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## Attn. managers: Are you for sale?

One of the most revealing questions that I have ever been asked occurred when I was bidding on a janitorial contract at a major office building in the central business district. One of the bidders came by my office and after a few minutes of "weather talk" asked me if I would like to drive a new Mercedes-Benz. I qualified his question by asking what color and how that could occur. He said, "Sign the contract and you can choose the color!" I was touched and felt so special, to say the least!

I did not know at the time that this janitorial company was also in the Mercedes Benz business. I have heard of multiple streams of income and diversification, but this was quite the unique business model. I then asked him if he had heard in the marketplace that I was for sale. He stuttered in weak response. I asked him again. "Do you think I am for sale?" In other words, "Do you think I am a prostitute?" He sheepishly bowed his stiff neck as I escorted him to the door and told him never to darken my office by his presence again.

I have thought much about this exchange and conversation over the years and believe that every property manager will be asked the same question in some form. What will it take for you to sell out, to compromise your sacred name, reputation, even your soul, for a measly buck? Is it the promise of title or position that finally



**Steven S. Sessions**  
President/  
chief executive  
officer, Fuller  
Management  
Services, Denver

sways you to the dark side? What is it? And once we cave in and compromise, we must forever understand that another now owns us. We have sold ourselves. The thought just sickens me. Then how do we avoid such compromise and loss in the "excitement of the moment?"

I was taught that "right decisions are easiest to make when we make them well in advance, having ultimate objectives in mind; this saves a lot of anguish at the fork." It seems that numerous times a day I come to a fork in the road and must decide which way I will go. I believe it is critical to have my ultimate objectives clearly in mind so that I do not become distracted at each fork in the road by irrelevant questions. Having an unalterable determination firmly established has given me good reason and good strength to resist in the "excitement of the moment!"

We choose what we become! We reap what we sow! And as the years roll by, I have found that my past choices have nar-

rowed the alternatives open to me. James Allen has expressed it in his well-known book, "As a Man Thinketh":

*"As the plant springs from, and could not be without the seed, so every act of a man springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them. This applies equally to those acts called 'spontaneous' and 'unpremeditated' as to those which are deliberately executed...In the armory of thought [man] forges the weapons by which he destroys himself; he also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace...Between these two extremes are all grades of character, and man is their maker and master...Man is the master of thought, the molder of character, and the maker and shaper of condition, environment and destiny."*

I came across the following quote whose authorship I do not know, but which has had a big impact on my thinking and choices made in the "excitement of the moment":

*Sow a thought, reap an act;  
Sow an act, reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, reap a character;  
Sow a character, reap an eternal destiny.*

In the end, I hope somewhere on my tombstone will be printed in large print the following: "Steve was a great father, husband, son, and NOT FOR SALE!"▲