1. Do you and your clerks know the interesting facts about the source and the details of the manufacture of the merchandise you are offering?

2. Are you well posted as to the prevailing fashions of the year?

3. Do you present your facts in a cold lecture and forbidding manner? Or do you tell them in an interesting, enthusiastic manner?

4. Many salesmen frequently unintentionally make a customer feel cheap by the fact that they display ignorance of what the customer wants. Most careful diplomacy is necessary in suggesting a different article than the customer thinks he wants.

5. The substantial character and wearing qualities of any article if carefully brought out is always interesting to the buyers.

6. When a customer has made a purchase of any article, and the salesman wishes to interest him in some additional merchandise, be sure not to present it as if you were trying to make an additional sale, but simply make the customer feel that you are interested in showing it to him.

7. Always make a customer feel that every effort on your part in showing goods is not too much trouble – that you are only too glad to have them see and enjoy all the nice things you have.

8. Frequently we hear adverse comment that saleswomen while waiting on customers are more interested in “primping” their hair, or in arranging their dresses, than they are in the article they are offering or in the customer. Customers have told us that even managers in some stores while showing goods seem to be more interested in looking out of the window and watching other things going on in the store instead of giving their undivided attention to the customer.

9. Customers have commented that often clerks carry on conversation with someone else in the store while showing goods. Every customer resents this. They have the right to the undivided attention of the salesperson.

10. Every customer resents a salesman excusing himself and talking over the telephone for a considerable time in the midst of a sale. These interruptions should always be avoided were possible.

12. Dirty finger nails drive business away; salesman rattling money in his pocket is poor taste and disturbs the customer; drumming on the showcase with the fingers or with a pencil may distract the attention of your customer and lose the sale.

13. Smiles are always fascinating. A salesman can make the mistake of being too serious and make the decision seem too much of a problem.

14. A salesman who fails to learn the names of his customers is falling down on the job.

A mother or a father’s heart can often be won by a salesman knowing the names of the children and inquiring after them.

Dirty showcases inside the store drive away business just as much as dirty show windows.

Some salesmen make a customer uncomfortable by talking too loudly. A customer does not wish everyone else in the store to hear his conversation relative to the thing he is considering.

A salesman who stands in the rear of the store and waits for the prospect to come to him builds a wall of resentment immediately.

Frequently there is more power in sales suggestion than there is in high pressure of presentation.

No salesman should ever smoke in the presence of a customer.

Favorable comment about a competitor pleases people and makes your competitor friendly and is a boost for you. Makes your customer have more confidence in you.

Nothing is more offensive to a customer than to have the feeling you are pushing them in their purchases, or making them feel uncomfortable if they are keeping you a few minutes beyond the regular closing time.

If you do not have the article desired by the customer, either tell them where they can get it on the Plaza, or if it is something you can order for them and for which the customer can wait, make such a suggestion. Always be extremely interested in just what the customer wants and make every effort to secure it at the earliest possible time. This builds future trade.

If you have sold your customer some important item in the past they are always pleased to have you inquire as to their satisfaction with it. It shows you are interested in pleasing them.

Much trade is given away by curt answers on the telephone, or apparent unwillingness to give information on the telephone. If a customer calls a store and someone yells “hello” over the phone they are immediately displeased. How much better it is to answer by giving the name of the shop and the person answering and a pleasant “Good morning”. Also it helps sometimes to ask the customer how they are feeling if it is someone you know very well. Many complaints have been received as to the impoliteness of Plaza merchants and their clerks on the telephone.
Indifference to a child who comes to shop alone can drive away the mother’s trade. It is just as important to please the servant girl, or the poorly dressed person as it is the wealthiest customer that comes to your store.

High-hat or patronizing manner can ruin any business.

Some customers find that the popular priced shops on the Plaza are much more pleasing and accommodating than those of more exclusive character.

Many customers find that the sales people in the popular shops seem to be better informed than the sales people in the exclusive shops.

Many customers find that they are frequently made to feel unwelcome in a store if they fail to make a purchase.

It is a great thing for the store when a customer begins to talk favorably and praises one of your clerks. This information spreads like wildfire and builds trade.

A salesman who becomes disgruntled or enters into an unpleasant argument with the customer should be fired.

When busy with a customer never fail to take time to cordially speak to another customer who happens to come in the door, and if possible step quietly over and tell them that you will be free in a very few minutes.

A customer is always pleased to feel that he is the first, or one of the first to receive some new goods that has just arrived. It is good psychology to let them see you actually unpack it just as it has come into the store.

It is always wise if a customer has several small packages to offer to wrap them into one bundle and thus make it easier to carry.

Sales people should always be conservatively dressed. Too much rouge; too much flashy jewelry; too striking clothes or color combinations make an unpleasant impression, creating lack of confidence in the customer.

Of course, no salesman should ever chew gum while waiting on a customer.

Untidy looking counters or floors are always disconcerting to a customer.

Customers have reported overhearing clerks, or even owners of shops, make unfavorable remarks about other customers, or other merchants in the presence of other customers. This is offensive and creates bitter enemies for your store.

It is always a mistake to express opinions on any political, religious or social question when talking to a customer. Your views may be directly opposite to those of the customer and you instantly build a wall between yourself and your customer.

It is always a mistake to express any pessimism or lack of confidence in business or in the future of our country. Many patrons of the Plaza have stated that they dislike to go in certain stores because they know they will hear pessimistic talk and they always come out in discouraged frame of mind. Optimism, good cheer, friendliness, interested brotherly feeling, alertness to please, willingness to go to any amount of trouble and general happiness and enthusiastic outlook for business will increase your turnover.

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN024

Planning for Permanence: the Speeches of J.C. Nichols
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.