

## Theresa Taylor is a Standout at A.A.O. Convention

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The Good Ideas Breakfast is, well, a good idea that just never got off the ground. Introduced a few years ago as a closing session for the annual Auctioneers Association of Ontario Convention, the plan was to have all the delegates throw their grand concepts into the ring and share them with the rest of the gang, all while enjoying a terrific breakfast.

The whole thing limped along for a couple of years, but people seemed more interested in their scrambled eggs than in scrambling for ideas. What this baby lacked was a co-ordinator who could put a little zest in the orange juice.

And then ... along came Theresa Taylor.

The crowd looked up from their toast the minute Theresa threw out her opening salvo for what was to be an hour of people getting very excited.

"My philosophy," said Theresa in her booming voice "is passion! I believe in integrity for longevity! You need to have goals! You need to have top of mind awareness!"

"Here's an idea," she continued, pulling out a bottle of water. "I give my church group bottles of water with my label on them so they can then sell at their events. I also take these bottles to speaking engagements and hand them out."

Theresa also takes this good idea a step further. She analyzed the demographics of the people who regularly attend her sales and then figured out which businesses in her area attracted these folks. It turned out that the people who frequented the local "Curves" were her kind of audience. So she now supplies "Curves" with her bottled water.

Theresa hands out homemade wine with her corporate label on it when she wraps up a sale with her clients.

Putting wine and bottled water together in a basket, along with some other tasty edibles, provides Theresa with something to donate to charity sales.



*Theresa Taylor of South Lancaster, Ontario blew away the delegates at the recent A.A.O. convention when she bombarded them with her ideas and her energy.*

All of these gifts have a long shelf life in people's memories, reminding them who to call when they need an auctioneer.

"Enough of the bottled water," said Theresa. "Another thing I do is I offer a matchmaker service. I have a database that pairs specialty buyers with specialty commodities. When a unique item shows up for one of my sales, I know who will buy it and I let them know when it's being sold."



Someone in the audience threw up his hand and asked Theresa where she found software that allows her to categorize not just by customer, but also by what the customer wants to buy.

"PFW Auction Manager," Theresa answered. "They advertise in "The Ontario Auctioneer" and they were here at the trade show. Check them out."

Moving along, Theresa asserted "Get yourself in the news!"

"I had a big clock sale, and so the day before the auction I had the curator of the Canadian Clock Museum give a lecture. It cost me nothing. The man was just excited about being able to tell people about clocks."

"I told the local newspapers and radio stations that the guy was coming and they covered the whole event."

A recent study done by the National Auctioneers Association (N.A.A.) indicates that the public have a favourable impression of auctioneers, but aren't really aware of the auction business. "What's the answer," Theresa asked? "Non-traditional advertising."

Sue Doyle, who is a Director of the N.A.A. and who was the A.A.O.'s keynote speaker for the convention, suggested advertising in the moving or movie section of the newspaper. "If people are moving, they probably could use the services of an auctioneer. If they want to be entertained, what better place than an auction!"

"I promote myself on a site that advertises the lowest gas prices in town each day," Theresa noted. "Everybody goes to that site."

Emphasizing her point with a fling of her hand, Theresa said, "Auctions are events. Right? So have yourself listed as an event member with the Tourist Bureau. Having

the Bureau suggest to visitors that going to an auction is a great touristy thing to do, can make converts out of people who might never think of going to an auction sale."

A concern for their local economy inspired Theresa and a group of other business people to launch Team Cornwall. This group acts as ambassadors of the city and the community. They attend conferences and hand out hockey-type cards, providing information on both the city and its businesses.

Theresa also counseled, "Be on as many web sites as you can. Join as many network clubs as you can. The Chamber of the Commerce. The Rotary."

"When I go to hear someone speak, even if they come from Timbuktu, I like to send them a thank you note," said Theresa. "That way they might refer to me someone who's looking for an auctioneer in my area."

"I send greeting cards to all my loyal customers, referrals, and so on," Theresa commented, "but I don't send them at Christmas time. Everybody gets cards from businesses at Christmas, but who gets them on Valentine's Day, Easter and St. Patrick's Day?"

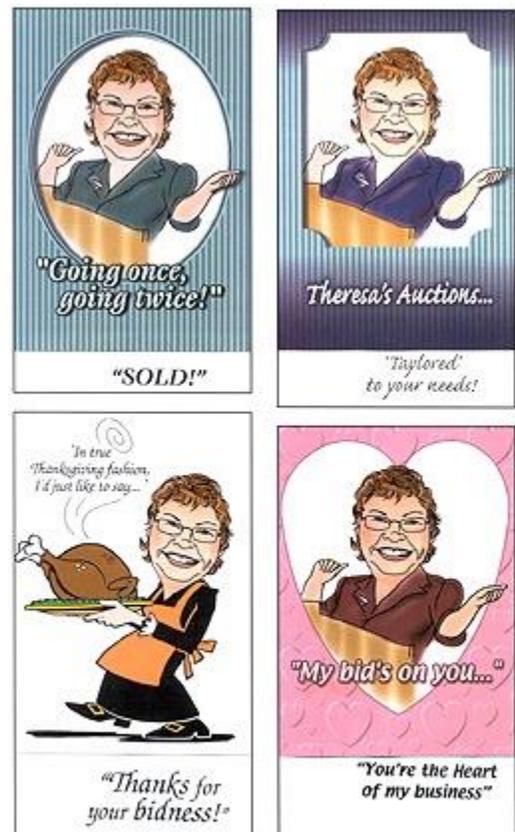
"Last year I sent out an Easter card telling my customers "Some Bunny Loves You". Most of my notes include a caricature of me."

"I try to touch my customers eight times a year," said Theresa.

An article published by the N.A.A. on Theresa's greeting card program can be accessed at [www.theresataylor.com](http://www.theresataylor.com).

Theresa volunteers to be the spokesperson for every charity auction going. On behalf of the charity, she does a radio spot for them and harvests her own publicity while she promotes the charity.

At her sales, Theresa believes that if people are educated about the kind of items they find at



The personalized cards have colorful fronts. The sayings at the bottom are the messages printed inside the card.

auctions, they'll be more prepared to buy. Right now she's working on peaking her customers' interest in collectables. To accomplish this, next to a group of like articles, she provides a brief history in a plastic sleeve.

In her early days, having mistakenly sold better quality items as items of lower value, Theresa has now learned from her mistakes. "In a fast paced auction," she says, "you don't want to confuse the sterling silver with the silverware."

So now she colour codes her merchandise. Sterling gets a blue dot. Absentee bids get a yellow dot. When things start moving briskly, there's no mistaking what's what.

Theresa's last piece of advice to the gang at the Good Ideas Breakfast had to do with keeping her clients in the know. "I have the newspapers fax me back copies of my ads with the cost of them written right on them," Theresa noted. "I then include these faxes with my auction summaries so my customers know exactly where their advertising dollars went."

Theresa's suggestions, though simple, were absolutely inspiring. Combined with a delivery that was driven by enthusiasm, it wasn't surprising that everyone's coffee was now cold and their toast was hard. The breakfasters were gobbling up ideas instead of food.

When Theresa opened the floor to further ideas, people jumped out of their seats to ask questions and to share their own hot thoughts.

Pretty much everybody who came to the Good Ideas Breakfast this year thought they would be having eggs with some tepid discussion on the side. However, under Theresa Taylor's deft hand, what they got was a full course meal.