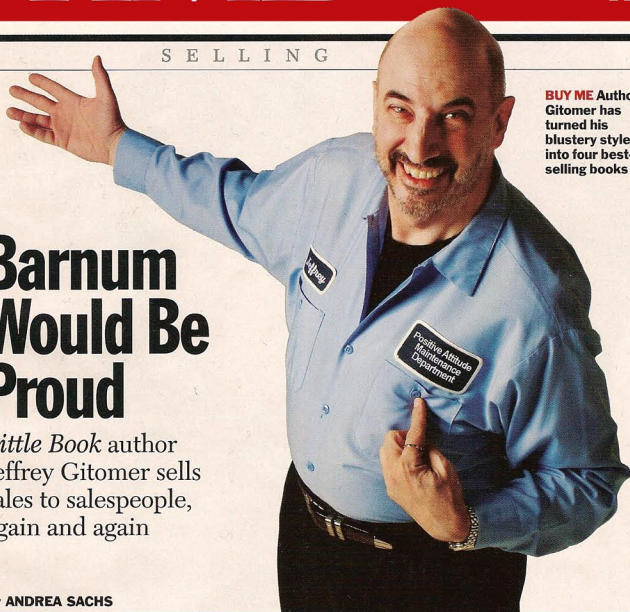


SELLING



BUY ME Author Gitomer has turned his blustery style into four best-selling books

Barnum Would Be Proud

Little Book author Jeffrey Gitomer sells sales to salespeople, again and again

By ANDREA SACHS

JEFFREY GITOMER OFTEN sounds more like a carnival barker than a business guru in his best-selling books on the basics of salesmanship: "As you study these principles, your sales will increase. As you implement these principles, your sales will begin to take off. As you master these principles, your sales will skyrocket." Step right up, folks, and make your quota.

He may be a bit of a huckster, but Gitomer has earned his bragging rights. The Charlotte, N.C., writer has had four consecutive books on the *Wall Street Journal* business best-seller list, beginning with *Little Red Book of Selling*, which has appeared on the list for an impressive 102 weeks and has moved more than 400,000 copies. The latest, *Little Gold Book of Yes! Attitude*, a pastiche of self-help

homilies, just hit No. 1, and Gitomer, 60, has another on the way: *Little Green Book of Getting Your Way*, a tiny tome on persuasion, due out in April. "I have enough for another half a dozen books," Gitomer says. "My goal is to have two books a year for the next 10 years."

So, what is he selling to salespeople? A traditional amalgam of positive thinking, self-improvement and persistence. He hammers in these virtues like a drill sergeant after his sixth cup of coffee. (His mantra "People don't like to be sold, but they love to buy" is restated a few pages later as "Selling is puking. Your customer wants to buy.") Despite the occasional coarseness (he proudly claims to have "edited out one thing, all the bull_____"), Gitomer's books have a certain blustery earnestness. They are the kind of books that Willy

Loman would have proudly stuffed in his coat pocket.

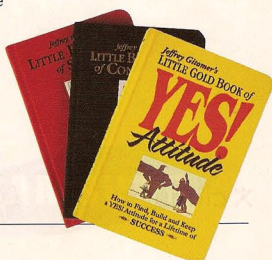
The *Little Book* series reminds Paul Argenti, a professor of corporate communication at Dartmouth, of the original self-help blockbuster, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, published in 1952. Both, he says, are popular for the same reason. "People are looking for very simple answers to relatively complex questions," Argenti says. "I don't think you're going to find it in a little red, gold or black book. But absent a deep dive into the subject or a tutorial with a world-famous practitioner or academic, this is not a bad way to get some instant information into your system." Full of cartoons and bite-size nuggets of advice, the books are aimed at people who watch TV rather than read. "They're easy to

digest," says Jim Milliot, the business editor at *Publishers Weekly*. "They're not heavy reading."

Like that of his hero, P.T. Barnum, Gitomer's story is as inspirational as any of the bromides in his books. After dropping out of Temple University ("I went on the six-year you-don't-quite-graduate program, which I completed successfully," he told *TIME*), Gitomer owned two race horses in Philadelphia, sold mobile-home lots with his father to retirees in Florida and later manufactured and sold sportswear in Manhattan, learning what was missing from his business-school classes. "They don't tell you that somebody's check is going to bounce and you have to go after him to get it," he says.

Gitomer started putting those real-world lessons on paper in 1992 and has turned them into a multimedia empire. In addition to writing his books, Gitomer is the host of "Selling Power Live," a monthly audio training program; two websites (gitomer.com and trainone.com); and corporate training seminars—more than 100 a year, to such companies as Coca-Cola and Caterpillar, for \$30,000 apiece.

But the author knows the limits of his considerable salesmanship. He offers a very un-Barnum-like aside to his readers: "Wake up, Tinkerbell," he writes. "There's no secret formula. There's no lotion or potion that will make sales faster and easier for you—unless your potion is hard work."



“If they like you, and they believe you, and they trust you ... then they may buy from you.” —Jeffrey Gitomer