

You do not have to read the next bit. It contains the personal stuff – the background that I think is important, but some readers may see it as irrelevant to the story of an inventor. I have included it because in running a small business I have come to realise that the buyers and others we encounter on a day-to-day basis want to deal with “Jayne and Andrew”. I have learned that businesses, even a caulking tool business, is all about personal relationships and that we are VTC. It is the people as well as the products that are important. I have also included this background to show how happenstance – those chances occurrences in life – can have cogent effects on your destiny.

While the other booths had fantastic graphics, photographs and professional looking displays using colour-coordinated products, we had the worst packaging in the world stuck on ceiling tiles hanging from curtain rings. Even the booth next door to us (selling, of all things, plastic drain-pipes) had water cascading through black cylinders and bar stools and potted plants and little bowls of chocolates and candies – making it the sort of booth you wanted to visit even if you could not get excited by drain pipes. Ours looked like it had been put together by a kindergarten class during an earthquake.

All relationships are difficult, and none are more so than the one between the inventor of a new product (who wants so desperately to be loved) and the industry buyer (who never seems able to commit to a new relationship of any kind). Buyers are those mythical beings all vendors fear and worship. They are like long-lost lovers who have so much power (and know it) that they can make your heart race and skip as beat just by saying “yes” to you and your product, or leave you dejected and emotionally bruised by saying ‘no’.