Abbas Aly, Mr. Irani, Mr. Guzder and many more. From the records of late 40s and early 50s, we learnt that it was tough to convince the customer to buy steel cupboards as they were more expensive than wooden cupboards and so was the case with our steel furniture. R. K. Sanjana impressed upon his team that 'a master salesman is one who knows how to create demand for what he is selling'. To motivate

**Right from inception, both Ardeshir and Pirojsha attached an equal importance to selling.**



▲  
Sales Team, Lalbaug, 1950

Lalbaug Sales Office, May 1950  
Sitting in front: From L to R:  
J. A. Kharas, R. K. Sanjana and  
Prabhavalkar

COPY 1012  
Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Private Ltd.,  
Lalbens. Parel, Bombay-12(DD).

Ref No. RKS/Cir/504

August 27, 1965.

Sales Department.

ALL BRANCHES, BOMBAY SALES OFFICE, STOCKISTS,  
SUB-STOCKISTS, DEALERS & SALES DEPT. AT THE  
HEAD OFFICE:

Are we selling or spelling?

Reproduced below is a typical example of American humour and sound common sense.

Let each of us who is connected with selling ask ourselves the above question and find an answer:

"

THE NEW SALESMAN

.....wrote his first sales report to the head office. It stunned the brass in the sales department. Obviously, the new "hope" was a blithering illiterate, for here's what he had written:

" I seen this outfit which they aint never bought a dimes worth of nothing from us and I sole them a cuple hundred thousand dollars of guds. I am now going to Chceawgo."

But before the illiterate itinerant could be given the heave ho by the sales manager, along came another letter:

" I cum her and sole them haff a millyon."

Fearful if he did, and fearful if he didn't fire the illiterate peddler, the sales manager decided to dump the problem in the lap of the president.

The following morning, the members of the ivory tower were flabbergasted to see the two letters posted on the bulletin board and this letter from the president tacked above:

" We ben spending too much time trying too spel instead of trying to sel. Lets watch those ssils. I want evrybody should read these letters from Gooch who is on the rode doing a grate job for use, and you should go out and do like he done."

For G O D R E J

*R. K. Sanjana*  
Sales Manager

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Are we selling or spelling?

Receipt is hereby acknowledged of your circular No. RKS/Cir/504 of August 27, 1965.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Godrej always had a tradition of selling well and strongly and salespeople have played a remarkable role in G&B's success over the years.

his Sales Force, he had issued a circular stating that such situation calls for good salesmanship skills for convincing the customer how it will be profitable to invest in high-quality Godrej furniture. Also our salespeople were very good at making offers against Government tenders and winning them.

R. K. Sanjana as the Sales Manager of G&B had a great knack of saying what he wanted to say using different means. In 1965, he had circulated a story of an American salesman which is reproduced here to convey the point that in challenging times, it would be better if we focused on the substance of selling than wasting our efforts in mere trappings.

Under the leadership of Dr. Hathi, who succeeded R. K. Sanjana, the sales function at G&B was modernised and made more dynamic to meet the new challenges.

Godrej always had a tradition of selling well and strongly and salespeople have played a remarkable role in G&B's success over the years.