



Planning for Permanence: the Speeches of J.C. Nichols
[Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Kansas City](#)

Don'ts For Salespeople

Mimeographed and circulated in the
Plaza at request of Plaza Association. Fall, 1933

Look in another direction while serving a customer.

Carry on a conversation with another clerk while waiting upon someone.

Argue with a customer.

Tell a customer something looks “darling” or “heavenly” on her.

Run the risk of offending a customer by calling her “honey, dearie or girlie.”

Gush.

Make your customer feel cheap. After all, she is the one who knows what she wants to spend – or can afford to spend.

Let your customer feel anything is too much trouble for you to do.

Forget that the customer is always right.

Wear too much jewelry ... too much paint. “Why look like a night club hostess?”

Wear a long face.

Rattle money in your pocket ... drum on the showcase ... distract your customer's mind.

Stand in a slouch.

Complain about how tired you are.

Under rate your customer. A chauffeur or maid may influence a good many buyers.

Get high hat. Exclusive shops, particularly, should never get “snooty”.

Criticize a customer. Back fence gossip will reach the customer's ears eventually and will kill your chances forever of selling that person or those she can influence.

Express strong political, religious or social opinions until you find out how your customer feels.

Remember that the customer in your store is an invited guest; treat him as such. If he were to come to your home, you'd meet him at the door, greet him cordially and offer him a comfortable chair, then talk pleasantly with him about things in which he was interested. **THAT SHOULD BE THE STANDARD OF TREATMENT FOR YOUR GUESTS IN YOUR SHOP OR STORE.**

Always be interested in what your customer wants – and offer to get it, if practical.

Customers are always interested in new things – new styles, new shipments, new methods of manufacture. People like to feel they are getting new information. You can tell of things you have had for a while in a new and interesting manner. That really makes them new.

Smiles win friends everywhere – and a smile means the same in any language. A clerk with a sincere smile is more valuable than one with just a college degree.

Neatness and orderliness of person, inconspicuous appearance, pleasant, genteel, helpful manners win the way to the hearts of your customers.

Learn the names of your customers, children as well as grown-ups. When you call a child by its name, you get not only its friendship but that of every member of the crowd or “gang” to which it belongs.

People like to have you ask them whether they were pleased with the things they bought from you at the last call.

Always notice and speak to customers the moment they enter your store. Even if you are busy, make it a point to welcome the customer. That is what being “host” to your customers means.

Don't stand like a bump on a log and wait for your customer to come to you. Go forward immediately and make it evident you are anxious to be helpful.

If you don't have what your customer wants, direct or – better still – take him to one of your near neighbors.

Nothing builds confidence in your shop more effectively than favorable comments on your near competitor, or tears down confidence quicker than knocking him. This rings honesty. Your competitor hears of it and returns the favor by praising you to his customers.

We are not Robinson Crusoes, living, on desert islands, but are living in an age of co-operation.

Always offer to wrap into a single bundle the several packages your customer is carrying.

Customer resents being hurried just to keep you from being obliged to work a few minutes overtime.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN023

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City. Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

Nichols' objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.” The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911-), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers. Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols' private and business life. Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him. Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.