

The Theory and Practice of Selling the Aga Cooker

BY DAVID OGILVY—JUNE, 1935
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"THE PERFECT AGA SALESMAN COMBINES THE TENACITY OF THE BULLDOG WITH THE MANNERS OF THE SPANIEL".

An AGA Cooker Sales Training Manual

FOREWORD

We may divide modern industry into three interdependent parts: design, manufacture, and selling. The Aga, designed by Dr. Dalen and manufactured by master English steel and iron founders, demands a high standard of selling.

Selling includes advertising, sales literature and personal contact. Of these, personal contact with the prospective purchasers is the last link in the chain between Dalen and John Bull. It might be the strongest.

In Great Britain, there are twelve million households. One million of these own motor cars. Only ten thousand own Aga Cookers. No household which can afford a motor car can afford to be without an Aga. They must be hunted out and their interest in Aga roused by personal sales argument. Only by personal contact can you judge whether a household is Aga-worthy. Only a salesman can get the order. Press advertising and sales literature is intended to facilitate your work and not to do it for you. You can use sales literature as one weapon in your armoury. People are impressed by what they hear far more than by what they read. They must be talked to about Aga, by you. Only an insignificant percentage will go to shops and ask you to tell them. In the immortal words of Henry Ford, "solicit by personal visitation."

Unfortunately householders do not hold "At Homes" for salesmen. Nor is there any inevitably successful method of getting into their houses. If you have never called on householders as a salesman it will not take you long to find out that there are hundreds of other people doing the same thing. In some towns it is not unusual for as many as twenty salesmen to call at a house in one day. Few, if any, of them get in. Orders have been given to the maid to keep salesmen out at all costs. But there are ways of getting in and only by constant experiment will you be able to develop what is for you the best technique. There are certain universal rules. Dress quietly and shave well. Do not wear a bowler hat. Go to the back door (most salesmen go to the front door, a manoeuvre always resented by maid and mistress alike). Always find out beforehand the name of the householder. Be as polite as you know how. Never lose your temper. Tell the person who opens the door frankly and briefly what you have come for' it will get her on your side. Never on any account get in on false pretences. Study the best time of day for calling; between 12 and 2PM you will not be welcome, whereas a call at an unorthodox time of day - after supper in the summer for

instance - will often succeed. Never "do" a whole street consecutively. If you must carry sales literature, use an expensive looking brief case which cannot be mistaken for a bag of samples. Some salesmen make their first call without any literature at all, a plan which has much to commend it. In general, study the methods of your competitors and do the exact opposite.

Find out all you can about your prospects before you call on them' their general living conditions, wealth, profession, hobbies, friends and so on. Every hour spent in this kind of research will help you impress your prospect.

Salesmen are only too often unpopular people in Aga-worthy houses... Show straight away that you are not of the so-called canvasser variety. Never bully, get into an argument, show resentment, or lose your temper. Do not talk about "your husband" - "Mr. Smith" is less impertinent. Never talk down or show superior knowledge. Never appeal to a prospect's pity because the more prosperous you appear the more she is likely to be impressed with you and to believe in you and your Aga. The worst fault a salesman can commit is to be a bore. Foster any attempt to talk about other things; the longer you stay the better you get to know the prospect, and the more you will be trusted. Pretend to be vastly interested in any subject the prospect shows an interest in. The more she talks the better, and if you can make her laugh you are several points up. If she argues a lot, do not give the impression of knowing all the answers by heart and always being one up on her. She will think you are too smart by half, and mistrust your integrity. Find out as soon as possible in the conversation how much she already knows about Aga; it will give you the correct angle of approach. Perhaps the most important thing of all is to avoid standardisation in your sales talk. If you find yourself on fine day saying the same things to a bishop and a trapezist, you are done for.

When the prospect tries to bring the interview to a close, go gracefully. It can only hurt to be kicked out. Learn to recognise a really valid reason for the prospect being unable to order (there are mighty few such reasons). With these reservations you cannot be too tenacious or too persevering. The good salesman combines the tenacity of a bull dog with the manners of a spaniel. If you have any charm, ooze it.

The more prospects you talk to, the more sales you expose yourself to, the more orders you will get. But never mistake the quantity of calls for quality of salesmanship.

Quality of salesmanship involves energy, time and knowledge of the product. We cannot contribute to the first two. The object of these notes is to help you to the third - a better knowledge of the Aga. And although many of the sales arguments expounded here are already well known to all experience Aga salesmen, this manual must contain at least some hints which will prove interesting and helpful to everybody. Selling does not materially differ from military campaigning, and we may analyse it under two main headings, ATTACK and DEFENCE.

The attack is the positive task of stimulating the prospect to want an Aga more than anything in the world. The defence is the negative task of removing obstacles which seem to the prospect to lie between her and her dearest wish. Never get manoeuvred into a permanent defence; it will become a retreat. Defence must be developed as quickly as possible into counter attack. Positive argument is more persuasive than negative argument.

ATTACK

1. General Statement

most people have heard something about the Aga Cooker. They vaguely believe it to involve some new method of cooking. They may have heard that it works on the principle of "heat storage". Heat storage is the oldest known form of cooking. Aborigines bake their hedgehogs in the ashes of a dying fire. The baker's brick oven has been in use for centuries and is known by most women to be traditionally the perfect oven. The hay-box came into its own during the War. But the Aga is not just a glorified hay-box with a fire inside, or a baker's oven put in a polished case of chromium-plat and vitreous enamel. It is the result of applying contemporary scientific knowledge of combustion, metallurgy, and nutrition to the accumulated kitchen sense of centuries.

The Aga was invited by Dr. Gustaf Dalen of Stockholm. A scientist of no little distinction, he has actually won the Nobel Prize (approximate value £ 5,000).

And Dr. Dalen is that rare thing, a front rank scientist who actually applies his knowledge to inventions of material and immediate benefit to mankind. Before inventing the Aga he had perfected a system of lights for lighthouses and buoys, which has been adopted throughout the world, and which at this very moment is saving the lives of sailors on some rocky coast on the other side of the world: just as the Aga is now cooking luncheon for at least one hundred thousand British people. The everyday influence of Dr. Dalen may justly be compared to that of Signor Marconi.

For nine years the Aga has been tested and improved in detail, at huge cost, until to-day it is perhaps the perfect cooker. For five years it has been in use in our British kitchens. For four years it has been made in Britain by a British company.

When the inventor built his wife a house, he looked for, but could not find, a cooker which was capable of every cooking method-baking, boiling, braising, frying, grilling, toasting, stewing, roasting, steaming and simmering. He demanded that his cooker should be able to do all these things to perfection. As a scientist even more as a husband he was appalled by the enormous waste of heat apparent in the ordinary type of cooker. He saw that however efficient a cooker could be made, so long as the human factor in the heat control remained, that cooker could never be economical. If he could cut out the human factor in heat control he would give to the world and to his wife their most economical cooker. So Dr. Dalen produced the Aga. It is the only cooker in the world with a fixed invariable fuel consumption,

guaranteed by its inventor, its manufacturers, its salesmen, its users and even coal merchants to burn less than £4 worth of fuel in a year.

Having got some preliminary remarks of this kind off your chest, find out as quickly as possible which of the particular sales arguments that follow is most likely to appeal to your audience, and give that argument appropriate emphasis. Stock-brokers will appreciate No. 2. Doctors will understand No. 9. Cooks will be won over with No. 5. Only on rare occasions will you have the opportunity of getting through all twelve arguments.

2. Economy

The Aga is the only cooker in the world with a guaranteed maximum fuel consumption. It is guaranteed to burn less than £4 of fuel a year. This figure can be expressed as £1 a quarter, 6/8 a month, 1/6 a week, 1 1/2 a day or one-fifth of a penny per hour. Different prospects are impressed most by different statements of time and price, but the majority will easily remember £4 a year. (These figures refer to the standard model only).

Very few people believe you the first time they hear this claim. Bring testimonials to your support. The most electrifying proof of the truth of your claim is to offer to make yourself personally responsible for keeping the prospect in fuel in return for a fixed annual payment of £4. If you add confidentially that the transaction will show you a profit, the prospect will prefer to buy her own fuel. Stress the fact that no cook can make her Aga burn more fuel than this, however stupid, extravagant or careless she may be, or however much she may cook. If more fuel is consumed, it is being stolen, and the police should be called immediately.

Avoid like the plague any reference to fuel consumption in terms of tons. Tons are less memorable than £s and discussion of weights and measures in English conversation invariably leads to argument, competitive exaggeration, disbelief, and bad temper. It is vitally essential to make every prospect believe your fuel consumption claim, even if she disbelieves everything else you say. On the whole, however, you will not find incredulity a serious obstacle in selling the Aga; after all, it is all true, and if you believe it yourself you will find that, like the Apostles, you will be believed by other people.

Next find out how much the prospect is spending in fuel consumption, making it appear that your estimate is charitable on the low side. Some prospects know the fuel consumption for the whole house, but very few indeed know how exactly what proportion is accounted for by the kitchen. The tactic is to assume an air of objective omniscience and to tell her that the kitchen accounts for at least 80 per cent of the fuel in most houses, but that in her house it may only burn 70 per cent of the total.

Having arrived by some means or another at an agreed figure for the fuel consumption of the present cooker, you proceed to finance. You let the wild cat out of the bag and tell her the price. If you have painted the Aga in sufficiently glowing colours she will have been led up to believe that the price will be actually higher than it is. Without apologising for the price, rush

on to prove that the Aga is a first-class investment which first pays for itself out of the money it saves in fuel, and then continues to pay dividends ad infinitum. If the prospect will invest capital in the Aga she will receive dividends on a scale unheard of on the Stock Exchange.

Suggest that the Aga can be bought by hire-purchase and that it will pay its own instalments. Money which has hitherto gone to coal merchants, the Gas Company, or the Electricity undertaking, can simply be diverted for a year or two until the Aga is paid for. Then one fine day the prospect wakes up and finds herself handsomely in pocket. There are houses where a Christmas Party is given every year out of Aga's fuel saving. It can be thus be shown that the Aga need cost nothing to buy.

The following tables will implement your thesis. Carry them about with you in the form you can show to prospects.

THE NEW STANDARD AGA COOKER costs £47 10S. Add from £5 for Delivery and Erection. Total Cost, £52 10S. Fuel Cost, 4 per annum.

H.P. terms for 4 years: Initial payment, £5 10s, followed by:

- 48 monthly payments \$1 S2 plus 6/8 for fuel
- £1 11s. 8d. a month, or 7/6 a week
- 12 quarterly payments £3 15s. plus £1 for fuel
- £4 15s a quarter

MODEL 21 AGA COOKER costs £78. Add from £5 10S for Delivery and Erection. Total Cost, £83 10S. Fuel cost £5 per annum

H.P. Terms for 3 years: Initial payment, £5 10s, followed by:

- 36 monthly payments of £2 12s, 10d plus 8/4 for fuel
- £3 28. 2d a month
- 12 quarterly payments of £4;0s 1d. plus 25/- for fuel
- £9 5s 1d a quarter

NOTE:—For fuel consumptions smaller than those shown the fuel saving is so small as to be hardly worth using as a major argument. You have barked up the wrong tree. Change gracefully to another argument, without giving the impression that any wind has gone out of your sails.

3. Always Ready

You cannot surprise an Aga. It is always on its toes, ready for immediate use at any time of the day or night. It is difficult for a cook or housewife who has not known to Aga to realise exactly what this will mean to her. Tell her she can come down in the middle of the night and roast a goose, or even refill her hot water bottle. On Sunday evenings when all the bread in the house is as stale as Old Harry, she need only pop the stale loaf into the oven for two to three minutes and abracadabra ! - a hot crunch loaf of new bread. Hot breakfast may be given to the wretched visitor who has to start back to London at zero hour on Monday morning. Only after the Aga has been installed will the prospect realise the real significance of the

"Always Ready" advantage, and the first time she returns from an all-day picnic to a hot cooker she will have reason to bless you. More than 90 per cent of the Aga users who have written to us and the other Aga organizations throughout the world tell us that the best feature of the Cooker is that it is always ready. (Although it is the actual user who can best express an unbiased opinion of the Aga, the value of testimonials is generally exaggerated. People are not much impressed by them unless they happen to know something about the people who wrote them).

"Always Ready" is a feature of cardinal importance which runs like a silver thread through every description of the Aga.

4. Cleanliness

Cleanliness with which may be coupled beauty, is a virtue sometimes better appreciated by the prospect than by the salesman. The woman who does the work in a house spends more time on cleaning than on anything else. Vacuum cleaners, carpet sweepers, soap, dusters, aprons, brushes and mops are bought to remove dirt. Anything calculated to remove one of the major causes of dirt in a house is immediately appreciated by all women. The Aga is innately clean-as clean as the shining vitreous enamel on its front. It will save £s in kitchen redecoration, and every £ saved annually represents the interest on capital investment of £20

Ladies can cook a dinner on the Aga in evening dress. Doctors will agree that it is so clean that it would not look out of place in the sterilising room of an operating theatre.

Like motor cars, women, hats and houses, cookers sell on their look, and there can be no denying that the Aga is more beautiful, modern-looking and "functional" than any other cooker. If your prospect has not seen an Aga she will never come to hanker for it until she has seen it. Fix it.

Appeal to the prospect's house-prouddness. She must be made to want the most hygienic cooker and to have her kitchen a model kitchen. If you are selling to schools or nursing homes point out tactfully the sales value to them of having a model kitchen. Schools and nursing homes revolve round their kitchens, and most of them know it.

An occasional flowery phrase is called for to allow your enthusiasm full scope in describing the beauty and cleanliness of the Aga. Think some up and produce them extempore.

Cookery

It is hopeless to try and sell a single Aga unless you know something about cookery and appear to know more than you actually do. It is not simply a question of knowing which part of the Aga bakes and which simmers. You must be able to talk to cooks and housewives on their own ground. Most of the women who buy cookers are cooks themselves by necessity, profession, or hobby, and if you can talk food with them you have at your finger-tips a ready

made topic of common interest which will open many doors and more hearts. And bear this in mind, that the more you know about cookery the more you will enjoy your own meals.

THE BOILING PLATE—I have heard the Aga is good for slow cooking, but can it cook fast?" You will hear this objection a hundred times a week. Forestall it every time. The Boiling Plate is far and away faster than any gas ring or electric hotplate. It is about as fast as the red part of a coal fire. If you are demonstrating, show how quickly water boils and how violently it goes on boiling. A hearty display of clouds of steam, lid rattling and boiling over should dispel this slowness inhibition once and for all. Nevertheless you will sometimes run across prospects who can quote chapter and verse for the Aga being too slow. With such people it will pay you to admit with a confidence-winning show of frankness that the old type cooker did indeed lose speed when the lids had been up for a prolonged period; how different, you will say, is the new cooker, which recuperates as fast as it loses heat and whose boiling plate is always as hot as blazes.

If you do not yourself believe that the Aga is the fastest cooker, spit on the boiler plate. Such an exhibition of bouncing, dancing and globular antics will convince you.

The heat of the Boiling Plate is even all over. Food does not stick, as it does when a saucepan rests on top of unequally impinging gas flames.

Aga grilling should be featured, particularly to men, who are almost always interested in this if in no other method of cooking; it is the only culinary operation they ever see and understand. Expatriate on the theme that the Aga grills almost as well as an open charcoal or coke grill. The process is described in the utensil catalogue and by Ambrose Heath.

THE SIMMERING PLATE. The point of importance with regard to the Simmering plate is not to admit for one moment the proposition that to cook on it cools the oven. In point of fact the oven will cook if the Simmering Plate is used to excess, but the prospect would be unduly alarmed were you to tell her this in so many words; your conscience can be salved by the safe knowledge that when she becomes an owner the Cooking Oven will make the use of the Simmering Plate largely superfluous.

It is possible, you will tell the prospect, to keep three saucepans simmering for all eternity on the Simmering Plate. They can never boil over. However, too much emphasis must not be laid on the virtues of the Simmering Plate, or it will detract from the culinary sensation you hope to make with the Cooking Oven.

THE ROASTING OVEN. Learn to recognise vegetarians on sight. It is painful indeed to gush over roasting and grilling to a drooping face which has not enjoyed the pleasures of a beefsteak for years.

Before you open the top oven door, either actually or by description, forestall the inevitable observation that it "looks very small." It is an optical illusion due to the solid shape of the Aga. Measured in cubic inches the top oven compares very favourably with other ovens. It is

deep from back to front-roughly the shape of a sucking pig. Demonstrate with exaggerated groping how far back the oven goes. It will take a 20-lb turkey, a 22-lb. roast of beef, or four legs of lamb. The turkey introduces the subject of Christmas dinner and this can be made an opportunity for digression into the realm of good food.

Every cubic inch of space in the oven can be utilised because the heat is even all over. This is very far from being the case with other cookers, where the gas flames dry and scorch food placed too close to them, or the hot flue passes over one side of the oven and leaves the other side as cold as an iceberg. Furthermore the temperature of the oven does not vary with unexpected rapidity as it does in an electric oven, whose walls are not so thick and whose insulation is not so thorough. Cakes and joints for this reason do not require such careful watching in the Aga Oven. Joints never require basting.

The Roasting Oven closely resembles an old-fashioned brick baker's oven, which all knowledgeable cooks will admit is second only to a spit for roasting. Indeed in one respect the Aga Oven is even better than a baker's oven: it does not have to be heated up. That reduces time spent in the kitchen and brings you to a most important talking point: the Aga makes you cook. The housewife who uses an ordinary cooker and who is busy in the house all day, tends to save time as much as possible over cooking by choosing those dishes which she can cook in a few minutes, without wasting time in heating up her oven. The result is an excess of expensive cutlets, sausages, eggs, and worst of all, tinned food. With the Aga oven such dishes as gratins, pies, tarts, joints, and patties come into their own. These dishes are better eating and far cheaper. In this way the Aga stimulates its owners to more and better cooking.

Joints roasted in the Aga do not shrink. The reason for this is that the actual walls of the oven hold sufficiently large quantities of heat to insure that the joint quickly reaches a temperature where the correct carapace or crust is formed, and the natural juices are sealed inside. Result: meat which is incomparably juicy, tasty, evenly roasted all through, and beautifully coloured on the outside. Cold Aga joints are a sight more welcome than ordinary cold meat. The budgetary saving brought about by the absence of shrinkage is so great that you can safely count on 10 per cent off the butcher's bill.

Baking interests most women more than roasting. Without beating around the bush, tell the prospect that pastry baking, bread baking and cake baking are star turns. A tart will come out evenly golden all over. Every little cake on a tray will be the same uniform colour. Home-made bread comes into its own in the baker-poisoned household. Most women are subject to baking fits, and the ability to give this idiosyncrasy full rein may be enlarged upon at some length.

The top shelf of the oven is good for browning gratins, etc.

Forestall the question: "How do you regulate the temperature?" It will be in the prospects mind long before you finish eulogising the oven, and if you can attack the subject before it is thrown in your teeth you will have a tactical advantage. One of the greatest virtues of the Aga is that the temperature control is fully automatic, so that the cook can forget it entirely. In boiling, or in the case of marmalade by soaking the peel and pulp with the water all night. Meringues, the first cousins of custard and mayonnaise, present no difficulty. The cooking oven will do them to perfection at any time of the day or night. National dishes such as Haggis, Irish Stew and Sauerkraut are child's play.

In a nut-shell the Aga enables a housewife to provide those dishes whose excellence is due to the cooking they receive instead of to the expensiveness of the ingredients they contain. Economy and good food all along the line.

THE HOT WATER TANK. Go into an old-fashioned kitchen at two o'clock in the afternoon and ten to one you will see a kettle boiling away sleepily for tea at half-past four, when the water will be dead and stale. Now imagine an 80-pint kettle which never quite boils, which remains perfectly fresh, and which is ready and fit all round the clock for tea, vegetables, hot-water bottles, washing up, and even to come to the rescue on those fearful occasions when the domestic hot-water system breaks down. Paint a picture of Colonel Blimp wallowing in a hip bath while hoards of apologetic kitchen maids carry cans from the Aga tank to float him to heights of political epigram. In humbler houses the tank makes it possible to do without the independent boiler in hot weather, or when a caretaker is alone in the house.. Needless to say, the tank is most important in those houses where there are invalids.

Some prospects will pretend that their domestic hot water system provides all the kitchen requirements. Point out to them the superior advantage of having the hot water actually on the cooker under the cook's hand, and invite them to admit that they would be horrified to hear of hot water from the house system being used for cooking or tea.

The tank must be filled daily. A tap from the main placed immediately above the opening only costs a few shillings to fix and saves fetching and carrying. If the cook forgets to fill the tank, it cannot run dry. And even if it could nothing would happen. In 15,000 cases there has never been an accident. To the prospect who is irretrievably nervous about bursting boilers you can only offer to erect the Aga without a tank; go on to say that the construction of the tank, with the business tap half way up, renders it incapable of being emptied. When the cook finds the tap running dry she will fill up, safe in the knowledge that five gallons still remain below tap level.

Every time cold water is poured in it falls to the bottom and the hot water comes up to the top. In this way you never have to wait for hot water and the water is always fresh.

The tank is imbecile-proof.

6. Appeal to Cooks

If there is a cook in the house, she is bound to have the casting vote over a new cooker. Butter her up. Never go above her head. Before the sale and afterwards as a user a cook can be your bitterest enemy or your best friend' she can poison a whole district or act as your secret representative. The Aga will mean for her an extra hour in bed, and a kitchen as clean as a drawing-room. Every cook who knows the Aga can get a good job at any time; but be careful how you tell her this.. The Aga is cool to work at and will not burn her face. It will be reliable and will never let her down. She will be able to bake rolls and scones before breakfast. She will not have to scrub the kitchen floor so frequently. In a big house do not make the unpardonable error of attributing to the cook the dirty work done by the kitchenmaid. All kitchenmaids love the Aga, at any rate until they are dismissed as superfluous; even then they can get a better job as cook in an Aga house.

Do not lead the cook to suppose that she will have to relearn her job.

7. Appeal to Men

When selling to men who employ a staff or whose wives do their cooking, make a discreet appeal to their humane instincts. The Aga takes the slavery out of the kitchen work. It does not cook the cook. It civilises live in the kitchen. It can be to women what their motor car is to men. And compare prices. If you can work on this appeal to a man's better nature and combine it with an appeal to his pocket and his belly, you cannot fail to secure an order. Contentment in a house spreads from the cook outwards, and a discontented cook will turn a house into a bedlam of grumbling. All men pray for peace below stairs and a house which runs on oiled wheels; the Aga goes to the heart of the problem.

8. Appeal to Special Classes.

Children can be given the run of the Aga kitchen for making coffee and so on. There is no danger of burning, electric shocks, gassing or explosion. The blind will like to hear that Dr. Dalen is himself blind. Cooks will like to hear that Ambrose Heat himself uses an Aga. Doctors will admire your perspicacity if you tell them that Sir Farquhar Buzzard and Sir Humphrey Rolleston are doctor-users, and if a case keeps them long after the normal hour for dinner they will get an unspoilt meal on their return to an Aga house. There is no end to the special appeal Aga has for every conceivable class and profession. Think it out.

9. Kitchen and Warming and Air Conditioning

The Aga warms an average-sized kitchen even in the depths of winter, acting like a radiator of approximately 37 square feet surface area at a constant temperature of about 90 degrees F. A little heat goes a long way if it is constant. Ordinary kitchens get cold in the night. The Aga kitchen keeps warm all night. For the cook to come down first thing in the morning to a warm kitchen, and to have one room in the house always warm, are huge advantages, particularly in houses which have not got central heating.

You can reasonably claim that the Aga will warm any kitchen enough for working in, but large basement kitchens and those in country houses with stone floors and leaky windows must be provided with other heating in winter, if the staff are to use them as sitting rooms. This difficulty often solves itself, as in big houses the boiler is in the kitchen, or there is central heating, or a servants' hall is provided (as it ought to be).

In summer the windows are left open and the Aga kitchen achieves an arctic coldness. And does it not look cool?

Magically enough, the Aga also contrives to "air-condition" the kitchen. This advantage will appeal with some force to factory owners, architects and others who understand that "air-conditioning" is the modern way of talking about keeping a room well aired. Modern cinemas, shops, and even express trains are air-conditioned. All coal-burning fires help to change the air in a room while they are burning. The Aga always burns as it pumps out foul air through the chimney and pulls fresh air into the kitchen. The Aga cook works in a fresh, dry, warm atmosphere. The Aga kitchen is healthy and inimical to germs. In coal-range, gas, electric or oil kitchens the temperature falls every night; when cooking begins again in the morning steam condenses on the cold walls, and in time a layer of sticky dust and grime accumulates everywhere. Food mildews, cereals lose crispness, salt cakes, and the kitchen needs re-painting; the Aga kitchen is perennially cosy and knows not such abominations.

10. Summary of Miscellaneous Economies

The Aga means fuel savings, staff reduction, reduced expenditure on cleaning materials, reduction of meat shrinkage and food wastage, abolition of chimney-sweeps; painting and redecorating is unheard of; electric irons and their antics are unnecessary; raids on registry offices for new servants become a thing of the past; the house can be let or sold at any time on its kitchen; bilious attacks and doctor's bills are halved; restaurants are seldom visited, and, as the French say; "The Aga owner eats best at home."

11. Wise-Cracking

The longer you talk to a prospect, the better, and you will not do this if you're a bore. Pepper your talk with anecdote and jokes. Accumulate a repertoire of illustration. Above all, laugh till you cry every time the prospect makes the joke about the Aga Khan. A deadly serious demonstration is bound to fail. If you can't make a lady laugh, you certainly cannot make her buy.

12. How it Works Briefly

The AGA Cooker works as follows: The heart of the Cooker is a mass of metal weighing about cwts.. It consists of two cylindrical barrels, one inside the other. The inner barrel forms a magazine which feeds the fire with fuel. The fire is burning at the bottom of the outer barrel. The space between the two barrels forms the flue from the fire. The magazine is

charged with coke once every twelve hours, and the fire, burning continuously, heats up this mass of metal. The heat cannot escape from this unit because of the insulating packing around it. When the temperature of the mass of metal, or the heat storage unit, reaches a pre-determined point, a damper automatically reduces the draught and the fire just remains burning to restore to the unit the heat which escapes to warm the kitchen. If the AGA insulation were 100 per cent. perfect, the cooker would not warm the kitchen and the fire would go out (unless cooking were done on it).

Heat is taken from the heat storage unit by metallic conduction to the various parts of the cooker, in exactly the right quantities. Straight up to the very fast boiling plate, across to the simmering plate and the roasting oven, across and down to the lower oven. The amount of metal in each part of the cooker has been calculated so that the temperature is exactly right. By virtue of the automatic damper, or the thermostat, the temperatures are constant.

The insulating lids on top of the hot plates are for keeping heat inside when the hot plates are not in use. When cooking is in progress, these lids are open, cold things are put in the oven, and heat is used up. But as soon as the lids are shut down, the heat immediately begins to store up for the next lot of cooking. All through the night the heat is storing up for the next day's cooking, and you know that when you come down to the cooker in the morning the temperatures of every part will be exactly the same as they have been on the previous days.

DEFENSE

1. General Advice

The ideal to aim at is to make your attack so thorough that the enemy is incapable of counter-attack, to pile up points in every round and to hand out a K.O. before the last gong; to anticipate every objection without suggesting bogies. In practice, however, you must always be faced soon or later with questions and objections which may indeed be taken as a sign that the prospect's brain is in working order, and that she is conscientiously considering the AGA as a practical proposition for herself. Some salesmen expound their subject academically, so that at the end the prospect feels no more inclination to buy the AGA than she would to buy the planet Jupiter after a broadcast from the Astronomer Royal. A talkative prospect is a good thing. The dumb prospect is too often equally deaf.

To show that you are completely stumped on any point is fatal, for it stimulates the prospect to attack, puts you on the defensive, and, worst of all, gives the impression that you do not know your job. Know all the answers backwards without learning them by heart. Reply to objections quietly and firmly; don't be too smart; return naturally to the attack.

If the prospect comes to trust you sufficiently, she may ask you in confidence to tell her what the crab is. Play up and tell her a crab, but be certain that what you tell her will not have the slightest adverse influence. Say, for instance, that orders are so plentiful delivery has been difficult recently, that her family's appetite may double, that her pigs and hens will die of

starvation, that she may find cooking so attractive she never does anything else, that kettles boil over as soon as her back is turned, that the cook will find time lies heavy on her hands, that the neighbours will be jealous, and that every conceivable blessing in disguise will crowd upon her. You can make a fine art of admitting crabs and scoring with them.

All the objections and answers that follow have continuations which will give you an indication of the technique of returning to the lead. They are not cast-iron rules to be learnt by heart and spouted automatically on every occasion. You will be able to develop and improve on our suggestions.

2. Detailed Objections

"IT IS TOO BIG FOR MY KITCHEN."

Bolony always. It only looks big because it does not, like gas stoves, stand on legs. Make the objection a pretext for going into the kitchen to measure, and then continue the conversation there. Among other advantages of selling in the kitchen is that the cook will be in earshot and you can kill two birds with one stone. Continue : There is no danger of getting burned with an Aga, so that it is possible to go right up to it. You have to give a range a very wide berth. You can sit on the Aga. It is an uncommon kind of kitchen maid in that it does not get in your way.

"I DON'T LIKE COKE."

The old-fashioned coke stove has admittedly brought coke into disrepute. But the Aga differs from the old slow combustion stove as chalk from cheese.

CONTINUE: Coke is the cheapest fuel per heat unit. It is five times cheaper than gas at 9d. a therm, and twelve times cheaper than electric current at 1d. a unit. The heat thus costs so little that it accounts to some extent for the economy of the cooker. If you are asked why the Aga cannot be made to work electrically, that is the answer. (It is worth while knowing the exact rates at which gas and electricity are purveyed in your districts).

"I PREFER TURNING ON A TAP OR A SWITCH."

Fuelling the Aga is dustproof. Show in the Catalogue how the fuel is injected. It is easier and quicker to inject coke once or twice a day than to turn switches and taps and wait for the heat.

CONTINUE: The top oven is always hot

"TOO MUCH WORK TO CARRY COKE FROM COAL CELLAR TO KITCHEN."

Not in a super container with a good handle. It is easier to carry coke than to turn switches and taps all day long and wait for heat.

CONTINUE: And think of all the heat you get for such infinitesimal trouble ...

"TOO MUCH WORK TO REMOVE ASHES AND CLINKER, AND THINK OF THE DUST."

Combustion is so complete that the ashes do not contain any soot and are as clean as toilet powder. Ash removal with a special shovel every day or so is as simple a habit as brushing your teeth. Combustion is so steady and controlled that slag and clinker are not produced.

CONTINUE: The combustion is complete and there is no waste. That explains why the cooker gets away with only 7-lbs of coke a day.

"DOES THE FIRE OFTEN GO OUT ?"

The only possible causes for the fire going out is that the cook has forgotten to fill the barrel. This may happen once or twice at first, but in a few days filling becomes a habit.

Even if the fire goes out it does not much matter , as the cooker stays hot enough to cook on for at least twelve hours afterwards.

CONTINUE: This point illustrates the heat storage principle, always ready, always on duty

"IS THE AGA DIFFICULT TO LIGHT ?"

Fantastically easy. Light it exactly like any other fire only using charcoal instead of wood for kindling. we give a lavish present of charcoal with the cooker, and this will last for many lightings. Our fitter will show you all the dodges when he comes to erect the cooker.

CONTINUE: There are Agas which have been burning continuously for several years. There is no reason on earth why they should not go on burning for several more

"DOES IT TAKE A TERRIBLE TIME TO GET HOT WHEN LIT FOR COLD ?"

No.. The top plates are hot in an hour or two and the ovens in two or three hours.

CONTINUE: If you go away for a weekend you fill up with anthracite. The cooker will then burn for forty-eight hours after stoking, and will remain hot for seventy-two hours. You can prolong your weekend all Monday as well and still return to a warm kitchen ...

"WILL MY CHIMNEY GIVE THE CORRECT DRAUGHT?"

If the old range has burnt well there is nothing to fear with the Aga.

CONTINUE: We come along and inspect your chimney to see that everything will be in order. If we find anything wrong it is our policy to tell you so honestly and at once, so that the appropriate remedy can be applied. We find honesty in these matters pays ourselves as well as our customers. we are only too often accused of gross understatement in our advertising; we prefer to leave exaggeration to Aga users, who represent a huge army of salesmen.

"CAN THE AGA SHARE A FLUE WITH AN INDEPENDENT BOILER?"

Yes. The only stipulation is that a damper must make it possible to shut off the boiler end of the flue when the boiler is out of use. This is invariably the case anyway.

CONTINUE: We come along and inspect your kitchen and leave no stone unturned to make the installation satisfactory beforehand. This policy obviates subsequent domestic upheaval for our customers and saves ourselves money in the long run.

"CAN THE AGA GIVE OFF UNPLEASANT FUMES?"

The flue construction makes this quite impossible; a striking manifestation of the inventor's genius. [You will some-times come across people with unfortunate gassing experiences of closed stoves. Try to avoid the subject as it introduces the wrong atmosphere.]

CONTINUE: The extra air inlet is also a brilliant safety device to prevent overheating in the event of the ashpit door being left open. The Aga is both fool-proof and knave-proof.

"CAN THE AGA MAKE TOAST?"

Extremely well. If you are in a showroom toast a piece. One Aga demonstrator recently made toast for thirty school masters on one Cooker in twenty minutes, three pieces at a time. To the prospect who has positive information that her neighbour's Aga makes toast like white tiles, admit that the old Aga was rather weak in this regard; the present Cooker is so fast that it toasts diabolically well.

CONTINUE: Toasting an old-fashioned range was no picnic ...

"TWO HOT PLATES ARE NOT ENOUGH TO HOLD ALL OUR SAUCEPANS BEFORE ELABORATE MEALS."

The Cooking Oven holds seven saucepans and each hot plate holds three, making a total capacity of 13 saucepans.. Cooks prefer to put their saucepans away in the Cooking Oven so that they do not have to bother about them, and can concentrate on the job at hand.

CONTINUE: The Cooking Oven cuts out rush and flurry ...

"THE ROASTING OVEN IS TOO SMALL."

This objection should invariably be anticipated. The answer is given under [ATTACK](#).

"HOW MADDENING NOT TO BE ABLE TO REGULATE THE ROASTING OVEN."

The answer to this objection is also given under [Attack](#).

"DOES THE SMELL OF FOOD COOKING ON THE AGA PENETRATE ALL OVER THE HOUSE?"

Nothing so impolite. The ovens ventilate direct into the flue so that all cooking smells are dispersed up the chimney.

How different from ordinary ovens, which irresponsibly discharge their perfume into the kitchen.

CONTINUE: Kitchen conditions are improved ...

"I DON'T BELIEVE FOOD COULD COOK PROPERLY IN THE COOKING OVEN."

How dare you! Why do you think we call it a cooking oven? But keep your temper, and explain that unlike the haybox the Aga oven is heated.

CONTINUE: Rush cooking breeds indigestion. Can your stomach cope with porridge cooked in the ordinary way? Quite so.

"MY COOK MUST HAVE AN OPEN FIRE TO SIT BY."

Agreed. But not to cook on, any more than you would cook on your drawing-room fire. Is there a servants' hall, or an independent boiler to sit by?

CONTINUE: The Aga kitchen is always warm, even first thing in the morning, without the bother of laying and lighting a fire..

"CAN YOU HEAT RADIATORS?"

No. There are limits, you will be surprised to hear. The Aga principle of heat conservation is the precise opposite of radiation.

CONTINUE: The Aga is itself a radiator and you will always have one warm room in the house ...

"MY COOKER MUST HEAT THE BATH WATER AS WELL."

Explain that, as somebody with experience of heating engineering, you would strongly advise one heat unit for cooking and another separate unit for hot water; to combine the two units results inevitably in outrageous fuel consumption, and that kind of Victorian inefficiency which means hot bath and cold oven, or hot oven and cold bath.

CONTINUE: The Aga is called a "Cooker." and, by heaven, that is what it is! Off you go again on the cooking advantages.

"I HAVE HEARD OF SOMEBODY WHO IS DISSATISFIED."

Probably at second hand. These malicious reports are spread by jealous people who have not got an Aga. Express grave concern and try to find out the name and address so that you can rush away then and there to put matters right. In this way you will give the prospect a foretaste of willing service.

CONTINUE: Do you know so-and-so, who has just put in an Aga? Go on mentioning all the satisfied owners in the district until you find someone whose name is familiar to the prospect.

"HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO INSTALL?"

Generally one day for removing the old cooker or range, and one day for erecting the Aga. We do not want to do your builder out of a job; he can attend to the preparatory work.

CONTINUE: Delivery can be obtained immediately, in spite of the flood of orders recently received. We have just installed one for so-and-so. (Mention all the recent installations in the district).

"MY COOK IS A PERFECT FOOL. SHE COULD NEVER MANAGE THE AGA."

Anyone who tolerates a fool in the kitchen is herself a dumb-bell. The Aga might have been designed for fools-no tricky temperature regulations to worry about, no taps or switches to remember to turn off, no temptation to suicide by self-ovenning, no danger of any kind. Any idiot can contract the habits-they become almost reflex actions-of semi-automatic stoking and riddling. In two large hospitals the Aga are entirely managed by certified lunatics.

CONTINUE: The Aga turns a second-class cook into a first-class cook, and we have a special department, run on the lines of a super domestic science school, to help users with their cooking problems and, if necessary, to instruct cooks in the elemental details of Aga management.

"I DON'T WANT TO CHANGE JUST AT PRESENT."

If it is summer, point out how cool the Aga would make the kitchen. If it is winter, how nice it would be to have a warm kitchen.

CONTINUE: You lose money and miss good food every day you are without an Aga. How can anybody afford not to own one?

"IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE, YOU ADMIT. A BETTER MODEL MAY COME OUT AND I MEAN TO WAIT AND SEE."

A very good argument for never buy a motor car.

Improvements are in detail only and can normally be incorporated in earlier models. Honestly, you know of no new model in the offing.

CONTINUE: He who hesitates is lost.

(It is equally true that he who is not for you is against you. Polite prospects choose this way of conveying to you that they are not "sold." Learn to recognise this gambit and begin again).

"I AM ONLY RENTING MY PRESENT HOUSE."

The Aga is not a fixture. You can take with you when you move. We make a small charge for dismantling and re-erecting it in your new house.

CONTINUE: A great advantage of the Aga is its simplicity so far as installation is concerned

3. Competitors

Try and avoid being drawn into discussing competitive makes of cooker, as it introduces a negative and defensive atmosphere. On no account sling mud-it can carry very little weight, coming from you, and it will make the prospect distrust your integrity and dislike you. The best way to tackle the problem is to find out all you possibly can about the merits, faults and sales arguments of competitors, and then keep quiet about them. Profound knowledge of other cookers will help you put your positive case for Aga more convincingly.

To the inveterate tap-fuel enthusiast - the gas and electricity maniac - argue the general superiority of solid fuel appliances in their most modern development; their safety, reliability, air-conditioning, simplicity, economy and so on. Gas and electricity are made from coal; why not cut out the intermediate processes and burn the coal itself? Coal miners love the Aga. It brings solid fuel back to pre-eminence as the cheapest, cleanest, and most labour-saving fuel. One coal mine has actually installed an Aga in its own canteen.

If you are invited to give your opinion of any particular make of cooker, damn it with faint praise. What you leave unsaid will kill.

4. Price DEFENSE

It pays to approach this subject off your own bat and in your own time, as described here.

