



L’ORÉAL VISIT TO A FLAGSHIP PERFUMERY

He prepped me by saying we were about to walk into the temple of Italian perfumeries. The owner had a number of stores scattered across the whole country — his name was LIMONI, but there was nothing citrus about him; he was someone who knew exactly how to move and had built himself an empire.

I already knew who he was, because Mother Gillette had put him on the list of key accounts we weren't allowed to visit ourselves — and now here I was, walking in wearing someone else's suit, about to find out what "key account" actually meant, and what kind of science it took to deal with people like him.

As soon as we were inside, the manager greeted us: Dr. Priolo, we're lucky to have you here today, Mr. Limoni has just arrived from the Bologna office and would like to say hello.

He came out of his office and, walking straight to Giorgio, embraced him warmly. The two of them were on easy, first-name terms.

He'd met him on one of the trips the company handed out, ritually, four times a year, to its best clients — always accompanied, on a rotating basis, by one of the sales managers.

That built a triple bond with the client — not just a lemon to squeeze for its juice, but a store where you had to show up, and a personal relationship with the client that kept the business relationship solid and always improved loyalty.

Then we walked over to the Corolle counter — it felt like standing inside the room every woman would have wanted for her own.

Right then an elegant woman walked in and said: Patrizia, give me the blades my husband uses — if I don't buy them, he never will, he'll just keep using my BICLADY razors and never remember to buy his own MACH3 refills.

I'd changed location, but the reality of the consumer was exactly the same: women buy the blades for their husbands, and that's what actually keeps the category alive — otherwise there wouldn't even be sales for the competition.

When it came time for the order, he knew every color code by heart, numbers and all — it was impressive — and at the end he asked to add some new colors without any pushback at all, just a thank you for your attention.

We walked out of the store and I felt drunk — I'd seen things nobody had ever told me existed. We at Gillette thought we were the biggest, the strongest, with a slogan campaign that said "THE BEST A MAN CAN GET," and to this day nobody has understood one thing: THE GILLETTE MAN ONLY THE BEST OF WOMEN.

Ferdinando