

# ***BBQ SAUCE & THE LAW OF RECIPROCATION***

by Art Sobczak

A Famous Dave's Barbeque restaurant just opened near me. I know a little about good 'que, occasionally cooking in barbeque competitions, and give it a glowing five-star review.

Yesterday I was waiting for my order in the take-out area (my third visit in a week) and noticed the owner of this franchise location meeting and greeting customers. Now, this is no regular restaurant owner; he's Willie Thiesen, founder of the Godfather's Pizza chain. He cashed out of that for several hundred mill a few years ago, at one time owned the largest home in Omaha, and is again dabbling in the food business. He's somewhat of a legend around here.

So I'm sitting there, looking very ordinary in my beat-up sweatshirt, jeans, pulled-down faded ballcap, sporting three-day beard stubble, and he sits down next to me on the bench. "Waiting for your takeout order?"

"Yeah, haven't been here long. No problem."

Then we chatted for several minutes about the fine art and science of smoking a succulent, melt-in-your-mouth brisket. He then jumped up, reached over the counter, grabbed a bottle of Famous Dave's Devil's Spit spicy sauce and said, "Here, let me give you this. I think you'll love it."

Wow. He GAVE me a bottle of sauce.

That's the basis for this week's Tip.

Now, you might be saying to yourself, "Is this crazy? I'm wasting time reading about a guy giving another guy a \$3 bottle of barbeque sauce." Oh, but it's much more than that, my friend.

Do you realize how much mileage Famous Dave's and Willie Thiesen is going to get from that \$3 bottle of sauce (which probably cost about 50 cents to produce)?

Well, for one, over 21,000 people worldwide are reading about it. And what the heck, here's Famous Dave's website: <http://www.famousdaves.com/> maybe someone will buy a franchise. Or some stock (they're on the NASDAQ).

And of course any time I talk to anyone around here about barbeque, they're going to hear about it. And they might tell others.

And know what? I'll be buying lots of that sauce. (Willie—we're on a first name basis now—did nonchalantly mention the grocery chains that carry it.)

Here are a few other sales points at work in this Sauce Event.

**DON'T DISMISS SOMEONE AS UNIMPORTANT.** Or not qualified to buy. You never know who you're talking to. Especially on incoming calls. I've seen plenty of sales reps mentally disqualify a prospect by just looking at a name on a reply card or computer screen. Yesterday, I looked like I might have been applying for a busboy job, but still received VIP treatment.

**THE LAW OF RECIPROCATION.** In the book I consider the "bible" of persuasion, "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion," by Robert B. Cialdini, the author spends an entire chapter talking about the Reciprocation Rule that our culture follows, which states, "We should repay, in kind, what another person has provided us."

He further says "that because there is a general societal distaste for people who take and make no effort to give in return, we will often go to great lengths to avoid being considered a moocher, ingrate, or welscher." After all, who hasn't sent holiday cards to someone because you received one from them? Or have you ever bought something in a grocery store simply because you tried the sample from the nice lady handing it out and felt obligated to stick one in your cart?

**GIVE A LITTLE AND MAYBE GET A LOT.** I don't advocate lowering price to sweeten a deal, but how about giving away something that is low cost to you, but high value for someone else? Little things mean a lot. Extending the terms on someone's warranty or subscription, giving valuable printed how-to information ... anything with a high profit margin that could have tremendous impact. It can get customers, and keep them buying.

**BE CARE-FULL.** Or, full of care. You need to CARE about a prospect or customer to truly make an impact. I was giving some instruction to an underperforming sales rep after a call, and he told me, "You're assuming I care about them." No coaching will help that attitude. In my example, I watched Willie care about all the customers he talked to. I personally saw it in his eyes and felt it in his voice. Think he needs the money? There's a different motivator there. On the phone, your care must come through in your voice.

Yes sir, a nice investment of about 50 cents and your personal touch, Willie. Lots of people are getting a return on that one.

And now that I think about it, some ribs sure do sound good right now ...

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