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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**LUXURY RETAIL SALES EXPERT MARTIN SHANKER:  
HOLIDAY 2012 WRAP-UP AND OPTIMIZING 2013**  
*THINK @Shanker, Inc. White Paper:*

**THE NEW EQUATION:  
LOWER IN-STORE TRAFFIC MAKES "SILENT DERAILERS" A HIGHER RISK**

*Narrow the Gap Between The Customers' **Optimal** Experience  
and Salespeople Who Unknowingly Push Customers Away*

NEW YORK, **December 31, 2012.**

With signs of continued traffic decrease and less than optimal holiday sales at premier global luxury brick and mortar stores, increasing the conversion rate of new client acquisition is key. **However, the highest risk, which many retailers don't see, are the "Silent Derailers,"** says luxury retail sales thought leader Martin Shanker, president of [Shanker, Inc.](#), who develops sales teams for high-end clients including Ralph Lauren, Burberry, Lane Crawford and Van Cleef and Arpels. **"Salespeople are still unintentionally pushing new customers away through sales clichés or lack of rapport. A salesperson unable to increasingly acquire more customers is actually a liability."** Shanker spends 150 days a year observing **and coaching sales professionals and managers** on the sales floors of the most desirable luxury brands in the world from New York to Paris to Beijing, noticing subtle, yet critical insights **to reverse the trend. "What is now required," advises Shanker, "is for some retailers to re-think a new "Service Proposition" in order to optimize traffic and 'sell the dream,' versus driving customers away from stores to the internet for mere transactions."**

"Now is the opportunity to safeguard sales at brick and mortar stores," Shanker believes.

Described this year by [The New York Times](#), as a “behaviorist” and “an expert on the nuances of sales and service,” by [Philip Delves Broughton](#), in his recently published book, *The Art Of The Sale, Learning From The Masters About The Business Of Life*, (ISBN-10: 0143122762), Shanker was quoted by the author, who interviewed the world’s experts on the art of sales.

“Even the simplest of retail sales transactions comes larded with...the potential for customer loyalty or hatred,” opened Broughton for the section on Shanker’s insights. “Salespeople cultivating authentic relationships are key to turn an in-store visit to an in-store sale, versus merely transactional sales online,” **advises** Shanker. “Salespeople are retailers’ best asset towards new client acquisition, but they must be **'real,' defined by a practice which I call, 'Relating Genuinely.'** As just one subtle example, unaware salespeople often manufacture a false persona when interacting with high-end customers, who pick up this nuance. Shoppers, choosing brick and mortar, are those most likely to value a relationship of **genuine** rapport and trust through authentic human interaction. **If they don’t get it, they are driven to the Internet or a competitor.”**

At THINK@Shanker, Inc., Shanker's online information resource, **he maintains that “For luxury customers and retailers, client relationships are a core value.** This lack of expertise in relationship skills and out-moded ideas of sales techniques can be the cause for most derailed sales. At its worst, it is a factor in diminishing store traffic and the devaluing of a brand.”

Shanker advises his luxury clients to [narrow the gap](#) between the way customers want to be treated and the way salespeople relate, often solving a problem that retailers and brands didn't know they had. "The expectations and stakes are high and the salesperson must know how to jumpstart authentic relationships of rapport,” says Shanker. "The opportunity is to create, meaningful shared experiences between a customer and a stellar salesperson, the one who can skillfully discover the customers' desires and satisfy them. Nothing will replace this type of compelling experience. While many textbooks on sales training point out the obvious best practices, complex relationship skills and nuances of human behavior are rarely taught.“

“It’s never been more important to restore the one-on-one, high-quality, in-person sales experience, creating a more satisfactory and loyal customer interaction with the brand. **New client acquisition and revitalizing this sector of business is the potential,**” emphasizes Shanker.

Many of Shanker’s coaching and insights on building rapport can be found online in **the free downloads of white papers and articles** at [THINK@Shanker, Inc.](#)

1. **Salespeople Are Interactive Ads.** If a brand’s website and social media are more interactive and persuasive than its salespeople on the selling floor, customers say “I’ll think about it,” exit, and can use their smart phone to purchase from the brand’s site or worse, from another company. [“Greet for Success”](#) skills won’t push the customer away.
2. **Cocktail Eyes.** Stores are public places which serve the basic human desire to connect. Yet avoiding or breaking eye contact, what Shanker calls [“cocktail eyes,”](#) looking around for someone better, breaks the relationship with the other person, at a party and on the sales floor.
3. **Not Everyone is Your BFF.** People know a real interaction when they feel it. Luxury customers love when salespeople are authentic and respectful of boundaries, but react when sales people are fake or assume instant friendship by getting too personal too quick. [Flexibility with each unique customer](#) is key.
4. **T. M. I. or Too Much Information.** Authentic stories and engaged interactions will trump mechanized downloads of product knowledge, random facts or recommendations that have nothing to do with [what the customer may even be interested in.](#)

Martin Shanker's insights and strategies to improve sales training for luxury brands can be found at [THINK@Shanker, Inc.](#) Shanker Inc., is located in New York, and can be reached at 212.545.7200 or [contact@shankerinc.com](mailto:contact@shankerinc.com).

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About Shanker Inc.

Martin Shanker is the founder and president of Shanker, Inc., a Manhattan-based international management consulting firm for such companies as Burberry, Cartier, The Estee Lauder Companies, Ralph Lauren and Van Cleef & Arpels. Described as a 'behaviorist' by *The New York Times*, Martin specializes in helping global brands accelerate sales and profit by growing their companies from within. By addressing the tough issues of sales and management teams, and the behavioral dimension of retail relationships, Shanker Inc. offers a unique, multi-dimensional way for companies to achieve success through their own people. [www.shankerinc.com](http://www.shankerinc.com)

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