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Introduction

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How To Build A Rock Solid Value Proposition

By Dan Adams

Q: We'll soon be announcing a new product to our entire sales team. In our last product introduction we did not give the sales reps the information they needed to really promote the product successfully. Do you have any best practices that we can incorporate into this rollout that will help to insure the successful launch of this product, especially to senior executives?

Amy P.

Seattle, WA

A: Sounds like your team could benefit from having a solid "Value Proposition" for your corporation and your new product, particularly given that you are selling to senior executives. You need something in your sales arsenal called a Value Proposition.

A "value proposition" is a sales message that shows that you thoroughly understand the following:

- Who the customer is and the exact nature of his or her headaches
- How your product or solution can eliminate or prevent those headaches and provide desired benefits
- The ways in which you are uniquely qualified to do this
- Specifically why a customer would want to spend more for this uniqueness
- Solid credible proof that you can do it

Although you must memorize it, you will never use your value proposition in its entire memorized form with a customer.

Preferably, the value proposition is developed in conjunction with senior executives and corporate marketing. Everyone from the person who answers the phones to the CxO and to the janitorial staff should know the company's value proposition. Although you must memorize it, you will never use your value proposition in its entire memorized form with a customer. Rather, you customize it to each customer - based on his or her specific needs and role.

A powerful value proposition has five components:

- The Promise
- The Enablers
- The Unfair Advantage
- The Justification Of Value ("Show Me The Money")
- The Proof

The Promise

This first value proposition component answers the customer question, "How can you help me?" Typically, your promise will be to help the customer increase profits, reduce costs, increase revenue, increase efficiency, improve quality, or strengthen its market position. Promises are not the same as benefits. If you were selling medical billing software, your promise would not be the software's ability to print labels at top speed; it would be to reduce billing costs and improve the hospital's bottom line.

The Enablers

The second component of your value proposition answers the customer question, "What services, products and solutions allow you to make the promise to me?" The enablers are what you offer to fulfil the promise.

For example, if your promise to the customer is, "I can help you increase revenue", the enablers explain the tools, solutions and services you offer that will permit you to fulfil that promise.

The Unfair Advantage

This third component of your value proposition answers the customer question, "What makes you different from your competition?" Your unfair advantages are the capabilities, services, and offerings unique to you or your company that your competitors consider a threat to their success. An unfair advantage - such as having the largest market share, the best product, the best reputation among buyers, or the longest experience in the field - alters the playing field and gives you a distinct advantage.

This third component of your value proposition answers the customer question, "What makes you different from your competition?"

Once you determine your unfair advantage, you need to elevate it as a key-buying criterion for all of your customers. If it's not a key-buying criterion now, you need a strategy to convince the customer that this should be a key buying criterion.

The Justification of Value: "Show Me The Money!"

Having one or more unfair advantages is not enough. In an advanced value proposition, each unfair advantage also includes a justification as to why the customer should invest more in the selling price (initial investment), than that of your competition.

A true 'superstar' assumes that the initial investment for his/her solution will be significantly higher than that of his/her competitor. He/she is armed with the sales tools and knowledge to specifically justify that difference. In fact, the true superstar wants his/her initial investment to be higher than her competition because it speaks to value.

The Proof

The proof, the fifth component of a value proposition, provides a response to the customer statement, "I don't believe you - prove it!" Without question, the very best proof comes in the form of referrals from satisfied customers, quotations in the press, or case studies showing how you improved quality or increased revenue for another account similar to your target account.

A rock-solid value proposition is one critical tool that will help in accessing and working with CxOs. Good Luck, and Close 'Em!

A true superstar assumes that the initial investment for his/her solution will be significantly higher than that of his/her competitor.

DAN ADAMS is an award-winning professional speaker, best selling author and consultant, who draws upon more than 20 years of experience in the field of sales and marketing. Having honed his sales skills selling multimillion dollar solutions for 'Fortune 500' and high technology companies over the past 20 years, Dan founded a profitable sales consulting company called Adams & Associates, utilizing his own strategic selling principles embodied in his program Trust Triangle Selling™.

Visit: http://www.trusttriangleselling.com/

The Hard Cost Of Complacency

By Keith Rosen

"So, what exactly is it that you sell?" This is one of the first questions I ask new clients when we start working together. As you can imagine, most of the time they would respond with either the product name, the type of product or service they sell, or the process in which they deliver their product or service.

While this may be what the final deliverable would be, it's not exactly what you are selling. The fact is, the product doesn't always - as the old adage goes - "sell itself".

Instead, consider that the prospect is actually purchasing the end result of your product or service or, said another way, their desired state of where they want to be. (I dedicated an entire chapter to developing your compelling reasons in my last book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Cold Calling.)*

Here are some examples that advertisers use to paint a visual picture of the desired state that their target audience wants.

- Lose 20 pounds in two weeks
- Look younger in 30 days
- Cut your debt in half
- Find your ideal relationship
- Discover your dream job today
- Fill your practice in less than three months

Now, painting the vivid picture of the end result your prospects will experience from buying your product or using your service is only half the equation. While you may be able to communicate a clear benefit the prospect will experience from your product, that doesn't mean the benefit is strong enough for them to make a change. Selling the prospect where they want to be may stimulate good conversation, but does it move the prospect into action?

Selling the prospect where they want to be may stimulate good conversation, but does it move the prospect into action?

Let me say this in a different way. The product/service the prospect is currently using may be "just fine" or "good enough" - and if it's good enough, then why should the prospect spend money and time to make a change? The fear of change is the biggest fear of all when it comes to making a purchasing decision of any magnitude.

"Ouch, That Hurts!" - Selling the Pain

Before you can enroll someone in purchasing the desired state/benefits you can deliver on, there has to be enough pain or discomfort in their present state that would motivate them enough to take action and want to make a change - so, sell them where they **don't** want to be.

Therefore, you need to uncover what their current pain is and the cost of not making a change. What does it cost your prospects by not changing their current condition and keeping things just the way they are? Does it cost them money, time, stress, productivity, lost sales, a potential hazard, a great employee, their health?

Help the prospect visualize the advantage of moving from their present state to their desired state. Once you can uncover what their pain is, through the use of well crafted questions, then and only then can you paint the picture of moving the prospect from their "painful" present state or condition to their desired state of benefits.

If you are in good health, you do not visit the doctor (unless you go to the doctor for annual check-ups in order to prevent a future pain from occurring. If you are currently employed and happy with your job, chances are you are not actively seeking new employment.

If you were sick, you'd want to get better. The pain associated with being sick encourages you to seek help to become healthy again. If you are miserable at your current job, or unemployed, this pain may be the driving force which is pushing you to find a new job in order to pay off your debt or start enjoying your life and career again.

Help the prospect visualize the advantage of moving from their present state to their desired state.

There was a story of an officer in the army who did a fabulous job enrolling the new recruits in the government benefits available to them.

Officer Murphy was assigned to the induction center, where he advised new recruits about their benefits, especially their GI insurance.

It wasn't long before Captain Miller noticed that Officer Jones was having a staggeringly high success-rate selling the government's insurance policy to nearly 100% of the recruits he advised. Rather than asking him about this, the Captain stood at the back of the room and listened to Officer Murphy's presentation.

Murphy explained the basics of GI Insurance to the new recruits. "Nothing different here" thought the Captain.

After Officer Murphy explained the basics, he then shared the following insight with the new recruits, "If you are killed in a battle and have a GI Insurance, the government has to pay $200,000 to your beneficiaries. However, if you don't have a GI insurance and get killed in the battle, the government only has to pay a maximum of $6,000."

"Now," he concluded, "Which group do you think they are going to send into battle first?"

As you can see, Officer Murphy did a great job extracting and then sharing the pain or cost of not purchasing the GI insurance in a way that the new recruits could understand and certainly relate to. The cost of not purchasing the insurance was now greater than the cost of purchasing the policy.

One universal and timeless truth when selling: pain is a greater motivator than pleasure. In order for a prospect to buy from you, the cost of not changing must be greater than the cost of making a change.

One universal and timeless truth when selling: pain is a greater motivator than pleasure.

KEITH ROSEN is the Executive Sales Coach that top salespeople and managers call first to attract more prospects, close more sales and develop a team of top performing sales champions. For over twenty years, Keith has successfully coached more salespeople and managers than any other coach on the planet to achieve positive, measurable change. An award winning columnist, speaker and best selling author, Keith has written several books on leadership, time management, selling, cold calling, closing the sale and the gold medal winner, *Coaching Salespeople into Sales Champions*, which was named the **2008 Sales Leadership Book of the Year** and one of the **World's Best Business Books of 2009**.

As the globally recognized authority on sales and sales leadership, Keith is the winner of the 2009 Stevie Award and was named **The Sales Education Leader of the Year.** Inc. magazine and Fast Company named Keith one of the five most influential executive coaches. He's been featured in Entrepreneur, Inc., Fortune, The New York Times, Selling Power, CBSNews.com, The Wall Street Journal, Sales and Marketing Management and is a frequent guest on Channel 12 News. In addition, Keith sits on several editorial boards and advisory boards and is the expert sales advisor for Dun & Bradstreet, Hoover's and AllBusiness.com.

For sales training videos, podcasts, more information on executive coaching and sales training or to contact Keith, visit **www.ProfitBuilders.com**, **www.CoachingSalespeople.com**, call 516-771-1444 or email **info@profitbuilders.com**. Subscribe to his newsletter, The Winners Path, **http://www.profitbuilders.com/winnerspath.htm**

2009 Cold Calling Checklist

By Wendy Weiss

In 2009 sales professionals everywhere are facing a tough economy. A tough economy, however, does not mean that no one will ever buy anything or that no business at all will be done. What it does mean is that business owners and sales professionals will need to become more proactive and more efficient at finding new opportunities.

There are only four ways to generate appointments for new potential sales opportunities:

1. Marketing activities to generate prospects who will pick up the telephone and call you
2. Contacting existing customers or your circle of influence for referrals
3. Face-to-face or social networking/web 2.0 efforts
4. Cold calling

While many business owners and sales professionals prefer to focus on only the first three activities, those three activities alone are not always enough to generate all the appointments one might need. Cold calling, when done effectively, will fill a sales pipeline with qualified leads.

In addition, while all four of the above activities will generate leads for your business, only one is directly under your control. The first three of the listed activities are essentially passive in that, once you undertake the activity, you then must wait for the prospect to come to you. Because you have to wait for the results (prospects coming to you), these processes also take longer. When you pick up the telephone to contact a prospect directly, however, you are able to go to that prospect and initiate a conversation that can turn into a relationship, which turns into a sale.

There are only four ways to generate appointments for new potential sales opportunities.

In today's economy, cold calling is also one of the most economical ways to generate new business. It does not require expenditures in new equipment or infrastructure or staffing. All you need is your list and a telephone. When done well, cold calling is a direct, targeted, efficient and effective way to generate new business.

That said, here is your *2009 Cold Calling Checklist:*

1. **Target your market.** Answer the questions:

- "Out of everyone in the entire world, who may buy my products or services - who is most likely to buy my products and services?"
- "Who is most likely to buy a lot of my products or services and then come back to buy more?"

The answers might be types of companies, a particular industry, the size of company in employees or revenue or the answer might be the types of individuals - their age, where they live, their level of education. The bottom line is that the more specific you are about your market, the easier it will be to find qualified prospects and the more they will resonate with your message. And, by the way, to be effective you need to target your market for any type of marketing or prospecting activity - not just for cold calling.

2. **Create your message.** On a cold call you have approximately 10-30 seconds to grab and hold your prospect's attention. And, bear in mind, it is harder and harder to get people on the telephone these days. It is therefore imperative that you craft your message before you start making calls. Winging it simply does not work. Figure out how you will introduce yourself, the key points you wish to make, and the goal of your conversation. Your script does not have to be word for word - bullet points will do. Figure out answers to the objections and/or questions you are bound to hear. Write it all down.
3. **Practice out loud.** If you are new to cold calling or uncomfortable with cold calling, practice your script out loud. Do some role playing with friends and/or colleagues. Call your voice mail and record yourself. The idea is to become comfortable with the words and the approach. Once you are comfortable you can simply be yourself, say what you have to say and most importantly, listen to what your prospect has to say.

In today's economy, cold calling is also one of the most economical ways to generate new business.

4. **Make phone calls.** Nothing happens without action. Commit to making a certain number of dials every day or spending a certain amount of time every day. Put that commitment in your calendar and do it. Set yourself up to succeed by making your commitment realistic - it is best to make a small commitment and do it every day.

WENDY WEISS, The Queen of Cold Calling, is an author, speaker, sales trainer, and sales coach. She is recognized as one of the leading authorities on lead generation, cold calling and new business development and she helps clients speed up their sales cycle, reach more prospects directly and generate more sales revenue. Ms. Weiss is the author of the book, Cold Calling for Women and has been featured in the New York Times, BusinessWeek, Entrepreneur Magazine and Selling Power Magazine.

Contact Ms. Weiss at **wendy@wendyweiss.com** . Download the Special Free Report, Getting in the Door: How to Write an Effective Cold Calling Script at **http://www.wendyweiss.com**

Risky Business

By Nancy D. Solomon, MA

"Sometimes the greatest risk is not to take one."

Although it may seem to be counterintuitive to those stepping up the leadership ladder, your manager wants you to take more risks. That's right—risks. In the past eighteen years, I've yet to meet with one senior executive who's said, "Gee, I wish my talent would play it safe and keep things status quo."

What kind of risk is your manager talking about? And why do they encourage their people to take more of them? The word 'risk' usually implies exposure to danger and the possibility that something unwelcome or unsafe is imminent. The concerns about risk in corporate America revolve around managers wanting their talent not so much to step away from safe decisions, but to move toward innovative thinking.

These leaders are cultivating their talent's willingness and courage to drill down deep within themselves to access the confidence it takes to think differently: This next generation of leaders must trust themselves enough to take risks. These managers are successful themselves, so it's likely they hired you *because* of your unique skill set and they want you to use it.

The willingness to take risks is particularly critical during tough economic times. That would be now! There is a cultural tendency to want to play it safe when times are uncertain. However, if we examine historical precedent, we'll find that it was those who threw the dice in an exciting and new direction who were most successful at making the changes that the times demanded.

The word 'risk' usually implies exposure to danger and the possibility that something unwelcome or unsafe is imminent.

What makes employees reluctant to take risks at work? In a word: FEAR.

Fear that:

- I'm not smart enough
- I'm not educated enough
- I'll look stupid
- I'll be wrong
- I can't trust my gut instincts
- I won't get the sale anyway
- Things will change. I hate change.
- I ______________________ (fill in the blank)

These things don't have to be real; they just have to be perceived that way. To be sure, there is nothing that will prevent or halt forward movement (and, therefore, risk-taking behavior) quicker than the prospect of your ego getting bruised or annihilated in the process.

What does a great manager want you to do?

- Trust yourself
- Have confidence in who you are and what you do
- Follow your gut instincts
- Don't rely on "It's always been done that way"
- Be willing to be wrong
- Think uniquely
- Take the initiative

Next time you're facing a situation that requires you to step out of your safety zone, ask yourself these questions:

1. **Is the risk perceived or real?** Do the facts or evidence overwhelmingly stack against your position, or are you simply afraid of the unknown?

2. **Are you taking this risk to prove who you are (your ego) or to demonstrate it?** Are you taking a bold stand because you know, in your bones, that this is the right course, or are you trying to prove that you're smart and competent?

3. **Is the timing right?** Sometimes your idea might be simply brilliant: Just not now.

4. **What is the best possible outcome of taking this risk?** In an ideal world, what's the outcome? What are the wins?

5. **What's the worst possible outcome?** Think disaster: Do you have a back-up plan? Will anything be beyond repair?

6. **If you 'failed,' how would you recover?** This is called Plan B. Have you fully prepared a plan for the possibility that you might not be able to go back to the way things were before you took this risk?

7. **If you 'failed' what might you be able to learn?** You've failed before. You will fail again. What wisdom have you gleaned from this event? If you got a "do over" what, if anything, would you do differently?

So what's the risk of not taking risks? When you don't take risks things stay the same, and same is NOT necessarily why you were recruited. *Same* may mean no new opportunities. *Same* may mean little growth. *Same* may mean the project never gets launched. *Same* may mean you're passed over for that promotion. *Same* may mean you end up feeling under utilized or devalued. Save one letter, *same* and *safe* are spelled, well, the same.

NANCY D. SOLOMON
As a nationally recognized human potential expert, Nancy D. Solomon, MA provides training, keynotes, coaching and facilitation for executives and their organizations seeking to improve their personal and professional standards of success. For a full bio, visit **www.nancydsolomon.com**. She can be reached at 253.265.3240.

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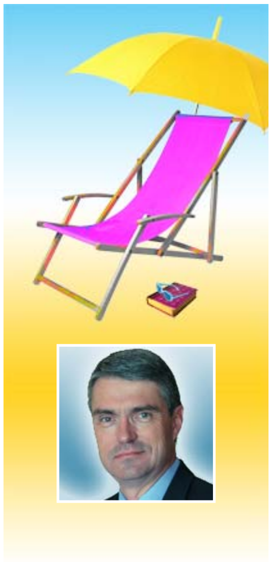

Have You Sold Yourself?

By The Sales Hunter

You will always be your number one customer. It's not the big account you service, nor is it the hot new prospect you just uncovered; it's you. The reason is simple: if you're not completely confident in what you're selling, you will never come close to maximizing your sales potential.

The current sales environment makes the need to sell yourself even more important. If you think you're the exception to this rule and you're not completely confident in the products or services you offer, ask yourself this simple question: Have you ever offered a discounted price to either keep a customer or attract a new one? Few salespeople can honestly say they have never done this. If you have, it means that you were not 100% sold on your product or service.

As a consumer, when we don't fully believe in what is being offered to us, we naturally expect a discount. We want something in return for not being completely confident about what we're buying. Since the salesperson hasn't communicated the level of confidence we need in order to buy the product at full price, we want some type of concession to make us feel better about the purchase.

To be completely sold on your product or service, not only do you need to use what you sell, but you also need to understand all of the benefits that your product or service provides. As a sales consultant who works with thousands of different professionals each year, I'm amazed at the number of salespeople who admit that they don't even use what they sell. How can anyone be totally committed to a product or service if they don't even use it? Furthermore, it's not uncommon for me to see salespeople shortchanging themselves because they are unable to identify and explain the value of what they are selling. Although this sounds basic, many salespeople cannot name five benefits their customers receive from using their product or service. They can usually only list five features. Without understanding the full array of their product's benefits, there's little chance the customer will ever see them too.

To be completely sold on your product or service, not only do you need to use what you sell, but you also need to understand all of the benefits that your product or service provides.

A poor sales process is usually a good indicator of whether or not the salesperson is sold on the product or service they are offering. Nothing conveys a lack of confidence faster than a sales process that is not professional. Unfortunately, for many salespeople, a disorganized sales process is the norm and it only serves to destroy more sales and, ultimately, a huge amount of profit. Despite the customer's desire to buy, an unorganized sales process creates an air of skepticism that often can only be countered by offering some type of discount to close the deal.

With the current state of the economy, it is imperative that sales professionals be both confident and competent to achieve maximum success. In any sales call, you best communicate these qualities by being completely sold on your product or service. If you are not, find ways to better educate yourself so that you can become your number one customer. Remember, "No customer is ever sold until the salesperson is sold."

MARK HUNTER, "The Sales Hunter", is a sales expert who speaks to thousands each year on how to increase their sales profitability. For more information, to receive a free weekly email sales tip, or to read his Sales Motivation Blog, visit **www.TheSalesHunter.com**.

With the current state of the economy, it is imperative that sales professionals be both confident and competent to achieve maximum success.

8 Killer Steps To Propel Your Business

By Joanne S. Black

No more recession talk. Economies go up. Economies go down. That's how things work. So pull up our bootstraps and commit to thriving in any economic climate. Accelerate your sales, retain your loyal customers, and attract new business without increasing your cost of sales.

Successful sales pros, business owners, and companies that take charge and compete will win. Traditional indicators have changed, so have traditional responses. Nothing is traditional anymore. What can you do to be non-traditional? Start by following my 8 Killer Steps.

8 Killer Steps to Propel Your Business

1. **Broaden Your Perspective**
   What business are you in? Redefine and reinvent yourself. Is Starbuck's in the coffee business or the people business? Build new alliances and consider alternate distribution channels. Don't go solo. Assemble a group of advisors and get their input and creative ideas.

2. **Be Nimble and Innovative**
   You'll never have all the facts. Make quick decisions. Be fearless and make tough choices. Create new uses for your products. Why not a new business model? Think on your feet, make smart decisions, and do it.

3. **Dazzle Your Current Customers**
   Your current customers need care and feeding. Don't ignore them at the expense of new business, because they are your best source for new business. Call your clients. Stay in touch. Offer your expertise even when you have nothing to "sell" them.

Successful sales pros, business owners, and companies that take charge and compete will win.

4. Prioritize Wisely

The most important activity for any salesperson is to do what's "closest to cash" the first thing every single day—whether it's following up with a prospect, writing a proposal, or closing a deal. Most of us get buried in email every morning and surface a few hours later. If you do what's "closet to cash" the first, it doesn't matter if other things on your to-do list don't get done. They're just not that important.

5. Become the Expert

Companies hire experts because they can't afford to make mistakes. Position your company as the expert with a specific product or in a specific market niche. This is counter-intuitive: We often think if we don't mention everything we do, that we will miss an opportunity - the opposite is true.

6. Stay Connected

Network like crazy. Attend a minimum of one event a week. You never know whom you will meet and what you will learn. Woody Allen said that 80 percent of life is showing up. He also said 70 percent of success in life is showing up. Show Up! It counts.

7. Don't Cut Price

There's a lot of chatter about cutting price in a lagging economy—businesses are cutting back, they don't have money for your project. Consider how to "get in and get started." Divide your offering into smaller chunks, get results, and create traction. If you do decide to adjust your price, always get something in return. Work together with your clients and collaborate on a solution.

8. Commit to Building Your Referral Business

Reach your market without hard costs: no marketing budget, no direct mail budget, no advertising budget, no trade show budget. The only budget you need to worry about is your *Time & Referrals Budget*. Your time: your time to ask for referrals. There is no line-item cost to referrals.

Companies hire experts because they can't afford to make mistakes. Position your company as the expert with a specific product or in a specific market niche.

When a qualified prospect is referred to us, we get a new client a minimum of 50 percent of the time and typically between 70 and 90 percent of the time. The benefits are incomparable:

- You are pre-sold
- Your selling time decreases
- You have credibility
- You ace out the competition

Referral-selling works. *There is no other business-development process that can claim these results.*

Engage these "8 Killer Steps" and propel your business!

JOANNE BLACK is America's leading authority on referral selling and the founder of **No More Cold Calling**. She helps salespeople, sales teams, and business owners get more referrals and attract more business fast without increasing costs. Joanne is the author of **NO MORE COLD CALLINGTM: The Breakthrough System That Will Leave Your Competition in the Dust** (Warner Business Books). A **captivating speaker** and an innovative seminar leader, Joanne is changing the business of sales. Her proven No More Cold Calling® system works.

Business Consultants, Strategic Orchestrators & Long-Term Allies

By Jonathan Farrington

As we are all aware, getting to know the customer and understanding their needs is not a quick and easy process. Customers possess a hierarchy of needs which have to be uncovered gradually. This is why we need a new type of salesperson for a new type of customer.

So what does this new breed of salesperson look like? For a start he or she has progressed from the more traditional 'lone ranger' approach of selling to a more team-based consultative style. Our research shows that a consultative salesperson needs to fulfil three basic roles - that of Business Consultant, Long Term Ally and Strategic Orchestrator.

By combining all three roles, salespeople are more able to develop and maintain long-term relationships with clients. At the same time, organisations need to ensure that they provide their salespeople with the vital support systems and training that enable them to make the most of their knowledge and skills.

Business Consultant:

Gone are the days in which a salesperson could simply walk into an office, establish a good rapport with the client, show he/she had thorough knowledge of their products and services and clinch the sale. Nowadays, the emphasis is on establishing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. In order to achieve this, the salesperson needs to earn the right to continue discussions with his/her client. Before they can proceed to sell their products or services, the salesperson needs to reassure the client of their integrity, reliability and ability to understand and recommend the appropriate solution.

Our research shows that a consultative salesperson needs to fulfil three basic roles - that of Business Consultant, Long Term Ally and Strategic Orchestrator.

They can do this by demonstrating:

- **Up-to-date knowledge of business news and current affairs**
  Best practices include - reading newspapers, magazines, journals, trade publications and other sources of business information, maintaining membership of appropriate professional organisations, acknowledging gaps in knowledge and taking steps to fill them, locating or developing databases with information on customers, their industries and their own customers.

- **An in-depth understanding of the customer's industry, company and strategies, as well as an appreciation of "the big picture".**
  Best practices include - gaining an understanding of the issues, at all levels, of the customer's organisation (including strategic, departmental and individual needs), seeking to understand the customer's perceptions of market trends, company direction, plus potential product and service needs.

- **A readiness to exchange information and ideas between the supplier and client organisation.**
  Best practices include: Familiarising the customer with your own industry and companies, sharing useful business information (even if it does not directly impact on the sales effort), demonstrating the cost-cutting or revenue producing benefits of your products and services.

- **The ability to listen and absorb information.**
  Best practices include - refining the way you identify customer's needs by asking the right questions and listening actively to customer comments, speaking at the listener's level of knowledge, using stories and analogies effectively, asking for feedback on the clarity of your message. By demonstrating comprehensive knowledge, outstanding communication skills and the proper attitude, the salesperson earns the right to move beyond the role of supplier to that of a valued business consultant.

Strategic Orchestrator:

To fulfil this role, the salesperson needs to be seen as the key person responsible for engineering the appropriate solution. This involves co-ordinating all of the information, resources and activities needed to support customers before, during and after the sale. It means enlisting support from specialist colleagues and hence, the move away from the "lone ranger" approach.

According to our research, effective Strategic Orchestrators have mastered the following competencies:

- Knowledge of their own company's structure
- Expertise in developing and managing a team
- Ability to manage priorities and performance
- Ability to co-ordinate delivery and service to customers
- Efficiency
- Flexibility

Customers of Strategic Orchestrators express a high level of confidence in the salesperson and his or her organisation:
This increased confidence can lead to faster buying decisions, increased repeat business and strengthened links between customer and supplier organisations. Working as Strategic Orchestrators, salespeople are also able to develop their organisation's capacity for team selling.

Long Term Ally:

Since the key to differentiation is in forging closer links with clients, the role of Long Term Ally is a crucial one. Once the salesperson has earned the right, it is important to develop and maintain the relationship.

Since the key to differentiation is in forging closer links with clients, the role of Long Term Ally is a crucial one.

As the term suggests, acting as a Long Term Ally, involves maintaining contact with the client, even when there is no immediate prospect for a sale. It also suggests that the salesperson needs to be committed to the long-term development of the relationship.

Our research shows that top salespeople demonstrate this commitment by continuously looking for ways to:

- Build interpersonal trust
- Create and maintain a positive image of the sales organisation
- Inspire respect for their company
- Show genuine concern for their customers' short and long-term interest
- Identify ways to strengthen the quality of their business relationship
- Help the customer meet needs within his or her organisation
- Deal with issues openly and honestly
- Deliver on promises

It is also crucial for the salesperson to ensure that the relationship between the organisations is mutually beneficial. In other words, it is essential to build and honour the expectation that reaching agreements will mean good business for both parties.

At the end of the day, taking a long-term approach proves more profitable, since the customer will recognise that the salesperson is taking a committed interest and, in so doing, is giving honest and open advice. This inevitably encourages the customer to trust the salesperson and to view him or her as a colleague, rather than an opponent.

At the end of the day, taking a long-term approach proves more profitable, since the customer will recognise that the salesperson is taking a committed interest and, in so doing, is giving honest and open advice.

In Summary: Long Term Allies and Mutually Beneficial Agreements

Supplier Organisations Must Be Willing To:

- Elicit feedback from customers regarding overall satisfaction with the products / services delivered
- Maintain regular contact with current and prospective customers
- Alert customers to new developments in own organisation
- Review the business relationship underlying each account on a regular basis

Buyer Organisation Must Be Willing To:

- Keep suppliers "in the loop" regarding the company's strategic direction and needs
- Value the record of service provided by supplier organisations above lower cost competitors
- Grant access and information about their customers to the supplier organisations

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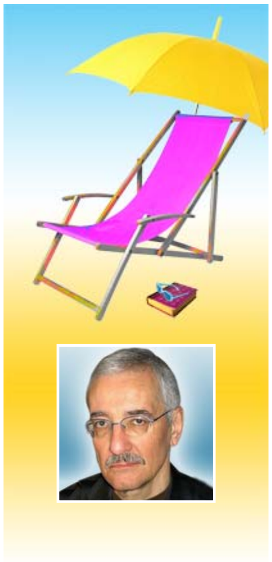
He is Chairman of The Sales Corporation, CEO of Top Sales Associates and Senior Partner at The JF Consultancy based in London and Paris.

Formerly, Jonathan was the Managing Partner of The jfa Group, which he established in 1994.

Early in 2007, Jonathan formed Top Sales Associates (TSA) to promote the very best sales related solutions and products. TSA is now a subsidiary of The Sales Corporation, based in London and Paris.

The JF Consultancy – **www.jonathanfarrington.com**, launched early in 2008 and Jonathan's highly popular daily blog for dedicated business professionals, which attracts thousands of visitors every day, can be found at **www.thejfblogit.co.uk**

Finally, Jonathan is the Chairman of the Executive Board over at Top Sales Experts – **www.topsalesexperts.com**



A "Big Picture" View Blurs The Vision.....

By Christian Maurer

At first sight, it might appear counter intuitive that we should leave the "Big Picture" level when thinking about strategies although it is logical. "Big Picture" views are averaging out a bigger variation on a more granular level. A customer segment might show only slow growth, but this growth is made up of customers that are growing faster than the segment average, and others that are growing slower than the average.

For the formulation of a B2B sales growth strategy, the focus must therefore be on the individual customer company within a market segment, or even on the divisions, departments or geographical locations within large, global customer organizations.

Having a "named", "strategic" "key", "major" account program, or any other term used for activities targeted to the most important customers, might indicate the right granularity level. However, the view is probably too restricted. The number of customers included in such programs is usually dictated by the sales resources available for coverage. For the formulation of growth strategies, the number of accounts - or smaller entities within accounts - to be analyzed for their growth potentia,l should be as large a possible. After this extended analysis is the right time to focus the limited resources to the most promising targets, which are not necessarily those already covered.

Having a "named", "strategic" "key", "major" account program, or any other term used for activities targeted to the most important customers, might indicate the right granularity level.

However, this is still not yet a guarantee that the focus is on the right targets. To ensure this, the term 'most important' customer needs a clear definition. Often, this term is used for the biggest customers measured by their revenue or number of employees in their respective industry or geographical segment. The revenue or profit gained from customers in the past, are other frequently used ranking criteria. Both those approaches are though of little use for the formulation of sales growth strategies.

First, you need to understand what indicators drive demand for your offerings. For a telecom operator, as an example, it could be the complexity of the relations in the eco system the target customer operates in and the level of sophistication of services used to interact with this eco system. The best targets to focus on are then those which indicate the highest growth of these indicators within their industry peer group.

If you do no trust this intuitive common sense approach and are looking for some factual evidence before further consideration, I recommend you consult the book "Granularity of Growth" by Patrick Viguerie, Sven Smit and Mehrdad Baghai, which inspired this article.

Admittedly the book is based on research about how large corporations can grow. However, I believe the concepts, as far as the organic growth components are concerned, also apply for formulating any sales growth strategy.

To speak in the terms of this book, the method described above focuses on portfolio momentum (the composition of your customer portfolio) for revenue growth.

Intuitively, sales organizations might prefer to address the growth challenge by working on increasing their market share through higher efficiency. However, the authors of the book make a convincing case that growth champions draw most of their revenue growth from portfolio momentum. Market share growth can contribute to revenue growth, but at a lesser level than portfolio momentum. In addition, market share gains are often not sustainable.

Intuitively, sales organizations might prefer to address the growth challenge by working on increasing their market share through higher efficiency.

To conclude, for sales growth strategy formulation, you are better served if you abandon the myth of "stagnating" or "growth markets" and the thinking in broad averages. Instead dig deeper to find the concrete targets that will fuel your revenue growth.

CHRISTIAN MAURER, The Sales Executive Resource, is an independent sales effectiveness consultant, trainer and coach. He has a proven track record of helping the leaders of large, global B2B sales organizations to increase their productivity.

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Four Forgotten Productivity Enhancers

By Kevin Eikenberry

All of us want to be more productive. We buy time management books, go to courses, buy new software, read blogs dedicated to productivity and search for the best system to help us get more done in the time we have.

Of course this makes sense, because we all know, even if we don't always act like it, that we only have a limited amount of time – and we also have a variety of things we would like to do with this limited time resource.

This article isn't about a system, or some super-special techniques. Nothing you are going to read below is going to surprise you, and yet most of us don't do these things well, or do them so inconsistently that they lose their value. They aren't sexy, don't have a related website, and they won't cost you anything except a decision and some discipline. The good news is that they are so effective, that once you develop the discipline, you have productivity gains for the rest of your life.

The Productivity Enhancers

Here are the four choices that we can make that will extend and enhance our productivity in any and every area of our life.

- **Believing in Yourself and Your Success.** While this is certainly true at the highest level - our self esteem is an important component of our success - in this case, I am thinking about something more pragmatic. Have you ever had a situation where the task becomes so daunting that you aren't sure how you will ever figure it out or know if you can get it all done at all? When we are this unclear, our focus naturally moves to these negative thoughts and our confusion, frustration and overwhelm get in our way of getting anything done - let alone large amounts of high quality work. Thankfully, the other three enhancers that follow can help solve this one!

Have you ever had a situation where the task becomes so daunting that you aren't sure how you will ever figure it out or know if you can get it all done at all?

- **Creating a Clear Purpose.** As with belief, there is a big picture component to clarity of purpose. When we are clear on our life's purpose any things in life get better, but for now we are talking about clarity on the current situation. Do you clearly understand the problem you are facing? Do you clearly know the goal you are trying to achieve? When we get more clearer, we get more focused, and as we get more focused we can get more – and the right things – done.

- **Maintaining a Refreshed State.** Have you ever noticed that stress can negatively impact your productivity? Have you ever noticed how much more effective you are when you have gotten a good night's sleep or eaten a healthy meal? In every one of these cases lies a key to greater productivity. To be more productive we must take better care of our self. Get ample rest, eat better and exercise. All of these things will help us reduce our stress and remain refreshed and ready to tackle the work in front of us.

- **Investing in Quiet Time.** There are a number of forms and functions for your quiet time. In our quiet time we can reflect, we can pray or meditate, we can plan. Perhaps most of all, when we create quiet space in our lives, we can think. Thinking is something we do far too little of! When we give our self time, space and permission to think about the things we are working on, we will generate new ideas, approaches and connections. In addition, thinking time helps us remain more refreshed and alert as well.

The Paradox

As you read these four ideas, you may be thinking – these things don't give me more time – they take time. This is so true. Just as we must invest money to gain a pleasing return, we must invest in ourselves and our process in order to glean the best possible results. As counter-intuitive as it might sound, when you begin investing in these activities, the resulting performance improvement will be incredible.

As you read these four ideas you may be thinking – these things don't give me more time – they take time.

The Ultimate Benefits

These ideas can be applied, thinking of greater productivity in any area of life, but the best news of all is that, when we decide and discipline ourselves to develop these habits, the benefits accrue in every area of our life – not just the area we were focused on when we started!

Potential Pointer: The greatest productivity improvements come from our self and a commitment to being more successful. That commitment starts with investing time in ourselves, even when we think we are "too busy" to do those things.

KEVIN EIKENBERRY

Improving our productivity is important for us as individuals and as leaders. One way to become more productive as a leader is to get engaged in an ongoing learning process. You can kick start your progress as a leader and *become the leader you were born to be* with a free 2-month trial in Kevin Eikenberry's *Remarkable Leadership Kick Start System* at **http://www.remarkable-leadership.com/campaigns/kick-start-system.asp.**

Kevin is the Chief Potential Officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group **(www.KevinEikenberry.com)**, a learning consulting company that helps organizations, teams and individuals unleash their leadership potential.

Potential Pointer: The greatest productivity improvements come from our self and a commitment to being more successful.

"E-mail Is Dead"....... And Other Myths Explained

By Lori Richardson

Recently I have immersed myself into multiple dimensions of social media marketing. Through working with a wide diversity of clients - from entrepreneurs to Fortune 500 - I hear a lot of varied issues on the minds of those running businesses. Two things that are very much on people's minds are the economy (sales are flat or they are down for half of those talked with) and that there is a lot of fear, or at least stress, about what to do with all the social media options.

It dawned on me to embrace experts because I was finding so much conflicting information, and a sense of "it's too late for you", unless you or your business have eight or ten profiles up on various sites and you consume four hours a day monitoring them. Turns out that in a short period of time that I have invested, a lot has become clear - while there are all sorts of speculative platforms and sites out there, some strategies have been commonly adopted.

What you need to know:

The time to learn is NOW. Do not put social media off, or even limit your exposure, because it seems too intimidating or overwhelming. This is the megaphone on the web for word-of-mouth marketing. Remember when it was said that each of us knows at least 200 people to get our message out to? Now it can be thousands, or hundreds of thousands. Start simply and find others who are successfully integrating these ideas into their business - and learn from them.

The time to learn is NOW. Do not put social media off, or even limit your exposure, because it seems too intimidating or overwhelming.

It is <u>not</u> too late. Last week I heard the head of a text messaging startup business - who happens to be in his early 20's - state emphatically that "e-mail is dead." While e-mail may be dead down the road, it is still a strategy that many corporations and companies use successfully to stay in contact with prospects and clients. Are open-rates shrinking? Yes, but there are still compelling ways to keep in front of customers and prospects this way. Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater - find what works for your business, and integrate it in.

Create a social media marketing plan. Connect this to your sales plan and your existing marketing plan. Don't just stop and try some new tool because suddenly someone said to. Analyze yourself, or hire a company to offer you strategies that might increase your visibility and revenues.

Understand trial and error. Not everything you try in the way that you implement it will work necessarily. Again, listen to see what is working for others, particularly in your industry, and try them out.

Make 1% improvements daily. It is not about making a 180 degree change….. You wouldn't' do that with other aspects of your business - but it IS about ongoing ideas and integration.

If you're over 40 and resisting, it's time to take your blinders off. Actually the fastest growing group adopting Facebook and Twitter currently is the "45+ age group". There is a divide, though - businesspeople I know who say things like, "Someone's trying to be my friend - I don't want anything to do with it…." A few C-level clients who finally got comfortable with e-mail say that "the kids in marketing" will figure it all out. That is the wrong attitude. Take some time out of your schedule and attend one of the many social media workshops happening all around the world - or do some on-line research.

Businesses are different. What works for your "bricks-and-mortar" friend may not work for your distribution company, or your colleague's financial services company.

In fact I attended three SM (social media) presentations in one week recently. All three sessions were different, yet interesting in their own way. Common themes are these:

LinkedIn has been widely adopted as the "go-to" site for corporate connections and job seekers.

Not everything you try in the way that you implement it will work necessarily.

Facebook has "fan pages" for businesses. These are searchable through Google, while personal Facebook pages are not. You need to create a personal page first, then a fan page.

Blogging is a huge piece of the social media package. Writing a regular blog on your website is the easiest way to keep your site relevant and fresh. The best website software now is a blog platform, like Wordpress.

Twitter is NOT just about what you are doing. Before you write it off one more time, do some research on Twitter and business. Many articles have been written stating why you must investigate this strategy now. You might find, as many business leaders are now - immeasurable value.

Industry websites, such as **Top Sales Leaders**, will always have articles and links to valuable strategies to grow your business or favorite not-for-profit. Invest regular time in reading them.

To summarize, become a student of social media trends and facts. Learn every day, and implement new ideas in a "test" format to see how they serve your business. Don't delay, and don't overwhelm yourself if others are telling you that you've missed the boat. As soon as you read this article, take a first step and learn about "Google Alerts" if you haven't already - or visit your industry counterparts' websites and see how they are integrating social media - then create your plan.

LORI RICHARDSON is a B2B sales detective. She works with companies and integrates over 24 years in corporate selling to determine the cause of sales issues and then solves them. Lori is an in-demand keynote speaker and is the author of "50 Ways in 50 Days to Score More Sales" and co-author of "360 Degrees of the Customer." Sign up for helpful updates on social media, sales tips, and revenue generation at **www.scoremoresales.com** or call her toll-free at (888) 883-8370

It Takes A New Sales Model To Increase Sales

By Cheryl Clausen

The old sales model doesn't work in today's world. In fact, it has never really worked. The old sales model says, to increase sales you simply need to get more appointments, give your sales pitch to more people, and close more business. If only it were that simple.

You quickly run into some big challenges with the old sales model. For one thing, it's hard to get people to agree to meet with you. Once you set appointments, you discover you don't actually hold most of those appointments. So there you sit, no appointment, no hope to generate revenue.

Once you finally hold the appointment, you discover your prospect is defensive and guarded. They hold back. They don't want to answer your questions. When you give your pitch, they disengage or worse yet, get even more defensive. They refuse to follow along like they're supposed to. Somehow, they just don't seem to know their part.

When you finally get through your pitch, you ask for the sale. However, the prospect has one objection after another. About 70% of the time, the best you can get is permission to follow-up with them.

Oh goodie, now your work list is getting bigger, while your bank account is getting emptier.

Plus you can't balance everything at once. You can't aggressively prospect and hold lots of appointments and take care of existing clients all at the same time. Especially when only about 35% of those appointments turn into business. So what happens is you end up juggling between prospecting, sales, and fulfillment? Consequently, your revenue is feast and famine and so is your cash flow.

You quickly run into some big challenges with the old sales model. For one thing it's hard to get people to agree to meet with you

This process is like a treadmill. There's no sustainable growth. Following the old sales model, you aren't likely to ever make it big.

Contrast that scenario with the **new sales model.**

- First, you identify your **ideal future clients**
- Then you get those prospects to contact **YOU**
- Next you develop a **relationship** with them
- Finally, you present opportunities for those prospects to have an **experience** with you
- Ultimately, you **close** more business and increase your client **retention** because you only meet with qualified prospects and you develop strong relationships with those prospects

The experience makes it much easier to secure appointments. You effortlessly hold open and honest sales conversations, because they want to talk to you. Plus they want to talk to you about how you can help them. Agreeing to do business together is a **natural conclusion** to your conversation.

CHERYL A. CLAUSEN

One of the biggest benefits from the new sales model is it's a repeatable and easily automatable process. You put the process together once and it works without your direct input, consistently and predictably churning out new highly qualified prospects. Would you like to discover how to generate your own highly qualified prospects?

Visit: **http://increasesalescoach.com/highly-qualified-prospects.html**

Get the Increase Sales Coach Newsletter.
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Increase Sales Coach Cheryl A. Clausen Gets Results Sales Training Can't BECAUSE it's never just a sales issue.

This process is like a treadmill. There's no sustainable growth. Following the old sales model, you aren't likely to ever make it big.

Don’t Get Referrals, Get Introductions

By Paul McCord

Rick’s client was somewhat uncomfortable with his request. The sale had gone well enough—everything considered. There was the matter of the small overcharge on the invoice, but Rick took care of that within minutes of the discovery. And there was, of course, the issue with the programming that required an additional visit by the technician, interrupting another day of work. But, all-in-all, the process was certainly less painful than other installations the company had undergone.

But this last question about referrals was a little uncomfortable. His client was completely caught off guard. He wasn’t the least prepared to give a referral and wasn’t comfortable giving one. Nevertheless, Rick asked and stood his ground until his client coughed up the name and phone number of one of his vendors that might be able to use his services.

Rick was excited; the referral he received was to a company he had wanted to get into for quite awhile. Better yet, it was a referral to Nadia, the company’s COO, the exact person he had wanted to reach. He quickly thanked his client and headed to his office to make the call to his new prospect.

As soon as he was in his office, he picked up the phone, called Nadia, and got her assistant who, despite Rick’s insistence that one of Nadia’s clients had asked him to call her, refused to put him through. Instead, the assistant demanded that Rick leave his name and number and she would pass the information along to Nadia who would call if she were interested.

Rick tried several more times to reach her. He called and left messages. He took the liberty of emailing her. He sent two letters. Finally, after months of trying, he gave up.

Rick was excited; the referral he received was to a company he had wanted to get into for quite awhile.

Unfortunately, this scenario is played out thousands of times a day. Sellers get “referrals,” thank their client, rush off to call the prospect, and never have the opportunity to make contact.

Why is this such a common result of "referrals?"

Rick didn't get a referral. He simply got a name and phone number. Certainly, from his perspective, he received a referral. For Rick and most other sellers, a name and phone number and the permission from the client to use the client's name as the referring party are considered a referral. In reality, it is nothing but a name and phone number.

A real referral isn't simply getting the name and phone number of a potential prospect and the permission of the client to use their name as an introduction.

By simply getting the name and phone number and running off to make the phone call, Rick committed the most common sin sellers make when they get a referral. He failed to capitalize on the power of the referral and instead turned it into a warm call.

The power of a referral is its potential to open doors, to generate interest, to get an appointment. Seldom can a referral sell for you. That's not the goal of a referral. The goal is to open a door and, hopefully, begin the relationship from a position of strength and trust.

When you receive a referral, you are hoping to build a relationship with the referred prospect based on their trust and respect of your client. If the prospect trusts and respects your client, a portion of the trust and respect they have for your client is imbued to you because someone they trust referred you.

A real referral isn't simply getting the name and phone number of a potential prospect and the permission of the client to use their name as an introduction.

However, that trust is useless if you fail to connect with the prospect.

In many cases, the fact someone they trust gave you the prospect's name and phone number is not enough by itself to convince them to meet with you. You need something stronger than just your client's name to open the door.

That extra push is a direct introduction from your client to the prospect. A direct introduction is powerful for several reasons:

- It is unusual. It isn't often that someone is personally asked by someone they trust to meet a seller. The act itself places you in a different category than other sellers
- It demonstrates trust. A direct introduction demonstrates a high level of trust. Most people will not go to the trouble of taking the time and effort to give a direct introduction unless they have a high degree of trust and respect for the person they are introducing
- It makes it difficult for the prospect to decline a meeting. There is implied pressure on the prospect to meet with you since they don't want to offend the client

A call using the client's name doesn't have the power of an introduction and gives the prospect an easy out—they simply don't accept your call or decline a meeting. After all, the client wasn't really involved—you simply used the client's name.

On the other hand, a properly executed introduction virtually guarantees a meeting.

In most instances, you have three introduction methods at your disposal:

A call using the client's name doesn't have the power of an introduction and gives the prospect an easy out—they simply don't accept your call or decline a meeting. After all, the client wasn't really involved — you simply used the client's name.

1. **A letter of introduction written by you for your client's signature.** A letter from the client to the prospect is the most basic form of introduction. Rather than asking the client to write the letter, write it for them on their letterhead for their signature. Let the prospect know what you accomplished for the client; let them know why the client referred you; give a specific time and date to expect your call; and have the client ask them to let the client know their impression of you and your company after the prospect has met with you.

Mail the letter and then a day or two after the prospect should have received it, give them a call. Don't introduce yourself first. Rather, introduce the letter and client first, then move to asking for the appointment.

2. **A phone call from your client to the prospect.** A phone call is stronger than a letter and almost guarantees an appointment as it is very difficult for the prospect to say no to your appointment request while the client is on the line. The call gives the opportunity for the prospect to ask specific questions of your client and to get detailed information. Do not have your client call unless you are present—you want to know exactly what was said and you your client to formally introduce you to your prospect.

3. **A lunch meeting with your client, the prospect, and yourself.** A stronger method than either a letter or a call, a lunch meeting allows you to get to know the prospect as a friend before you get to know them as a seller. Like a phone call, it virtually guarantees a private meeting. Also, in a lunch meeting, your client becomes your salesperson and you're there as the consultant. Although a very powerful introduction format, most clients will only agree to do one, maybe two at the most, so use judiciously.

If you want to turn your "referrals" into real referrals, don't settle for just getting names and phone numbers. Learn how to turn those names and phone numbers into real referrals through a direct introduction to the prospect. Not only will the number of appointments you set go up—your sales will increase, your income will increase, and you'll find selling to be a lot easier.

PAUL MCCORD, a leading Business Development Strategist and president of McCord Training, works with companies and sales leaders to help them increase sales and profits by finding and connecting with high quality prospects in ways prospects respect and respond to. An internationally recognized author, speaker, trainer and consultant, Paul's clients range from giants such as Chase, New York Life, Siemens, and GE, to small and mid-size firms, as well as individual sales leaders. He is the author of the popular Sales and Sales Management Blog **(http://salesandmanagementblog.com).**

How To Prepare For International Selling

By Cindy King

Cultural differences in business practices can pop up on all levels. These cultural differences can also pop up at any time during the international sales process. The bad news is that these cultural differences are often potential deal breakers. Wouldn't it be nice to learn how to side-step these deal breakers and get more international sales?

One of the traits of successful international salespeople is their ability to process a wide variety of information, while operating in an environment of change. They know how to keep both their own sales objectives and their international clients' objectives in focus to close the sale.

Preparation is crucial in knowing how to deal with the diverse factors involved and can help you improve your international selling. Here are three important steps to prepare for international sales.

Open Your Cultural Mindset

If this is your first international sales meeting with a particular culture, it is a good idea to look up the cultural differences you might be confronted with. In some cultures, these differences are very important to know. Just one word of advice: do not get too wrapped up in the cross-cultural differences.

Instead of learning a long series of cultural do's and don'ts, it is often better to prepare your own mindset to adapt to different people. You need to be prepared to communicate and do business with people that think differently than you do. Culture shock can make you react in ways that are counterproductive to your international sales. Do not forget to question your own cultural baggage and how it affects your communication.

One of the traits of successful international salespeople is their ability to process a wide variety of information, while operating in an environment of change.

The right mindset of being open to different people will get you through most cultural challenges. Even if this takes time and effort to develop, you can simply try to keep the right frame of mind before an international sales meeting and you are on your way to improving your cross-cultural skills.

Strive to maintain an open mindset during your international sales meetings.

Get The Big Picture

International sales require more preparation than selling within one culture. Not only do you have to prepare for your sales meeting, but you also have to look back and review your business at a more basic level.

This is because different cultures have different ways of doing things. When two different business practices come together, there can be surprises: different needs, different limitations, and different opportunities. One of the particularities of cross-culture sales is that your international clients can challenge your business basics. There is no right way or wrong way. There is a path to find towards your international sale.

Sometimes you may even wonder if you live in the same world. This happens when you have not thought enough about the very basic elements of your business. It is not a question of having all of the answers. It is a question of grasping the big picture of how your business works, understanding the why, what this means and where things fit in… in simple terms.

You need the simple terms because you might need to equate your big picture with a foreign big picture which is totally different. If your picture is not basic enough, you might not be able to communicate well enough to find the path to the international sale.

Include a review of your basic business framework while preparing for your international sales meeting.

International sales require more preparation than selling within one culture. Not only do you have to prepare for your sales meeting, but you also have to look back and review your business at a more basic level.

Prepare For Credibility

The international salesperson also has the role of representing his company abroad. There are some fundamental credibility issues here.

Although these credibility issues are emphasized more in some cultures than in others, it is always good to be an exemplary representative for your company when dealing with international clients. People always like doing business with other people.

You create your credibility in how you communicate and what you say. This means you need to be prepared to have a credible response for a variety of questions and circumstances. The types of questions you need to prepare for depend both on your particular business and on the culture of your international client.

The main thing is to learn:

- When and how you need to address the question immediately
- When it is best to defer answering the question or state your need to refer to management

This is why cross-cultural selling requires more preparation. A sound and in-depth knowledge of your own business, what your product does and where this fits into your clients' picture, is an important part of representing your company in foreign countries.

You also need to learn how to communicate this knowledge to build your credibility. The best way to learn this is to listen to your international clients and to ask questions.

Keep your credibility in mind throughout any cross-cultural sales.

You create your credibility in how you communicate and what you say.

Use This To Stay Focused

International experience and strong cross-cultural skills are key to successful international sales, but the right preparation is just as important.

Follow the advice above and, during your next international sales meeting, you will find it much easier to:

- Keep your objectives on target
- Address unusual situations smoothly
- Come across with credibility

Good preparation gives you the tools you need to stay focused as you take in all of the information around you… even when cultural differences pop up and you need to adjust your sales strategy.

CINDY KING is a **Cross-Cultural Marketer & International Sales Specialist** based in France. She uses her dual background in sales & marketing to help businesses improve their international sales conversion and develop country-specific international sales guides.

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Sales Strategies For The New Economy

By Kelley Robertson

Times are tough. Companies are cutting back, people are tightening their belts, and many decision-makers are holding off on major purchases. However, your company has not reduced your sales quotas. Selling in a difficult economy requires a different approach than during a robust one. Let's look at what you need to do to actively compete and keep your sales afloat.

First and foremost, don't believe everything you hear. Just because the media says that the economy is sliding downward does not mean that your sales will be affected. Your mental mindset plays a tremendous role in your success. While it is difficult to maintain a positive perspective during times like these, it is essential to keep focused on your main objective. Associate with positive, like-minded people and avoid naysayers like the plague.

Tighten your prospecting. Too many sales people cast a wide net when prospecting with the intent of catching anything that comes their way. However, this approach is simply not a good use of your time. Instead of cold calling one hundred companies, determine your ideal customer and target businesses or organizations that more closely match this description. If you don't know who your ideal customer is, look at your existing clients. Who generates high revenue with high profit margins? What problems do you help them solve? Why do they do business with you? If you don't know, ask.

Do not, under any circumstances, say, "…and I will sell to anyone." This is the equivalent of selling to no one. In a difficult market, it is critical that you focus your efforts. Sales guru, Lee Salz recommends that you limit your prospecting efforts to exactly twenty-five new customers.

Just because the media says that the economy is sliding downward does not mean that your sales will be affected.

Use an account-entry campaign. Jill Konrath, author of Selling to Big Companies, suggests that you use a multi-touch campaign in your prospecting once you identify your top prospects. Use a combination of email, telephone, targeted letters, trigger events, and networking to connect with key decision-makers. This takes planning and time, which means you cannot effectively prospect to more than twenty-five companies. Once again, this reinforces the importance of narrowing your prospect list, rather than using a shotgun approach.

Focus your presentations. Anytime you meet with a prospect or existing client, make sure that your presentation is directly focused on their problem. Skip the nonsense about your company, how long you have been in business, blah, blah, blah. Instead concentrate on showing your prospect EXACTLY how their business will benefit from using your product or service. If your product will save them money, tell them EXACTLY how much. If what you sell will improve productivity or reduce errors, show your prospect EXACTLY how. Decision-makers don't stop making purchases; however, they do expect more in terms of value.

Get closer to your customers. Hopefully you already have a great relationship with your existing clients. Now is the time to strengthen that relationship. Aggressively look for ways you can help them solve problems they may be experiencing in their business. This does not necessarily mean selling more of your products. It could mean connecting them with experts in different fields, helping them on a project or recommending other resources.

Become more visible. Resist the temptation to crawl into a cave and hide until the economy recovers. Your customers may forget about you and you may die. Now is the time to increase your networking activities—make sure that you network at the appropriate events. You can also increase your visibility by writing articles for industry trade magazines, speaking at industry conferences, and volunteering at your association's events. Your prospects may not have the money to make a buying decision right now, but when you increase your visibility you may just give them a reason to buy from you versus a competitor.

Now is the time to strengthen that relationship. Aggressively look for ways you can help them solve problems they may be experiencing in their business.

Fine-tune your sales skills. As a sales trainer, I always come back to this and with good reason. The skills you currently possess got you where you are today, but they won't get you much further. During times of economic uncertainty, it is essential to refine your questioning skills and learn to ask some tough questions: How has your customers' buying process changed? What new challenges are they facing? What needs must your customers have satisfied now as opposed to later?

In addition to death and taxes, the one thing you can count on is that the economy will fluctuate. Right now, it is considerably more challenging than it was two years ago. However, that doesn't mean you can't reach your sales targets. Get smarter. Get focused. Get busy. Get ready to succeed in a tough economy.

KELLEY ROBERTSON, author of *The Secrets of Power Selling* helps sales professionals fine-tune their selling habits to improve their sales and profits. Receive a FREE copy of *100 Ways to Increase Your Sales* by subscribing to his free newsletter at **www.Fearless-Selling.ca**

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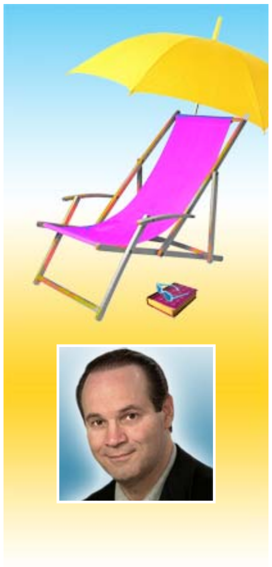

Collaborative Negotiating Strategies

By Dr. Tony Alessandra

I believe there are two ways to negotiate: manipulatively and collaboratively. You could call it "win win" versus "win lose". From which perspective do you currently operate?

Manipulative negotiating sees the participants as adversaries. Tactics include exerting power, using subterfuge and hiding your own nonverbal communications. There is a lot of mistrust, tension, and suspicion. The Manipulative Negotiator's goal is to win. There are usually hard feelings on somebody's part--typically the loser. The focus is on single answers and positions "This is what I want!" It's hardball negotiating. If you are making a one-time negotiation and you're not going to see the people anymore, perhaps you can get away with it, but it's not a healthy business practice.

The collaborative negotiator sees the participants as problem solvers looking for a mutually satisfactory solution. It's a process that both parties can walk away from and feel comfortable that neither one was "had." It relies on trust, openness, credibility and honesty. The goal is a wise and fair outcome for all parties. The focus is on multiple options. There are many ways to satisfy both parties' needs, not just one.

Everybody should have a negotiating philosophy. Many people enter important negotiations without having a clear idea of what they would like to accomplish. A negotiating philosophy could be that you want to go for low price; or you may be willing to pay going rates, but you want to get as many additional amenities as possible. Here's my personal negotiating philosophy: "When two people want to do business with each other, they will not let the details stand in the way. However, when two people do not want to do business with each other, the details will rarely pull the deal together." If somebody wants to do business with you, he is more apt to compromise and less apt to seek unreasonable compromises from you.

Manipulative negotiating sees the participants as adversaries.

Now let's look at several specific actions you can take during Collaborative Negotiating.

1. Develop a negotiation strategy that clearly spells out what you will and won't do during the negotiations.

2. Collect as much background information as possible beforehand on the people and companies you'll be facing in the negotiation process.

3. Evaluate your competitive exposure. What are the odds that another supplier or meeting planner will come up with a better offer than the one you are making? This information can help establish your maximums and minimums.

4. Prepare and role-play with colleagues prior to your initial negotiation meeting. It provides you with confidence in facing questions and situations you are now prepared to handle.

5. Make sure that your clothing, grooming, materials, handouts, preparation and depth of knowledge project credibility, authority and strength. This is where you start creating the "confidence" factor because people do "judge books by their cover." People will not negotiate seriously with you if they don't believe you have the power and credibility to make decisions.

6. Tailor your pace and presentation to the individual differences of the other people. People who are very relationship oriented and low in assertiveness are called Relaters and are primarily interested in relationships. Those who are "people" oriented and highly assertive are called Socializers and are interested in recognition. Task oriented, highly assertive people are Directors who are concerned about results. Less assertive, task oriented people are Thinkers who like structure.

Be flexible in your "approach" with the differences in people. It will reduce relationship tension and subsequently increase interpersonal trust, credibility, cooperation and productivity.

Be flexible in your "approach" with the differences in people. It will reduce relationship tension and subsequently increase interpersonal trust, credibility, cooperation and productivity.

7. Take time to study all dimensions of the other person's current situation. Ask questions and listen with your ears and eyes. Try to determine the end results the other person is attempting to accomplish, not solely his position or demands. However, it would be important to find out the decision making criteria (must haves vs. should haves vs. nice to haves) of the other person. This will provide you with his/her negotiation limits.

8. When presenting your desires/demands, try to relate them to the end results the other person is attempting to achieve. Show how your requests will also benefit the other person.

9. Negotiate the points of difference. Do not always go for low price (unless that's your negotiation philosophy). Look for other points to negotiate.

10. Do not attack the other person's position (specific demands) ¬Look behind them (objectives/end results).

11. Do not defend your position. Invite criticism and advice - e.g. "What would you do if you were in my position?"

12. At the conclusion of your negotiations, make sure all parties fully and clearly understand who is to do what, when, where, how, and why.

By following the above strategies, you should significantly improve the outcomes you generate from your negotiations. Furthermore, your counterparts in the negotiation sessions will feel much better about you, the process, and the outcomes. Together you'll both feel that a "fair" position was reached that was in the best interest of both sides - a "win win" outcome. That's the bottom line benefit of Collaborative Negotiating!

DR. TONY ALESSANDRA

President of AssessmentBusinessCenter.com, a company that offers online 360° assessments; chairman of BrainX.com, a company that created the first Online Learning Mastery System™; and is the founding partner of The Platinum Rule Group **(http://www.platinumrulegroup.com/)**. Recognized by Meetings & Conventions Magazine as "one of America's most electrifying speakers," Dr. Alessandra was inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame in 1985.

Do You Know What This Is?

By Diane Helbig

Many small business owners struggle with creating their marketing message and selling their product or service. There are various reasons for this, including not knowing the answers to some basic questions. Because of this, they cast a wide net and try to pull in anyone. Their message gets lost in a lot of words and directions.

Sales should be targeted to exactly those people/companies you work best with. Marketing messages should be clear and concise. They should capture some basic elements that when read tell the reader what your value is. Crafting your marketing message and selling is easier when you know the answers to some basic questions.

1. **Who Are We?**

   So who are you, anyway? Your company is made up of people – even when there's only you! Who are those people? What skills, talents, and personality characteristics do they (you) bring to the business?

   Who you are can be a significant part of your message. People do business with people they trust. When you include who you are in your message you are letting people know why they can trust you.

   When you know who you are, you know what your mission is, what your goals are, what you hope to achieve, and what you believe. This knowledge will help you stay on task when marketing and selling.

2. **What Do We Do?**

   What is the product you make or the service you provide? Having a solid understanding of this helps you speak about your business and frame your message. You can't be all things to all people effectively. Deciding to be specific about what you do, and don't, often keeps you on track and focused. This makes it easier for others to land on what you do.

Sales should be targeted to exactly those people/companies you work best with.

It also makes it easier to target market. When you know what you do, you know who you do it for. Those are the people/companies you want to pursue. Remember, you do not want all of the business out there. You want all of the right business – the business that is right for your company.

It also helps you know what you want to say in your marketing message. You want to convey to your market the specific results you provide. Taking the time to truly understand that will help you speak about it clearly.

3. **How Do We Do It?**

   How do you make that product or provide that service? This is where you should also consider the things that differentiate your company from your competition. What is your special sauce? Is there a methodology you use or a process that is unique? Is there a benefit your clients realize from that process?

   You should be able to explain to a prospect how you accomplish those results you've identified. Would you buy from someone who couldn't articulate the process? I don't think I would. It's part of the trust aspect of sales. People want to do business with people they believe know their business well.

4. **Who Do We Do It For?**

   What do your clients look like: size, structure, industry(s), and geography? Having a very clear picture of your client base gives you an idea of what your target market(s) looks like. It also helps you define your marketing message.

   There is a reason you sell to that group. The reason is a combination of who they are and what you do. Knowing who they are and what they need gives you the foundation for creating your marketing message.

There is a reason you sell to that group. The reason is a combination of who they are and what you do.

5. **Why Are We Better?**
   So, why should someone buy from you? What sets you and your company apart – that added edge? This is your differentiator. Understanding what it is helps you craft your message and sell your product or service.

When you run through the questions above, you will find yourself realizing the added benefits of YOUR Company. This too will make it easier to sell, because you can speak to the standard and added benefits to your clients and prospects of working with your company.

When it comes right down to it, there is no reason a small business owner should have difficulty with the sales process or creating their marketing message. By working through the questions here, you will find it easy to define the value of your product or service. You'll have a better understanding of WHY people should work with you. In addition, you'll have a clear view of WHO you should be prospecting to.

DIANE HELBIG is a Professional Coach and the president of Seize This Day Coaching. Diane works with salespeople, small business owners, and entrepreneurs, helping them realize success as they define it. She is also the Co-Founder of Seize True Success, a coaching practice dedicated to working with franchisees. She is a Contributing Editor on COSE Mindspring, a resource website for small business owners, as well as a member of the Sales Experts Panel at **www.topsalesexperts.com**

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To learn more or schedule a complimentary discovery session, visit **www.seizethisdaycoaching.com** or **www.seizetruesuccess.com**

Diane is a contributing author for Chicken Soup for the Soul: Power MOMS.

So, why should someone buy from you? What sets you and your company apart – that added edge?

Are You Missing These Buying Signals?

By Skip Anderson

Buying decisions are made in your prospect's mind. His behavior, body language, and use of verbal language can provide you clues that allow you to essentially peek into his mind.

Here is a list of twelve customer buying signs that you don't want to miss. They are behaviors, and body language and verbal language clues (buying signs). They often indicate interest in owning your product. [The following buying signals are discussed below with reference to their appearance during or after your product presentation, but before asking the prospect to buy.]

1. **Speaking the Language of Ownership**
   Most customers use tentative language when discussing a product with a salesperson. But when a customer speaks the language of ownership, the prospect has probably already emotionally or intellectually purchased the product. What remains are merely details of the transaction.

   Asking, "How will I pay the balance" instead of, "How would I pay the balance?" is an example of the language of ownership.

2. **Smiling (a real smile - not a polite smile)**
   A real smile is broader and more natural than a smile of politeness. When a prospect is smiling a real smile, especially when examining, using, or interacting with your product, the prospect is indicating pleasure, satisfaction, desire, interest, or happiness. Any of these are positive emotions we would want to see when selling to a prospect.

   Try this: Ask your prospects, "What do you think of the [insert feature here] that we talked about today," after your presentation. If your prospects ever flash a real smile, it's a buying sign.

Here is a list of twelve customer buying signs that you don't want to miss. They are behaviors, and body language and verbal language clues (buying signs).

3. **Dilated Pupils**
   The science of puppillometrics tells us that pupils dilate not only to allow more light into the retina, but also when looking at something we like. When I managed an art gallery, I would watch the pupils of prospects as they examined an art piece they were considering purchasing. Two different art pieces yielding two different dilation metrics told a story. [Caution: pupils can dilate for other reasons, too, like drug use or stress).

4. **Flushing of Face, Neck, or Chest**
   This can indicate a high level of interest in your product. If you test drive several cars, I'm going to bet you want to purchase the one that made your neck turn rosy!

5. **Elevated Sensory Interaction with Your Product**
   Customers who display an elevated use of their senses in examining you product are interested in buying it. Think of not being able to take your eye off that special diamond, or not being able to keep your hands off that velour sofa fabric. Sensory interaction increases with desire.

6. **Asking for References**
   Uninterested prospects rarely ask to speak to your former customers or to see references. If your prospect asks, there's a good chance she/he's in the process of purchasing from you.

7. **A Marked Increase in the Degree of Verbality, or the Speed and Volume of Speech**
   If your prospect's speaking rate or volume increases (and anger or frustration is not driving these changes), your prospect is probably showing you a buying signal.

8. **Increased Animation**
   When your calm and cool customer's behavior transforms and begins to resemble that of a three-year-old, you have a buying sign.

9. **Asking Specific Questions**
   Highly specific questions from the prospect often indicate an intent to purchase.

The science of puppillometrics tells us that pupils dilate not only to allow more light into the retina, but also when looking at something we like.

10.Talking to Self

When customers talk to themselves, such as "Look how lovely a view out to the valley this is from the kitchen," prospects are usually verbalizing what they're thinking. If their verbalization is positive, their thoughts are positive, too.

11.Silence

When a salesperson asks, "What do you think of this investment opportunity?" and the prospect remains silent, they are considering your product. Let the customer think. Don't interrupt their thought process. The prospect wouldn't be considering your product if they weren't interested.

12. Stating Objections (if real)

"I need to talk to my husband" usually isn't a real objection, it's a false objection. But when you can determine that an objection is real, and you have a solution to the prospect's objection, you have a very high likelihood of completing the sale.

SKIP ANDERSON is an authority on B2C selling and is the Founder of Selling to Consumers (**http://www.sellingtoconsumers.com/**), a sales training and consulting company that works with companies and individuals to boost selling performance. Subscribe to free email Sales Tips for consumer salespeople at **http://www.sellingtoconsumers.com/subscribe**

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Who Makes It About Price?

By Bill Sayers

Too often sales reps and sales leaders come to me and say – our business is all about pricing. Our business is different and we have to play in this price sensitive environment. I will listen and ask them about their business and what makes it all about price. I then say to them – "It is not the customer who makes it about price – it is the sales rep who makes it about price". That statement is always good for some real push back and arguments from sales reps and their leaders.

Why does your customer or prospect buy from you?

I ask this question in Strategic Account Management teaching: What do our customers value? I get the class to provide all the things that their customers look for when making a buying decision. Depending on the size of the group I can fill one, two or three flip charts with the words that describe what the customer is looking for from the sales person and his/her company.

Here is the interesting thing. Many times price is not even one of the things that is given as a reason. Some of the things that are listed are: value, trust, knowledge, service, capabilities, national coverage, brand, technology, honesty, delivery, industry status etc. If price comes up, many times it is qualified as competitive pricing.

What causes the sale to be all about price …

My observation over the years is that when a rep is not prepared, when a rep is lazy, when a rep knows nothing about the customer, then all they have to talk about is price. If this is allowed to go on then the rep has nowhere to go, except to discount and win the deal on the best price. And some customers rely on this as a strategy to deal with sales people.

Depending on the size of the group I can fill one, two or three flip charts with the words that describe what the customer is looking for from the sales person and his company.

A consulting firm I know surveyed 1000 Canadian CEO's two years ago. They asked: "What are the criteria you look at when making a buying decision? The first criterion was "trust". Number six on the list was "price". Price is **not** the deciding criteria. So why do reps make it the deciding criteria? Because the customer doesn't trust the rep and the rep doesn't know what is important to his customer.

What happens when you take price out of the equation …

I say to reps that when they go on a first call with a customer or prospect – take in a blank piece of paper and an open mind, and you can't talk about your product or price. The only thing left to talk about is the customer and their business as it relates to your industry. Now you must be prepared, must know what questions to ask and be prepared to understand the customers business from their standpoint.

In my negotiation classes the biggest take away for reps is that if they are prepared and know what their position is, what their walk away position is and what their customers key success factors are, that they end up with a deal that works for both sides and that price takes a back seat to the deal – even when they think their industry is all about price. You see, it is the reps who make deals all about price and who allow customers to make it all about price.

Do you have customers who want to make deals all about price? – you sure do. The question is – "Do you want to keep doing business with them?" Is the business profitable? Do you spend the appropriate amount of time with this customer? Do you have a good relationship? If you struggle with these answers then you may want to rethink this piece of business.

Next time you are working on a deal with a customer or prospect, take price out of the equation and see what you are left with. If there is nothing left – What do you need to do? If you are honest, you will discover that you need to do some more work on the deal or that it is time to walk away from this particular deal!

Price is not the deciding criteria. So why do reps make it the deciding criteria?

Sayers Says …

Why are you making the business all about price? What do you know about your customer? Where is your level of trust with your customers? What is it that customers value most in each specific deal? How are you going to get your customer that value? If you take the price issue out of each deal, what are you really left with?

BILL SAYERS speaks, coaches, leads education sessions and provides management consulting services to a variety of companies. Bill has been praised for his leadership, common-sense approach and ability to inspire sales people to new levels of success. His easy manner and strong public-speaking skills make him an engaging facilitator. Bill connects with senior executives and sales professionals alike, as he shares his real-life experiences and provides the appropriate tools and strategies for success in today's business world.

For the past five years Bill has run his own sales consulting practice. He has recently completed the writing of his new book – "Funnels and Forecasts – The Great Game of Sales". He has been a professor at George Brown College teaching Personal Selling Skills to the Sports and Event Marketing Graduate Program, and is on the faculty of Canadian Professional Sales Association and Canadian Management Centre.

To receive our free "How are you Playing The Game" Scorecard and a 45 minute one-on-one session with Bill Sayers, email: **info@TheSayersGroup.com** or visit: **http://www.TheSayersGroup.com** .

Recruiting A Sales Force That Sells

By Colly Graham

Recruiting the right salespeople is the first step in developing an effective and dynamic sales force. Therefore, you must have a comprehensive recruiting process that will allow you to seek out top performers.

Sequence

1. Identify
2. Search
3. Qualify
4. Test
5. Interview
6. References

Most employers believe that the interview is the most important step. Some will tell you that testing ranks first. Others will say that the search is a top priority.

Step one is the most important – identify. Identify the attributes and experiences of the ideal candidate. If you fail to apply an effective and comprehensive effort to the identification step, you will often be unable to find and/or recruit a strong salesperson that will succeed in your business.

If you have experienced any recruiting mistakes in the past, those errors were probably the result of an interview n which the candidate made a positive impression on you.

The second most important step – If you have experienced any recruiting mistakes in the past, those errors were probably the result of an interview in which the candidate made a positive impression on you. Unfortunately, many salespeople are capable of making a favorable impression in an interview. However, it does not mean that they will produce a lot of business.

The interview may actually be the least significant step in the process. No other step can help you measure self-presentation, composure, maturity, style, wit, responsiveness, thoughtfulness or eye contact. However, those may be the only things a live interview can accurately measure.

It's most important that you don't waste valuable interview time asking questions that were answered on an employment application or a CV.

The curriculum vitae is another tool that is far less important than it once was. References have been of questionable value for years. About the only thing a CV can predict is the length of time a candidate may remain with your company and the time of year when the he/she (gender neutral, subsequently referred to as he) is susceptible to slumping. The employment history in the CV will very quickly answer those questions. People tend to remain in each job for similar periods of time and you will see this pattern repeated over and over again. Others, when they change jobs, tend to do so at the same time of year on each occasion. If such a person comes to work for you, expect some kind of depression, distraction, slump or other downturn in performance at the same time of year.

What Makes A Good Sales Person

- Ability to feel – Empathy
- Need to Conquer – Ego Drive

Identifying Your Ideal Candidate

- Are you faced with tremendous competition?
- Are your products and services priced higher than, less than or the same as most of your competitors?
- What is the value of your average size order or account?
- Can your product or service be seen, touched and demonstrated or is it a concept that must be described?
- Do your customers or clients continue to buy from your company after the initial sale or do you move on to new ones?
- Will you ask the salesperson to take over a mature customer base or territory and grow the existing accounts, or will you want him to find new business?
- Should your salespeople "close" (in most cases) or do they leave with the hope that the next time your service is needed it will be bought from you.
- Your business is probably different in some other ways.

References have been of questionable value for years.

Although some or all of these criteria may appear very obvious, most companies seldom take the time to properly identify the ideal sales candidate.

Weaknesses to avoid if possible

- Need for Approval
- Self-Limiting Beliefs
- Difficulty Recovering From Rejection
- Emotionally Involved
- Not Money Motivated
- Non-Supportive Buy Cycle
- Not Comfortable Talking About Money
- Outlook Problem
- Lack of Commitment
- Lack of Desire

Interview Reality Test Check

It is very difficult to interview effectively when interviewing is not a full time practice. That difficulty is magnified when we consider that most managers have not been properly instructed to interview salespeople! Do you know what to look for?

- Overall First Impression
- Dress
- Relationship Building Rapport
- Eye Contact
- Sincerity
- Attitude
- Responsibility
- Organization
- Spontaneity
- Composure
- Maturity
- Style
- Resilience

Although some or all of these criteria may appear very obvious, most companies seldom take the time to properly identify the ideal sales candidate.

Taking References

1. Speak to a former supervisor
2. Relate your questions to the job the applicant has done
3. Ask Probing Questions:

"Why did the person leave or were they terminated?"

- **Take one of the applicant's obvious strengths and use as a basis for a discussion of weaknesses, i.e.**
    - *"I found John to be extremely personable - however I felt he was a little impatient"*

- **Ask questions which allow the other person to speak freely, i.e.**
    - *"John worked for you ………, in what area do you feel with appropriate training John's effectiveness could be improved?"*
    - *"What I am asking is how we could help John reach his full potential?*

- **And finally ask Direct Questions for example:**
    - *"Do you think John needs close supervision?"*
    - *"So that we can help John, what do you believe his weaknesses to be?"*

- **Don't fall into the trap:**
    - *"Would you rehire John?"*

And finally, you have made your choice - what will you do to ensure his or her's success?

salesxcellence was formed by **COLLY GRAHAM** in 1996 who has over thirty-five years experience in telephone, field sales and sales management. salesxcellence has trained and consulted with over three hundred companies since the formation of the company, assisting companies to raise the level of their game. salesxcellence focuses on businesses realising their real potential in sales. Visit: **http://www.salesxcellence.com/**

Boost Sales And Thrive In The New Economy. Be Shrewd And Creative About Who You Target

By Colleen Francis

No one could hit a baseball the way hall-of-famer Ted Williams could. He knew there was a lot more to becoming a home-run champ than just swinging hard at every pitch. "To be a good hitter," Williams once said, "you've got to get a good ball to hit." Here's a lesson in there for all of us as sales professionals to apply each time we step up to the plate in business: *it pays to be choosy.*

Just like Williams poised in the batter's box waiting for his good ball, sales people get their best results when they target their prospects with forethought and empathy. This is an especially important discipline to engage when selling in a down market, because resources are tighter than ever and your time is finite to meet your sales quotas.

Follow the money

In the new economy that is taking shape around us, buyer behavior is changing (a point that I discuss in greater detail in the first article in this series). It's incumbent on you as a sales person to sharpen your sleuthing skills and follow the money. Take time to look at your market and ask yourself how the needs of buyers are changing and how you can best position yourself and your organization to meet those needs.

To illustrate my point, consider the changes that we're seeing in the car industry. Sales figures for most car markers are pretty discouraging right now (although Jaguar, curiously enough, posted an eight percent sale increase for 2008!) Economists point to all kinds of reasons as the cause behind this, but the effect is clear: people are keeping their vehicles longer. There are opportunities here for those who choose to see them. If people are keeping their cars longer, doesn't it stand to reason that they have to take better care of them? It's not a stretch, therefore, to suggest that car owners could be frequenting garages, auto repair and tune-up shops more often.

"To be a good hitter," Williams once said, "you've got to get a good ball to hit."

To complete this illustration, a smart organization that targets these customers and caters to their needs will be well-positioned to smack those sales home-runs with a confidence that would make Ted Williams proud.

Spend money on those who are spending with you

This is not the time to be taking a shotgun approach to sales, trying to sell all things to all people. Rather, this is when you should be targeting those who know you best—particularly customers that have a higher propensity to buy from you in good times and bad. Spend money on those who are spending with you. Don't make the mistake that so many companies make during an economic downturn, taking a hatchet to their marketing budget. There's a real opportunity right now for smart companies to step up their advertising and marketing efforts—provided that they are willing to invest the time to target who they are going to reach with their message and then measure the results.

In addition, consider how you can improve up-selling and cross-selling in your current market. Look carefully at who buys your products or services. Let's say you're a sales rep for a food-services company and you notice that your product line is selling briskly among women who are Toronto-based restaurant owners in the 45¬–65 age bracket. Maybe that's who you should be targeting. Find out what their needs are, and market aggressively to them, showing how your product meets that need.

Be creative

Success in the new economy is about adapting quickly to change, but these are times that also offer an opportunity for you to become a game changer, too. Creative solutions to age-old problems have a way of finding an audience—no matter what market conditions are like out there. Look with **empathy** at your customers. Ask yourself, are there barriers that tend to get in their way of doing business...things that frustrate them in their work?

This is not the time to be taking a shotgun approach to sales, trying to sell all things to all people.

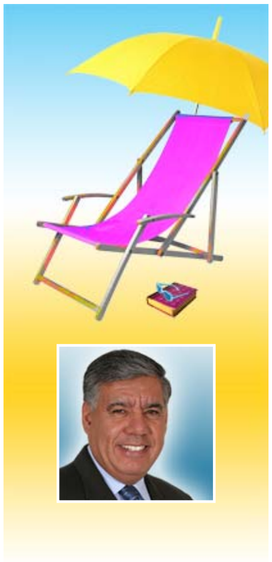
Think about how your sales team or your organization can ease that pain, starting with a simple, bold new idea or approach and give it time to germinate. That's the essence of what Clayton Christensen of the Harvard Business School describes as *disruptive innovation*. He notes in a recently published, co-written article: "success comes from figuring out how to satisfy a real customer who needs to get a real job done." Don't underestimate the incredible opportunities that are at hand in this new economy to change the rules of the game—no matter what industry you work in.

Just remember that targeting is about being selective. Focus on the customers who are spending, understand how their habits might be changing and find solutions—especially innovative ones—that can help position you and your organization to remain on top. Which takes me back to my point about Ted Williams. He stressed the importance of waiting for the right pitch before swinging, but he also had a poignant follow-up: "the greatest hitter in the world can't hit bad balls well." Targeting is as much about staying focused on customers as it is about being able to distinguish between the great ones and the not-so-great ones.

(1) The complete Williams interview from 1968's Sport Illustrated
http://vault.sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1081309/3/index.htm

COLLEEN FRANCIS, Sales Expert, is Founder and President of Engage Selling Solutions (**www.EngageSelling.com**). Armed with proven sales strategies that work in this tough economy, Colleen helps clients realize immediate results, achieve lasting success and permanently raise their bottom line.

Start improving your results today with Colleen's online newsletter Engaging Ideas and her FREE 7 day intensive sales secrets eCourse: **www.EngageNewsletter.com**



How To Successfully Cold Call For New Business

By Steve Martinez

I can remember driving around and driving around looking for the "friendly" building in my territory when I had to make cold calls on a daily basis. I didn't want to make cold calls. I didn't like rejection, but I had to make them for three reasons. Here are the reasons I believe a salesperson and a business must make cold calls.

1. **Cold calling** is the ultimate penalty and learning experience for new businesses and new salespeople that do not have a clearly defined business plan or marketing strategy. They must resort to cold calling or find a more accurate method of finding prospects.

2. **Cold Calling** is for any business that can afford to spend both time and man power to weed through contacts, because they don't have a clearly defined customer profile to narrow the prospect search in a more logical manner with an online search solution.

3. **Cold Calling** is for a business or someone that has something that almost everyone wants, because it is a HOT product or service that is unique and is not readily available online or in stores. The product can be recognized as - I want this!

Let's assume that you must make cold calls because it is your only option at this time. Your first directive is to define the perfect customer profile that you will use to measure prospects against. You should have at least three criteria that will determine if a suspect is a prospect.

I didn't like rejection, but I had to make them for three reasons. Here are the reasons I believe a salesperson and a business must make cold calls.

Let's say your ideal customers have an average sales volume of over $500,000.00, employ 20 employees or more and manufacture over 20 products with an average price of over $100.00. With this information, you can script a few questions to ask any prospect and determine if they are a suspect or a prospect.

Questions are the Power Tools of Cold Calling

The questions you ask will put you in the driver's seat in cold calling and turn the tables on who is going to be rejected. If you ask the right questions, you decide who qualifies and who doesn't - thus, you are the one that rejects contacts.

Cold Calling Facts

- The people you call on view you as an interruption in their day.
- If you act and look like a salesperson on a cold call, you will be rejected.
- People don't like to be rejected! If you are the one rejecting, you are in control.
- Most people you call on are willing to help someone who needs help.
- If you ask for help and time with a smile, you will get help most of the time.
- Most prospects aren't ready to buy, when you are ready to sell them.

Lead with questions, not with who you are or what you do. Remember, your goal in cold calling is to identify prospects. It is NOT to sell something on the spot. I have listed below a few questions to ask someone based on the information we created in our sample customer profile earlier.

1. Is this a company that manufactures a product?
2. How many employees work at this location?
3. Where can I buy the products made here and how much are they in stores?

Remember, "The goal of cold calling is to identify prospects and eliminate suspects" with the profile scripted questions you developed. The secret to success is, how you ask and if you are perceived as someone needing help. If you ask for a little help prior to asking your questions, you will get good information. If you also act as though you are lost and need direction, you will get assistance from some of the nastiest people who want to help you. It is all in the way you approach the gathering of information and asking your questions.

The questions you ask will put you in the driver's seat in cold calling and turn the tables on who is going to be rejected.

Cold calling can only be a good strategy when the percentages are in your favor rather than against you. What I mean here is that there are more likely prospects than rejects in your territory. Otherwise, it is not a good strategy.

Why I don't Cold Call

Instead of cold calling on the streets, I work with online profile services and use the abundance of profile data and information to qualify and quantify prospects on line. The secret is to know what you are looking for.

STEVE MARTINEZ – Founder of Selling Magic, LLC a business development company focuses on streamlining and automating the sales and marketing process for business. His company creates business development systems that work like selling robots programmed to build your business **http://www.sellingrobots.com**

You can get more tips on selling at **http://www.sellingmagic.com** by following his popular sales journal blog, watching free on-line videos on business development and automating the selling process.

Time Well Served!

By Tibor Shanto

As with all good books, plays, and movies, the full plot, the real lessons and meaning are revealed at the end. What makes the revelation so impactful is that it solidifies everything that has unfolded to that point, and then brings it all together and elevates the whole experience. So it is with this e-book, all the great advice, techniques and insights that have come before this piece can be elevated by adopting things presented in this chapter, regardless of your abilities.

So powerful is the tool and techniques that adoption alone can change one, from good to brilliant, from brilliant to invincible, and all for the cost of about one Starbucks visit a month. And you only need one thing to make it work: You!! Bring that and you can use it to transform your sales, drive shiner cars and attract the admiration of your peers and competitors.

What is this amulet or talisman? Your calendar! It guards you from interruption by time wasters, from losing your way on your journey to winning clients and revenue, and most importantly guards you from fooling yourself, the biggest sin in sales.

It is the great equalizer; the calendar renders all the same, greatness is measured by one's use of it rather volume of possession. With its magic grid unfolding over your domain, no matter who you are, it unfolds the same way over life and tasks; the same for all companies, buyers, sellers, and you. Magic grid of 60 X 60; 60 x 24, 24 x7, 7x52, overlaid with 12 ÷ 365, and on it goes, mystical names never out of order, bowing to no one Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday…; January, February, March…;

How does it work?

If you study great athletes, actors or sales people, you find that what they master best is the ability to plan and manage their calendar, allocating the right amount of time to the right activities in the right proportions given the task.

So powerful is the tool and techniques that adoption alone can change one, from good to brilliant, from brilliant to invincible, and all for the cost of about one Starbucks visit a month.

To do this you'll need to step back a minute and breakdown the elements specific to your task, (we'll help you below); once identified and defined, you'll need to prioritize, then you have to put it in the magic calendar.

Let's start by breaking down your day of success, this has a couple of dimensions, we will deal with three here, this will give you the foundation to introduce other necessary elements, key being necessary, not nice to haves. Priorities your 24 hours, time for sleep, (important for health and sanity), for life, love, interests and family, you know the things that truly define you; and then how much do you need for work. Let's say in total: you are looking at 11 hours for selling, 7 am to 6 pm, remember this includes the plotting and thinking sitting in traffic or riding the subway, those moments of brilliant flashes that change the context of a deal. So some 55 hours a week.

Next figure out what are the key activities you need to perform to win: planning, prospecting, admin, selling, writing proposals, account management, did we mention admin, updating CRM, etc. No need to get too granular, just make sure you capture the KEY activities. Then assign the right percentage time needed to allocate to each over the course of your sales cycle (yes you need to know the average length of your sales cycle, drag ha!). For example

Planning/research	10%
Prospecting	30%
Admin	5%
Selling	25%
Account Management	10%
Proposals	10%
Admin	5%
CRM	5%

(JUST AN EXAMPLE, figure yours out)

Once you get the right blend, factor it down by 10% so it only consumes 90% of your total sales time.

Follow this up by looking at specific activities and divide them into two groups, things that have to be done in Prime Time PT (traditionally thought of as face time), usually 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. (7 of the 11 hours). The second group is Discretionary Time DT, this does not mean the activity is discretionary, but you can do the activity effectively outside of Prime Time, still important but the time is at your discretion.

Then fill your calendar with the above activities, this will help you visualize what your time, ensuring that PT and DT activities are occurring at the right times, in the right proportions. If you are Account Managing 30% of the cycle, prospecting 5%, you're gonna fail, drink and be unhappy.

Once your calendar is filled, categorize activities into five categories, here are the first four:

Mission Critical – doesn't get done, you're cooked: prospecting, selling, client meetings, etc.

Planned Client – Planned activities that involve a client, that is, the client is expecting an outcome, not a meeting, but a report, analysis, conference call with technical team, etc.

Planned Non-Client – Planned must do activities without client expectations, CRM, admin, training, etc.

The Rest – All things which are good if they get down, but have no downside on impact on your success: checking e-mail in the morning, updating Facebook, cross town Shwarma, etc.

The fifth category is perhaps the most important, and why we separated it. In sales we are not always in control, this is why we factored down our activities to 90%, leaving 10% for events beyond out control. Everyday some unexpected thing comes up that truly has to be attended to. A prospect calls out of the blue asking for something that will determine the decision, a recently installed client calls in a panic that things are not working they are panicking and need YOU to FIX it five minutes ago.

The fifth category is perhaps the most important, and why we separated it.

The fact is that these events are NOT unexpected, they happen regularly and with a great degree of certainty and predictability, they only unknown are specifics of each “emergency”. You need to make room for this in your calendar, is time for things that hit your day. We want you to allocate 10% of your Prime Time to dealing with what we call **S**hipping **H**andling **I**nventory and **T**urnover. If you don’t, where will you take the needed time to deal with it? Prospecting, Proposals? Usually we take from the activity we like least and for most it is prospecting. But if you allocate the time, you will handle “emergencies” calmly, and if you get the odd day with no emergency you can get ahead on your prospecting, admin, or grab that Shwarma across town.

The hardest element is sticking to it; if you can do that you’re set. Some who succeed with the above steps, fail when they don’t stick to their plan, they turn their back on the power of the calendar, going alone to where thousands have failed and been consumed by chaos and distraction. Fear not if you think you may stray, we offer a unique service call “Personal Time Trainers”, **www.personaltimetrainers.com**. Just like the personal trainers at gyms, these professionals will teach you what you’ve known all along but have ignored, then depending on your budget, abuse you and whip you in to shape for a slightly more than reasonable cost, visit the site today, we are ready to help.

What's in Your Pipeline?

TIBOR SHANTO, Principal with Renbor Sales Solutions Inc., and find out how he has helped dozens of organization to fill their pipeline with real prospects - - driving real revenue. Email: **tibor.shanto@sellbetter.ca**

You can also visit Renbor's blog The Pipeline at **www.sellbetter.ca/blog**

For more information on helping your team sell better, write to: **info@sellbetter.ca**, or call 416 671-3555. You can also follow Renbor on Twitter **http://twitter.com/renbor**

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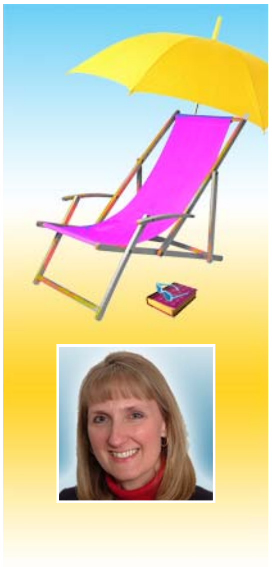


Mine Proposals For Hidden Gems Of Opportunity

By Kendra Lee

With the economy causing prospects and clients alike to clamp their wallets shut, we're looking everywhere to fill our pipelines. One place you may not have examined recently is in your past proposals, yet they could be the quickest place to find new opportunities.

When I'm working with a prospect, I like to look further and deeper than the initial problem they see to get to all the potential issues creating it. Often the problem isn't a simple one and the deeper I dig with questioning, the more I learn about how we can solve it.

My consultative approach results in a proposal that goes beyond one recommendation. It includes four, five, six suggestions or more on things they can do to address the challenge, complete with several options of how to get started.

It's beefy and full of ideas they can choose to implement – or just think about for now.

And therein lays the opportunity for us in a tough economy!

If you're writing a meaty proposal like I do, often your clients will choose to move forward with only a portion of what you recommended. They liked your ideas, but budget, resources, or timing limited their initial implementation.

They probably even told you they'd like to "wait and do the other things later."

And, if you're a savvy seller, you pinned them down to dates of when they'd do the "other things."

But busy as we are, and aware of how clients are looking to conserve spending, you may not have revisited those "other things."

When I'm working with a prospect, I like to look further and deeper than the initial problem they see to get to all the potential issues creating it.

Now's the time! You could have a goldmine of opportunity right on your hard drive!

Go back and revisit your proposals from the last twelve months. Look first at the suggestions they chose to invest in.

- How's their implementation progressing?
- What progress have they made in solving the problems they chose to deal with first?
- Where do they still need help to eliminate those challenges? Do you smell an opportunity there?

Then, look at all those great recommendations you made but they elected to wait on. Here's the goldmine just waiting for you to unearth it!

- Do the issues behind your suggestions still exist?
- Could they make a difference in your client's profitability or cost cutting if fixed now?

Don't wonder. Go find out!

Set up a review meeting to do a status check with your client.

I really like review meetings. These are your opportunity to check in on how you're doing, reinforce the great work you've completed so far, and get your client's agreement on value they've already experienced.

I really like review meetings. These are your opportunity to check in on how you're doing, reinforce the great work you've completed so far, and get your client's agreement on value they've already experienced.

Dust off the proposal and use it as your guide in the meeting.

The best part is, your client will remember it well. Before making any decision in the first place, you know he spent a great deal of time studying it. You reviewed the document in depth with him to be sure he did!

Use the proposal to revisit the issues you originally discovered and agreed upon before you started working together. Share the areas you think you can help take the results they've already experienced to even higher levels, with some simple tweaks or additions.

Next, remind your client of the recommendations you'd made. Discuss those things they wanted to "wait and do later."

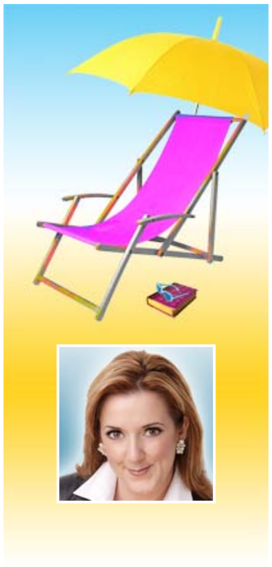
As you talk, the pain of those yet unsolved issues will come roaring back. Your client may see the need to address them now, especially if it'll help reduce costs, drive more revenue, or improve the productivity of an already overworked staff.

Get creative and show how you can help, even within their tight budget. Your clients will appreciate the attention you've given their problems.

Before you know it, new opportunities will surface and your pipeline will be healthy again.

KENDRA LEE is a top IT Seller, Prospect Attraction Expert and author of the award winning book "Selling Against the Goal" and president of KLA Group. Specializing in the IT industry, KLA Group works with companies to break in and exceed revenue objectives in the Small and Midmarket Business (SMB) segment.

Ms. Lee is a frequent speaker at national sales meetings and association events. To find out more about the author, read her latest articles, or to subscribe to her newsletter visit **www.klagroup.com** or call +1 303.773.1285.



The Easiest Way To Make A Sale When You're Stuck

By Kim Duke

There's something that isn't talked about much in the world of selling.

In fact, people avoid talking about it at all.

What is it??

Your attitude when things aren't going so well.

I call it being STUCK.

If you're allowing yourself to be pulled down the drain - and you're feeling like a loser and having **nightmares** that you're going to be homeless, pushing an empty shopping cart and muttering obscenities about selling under your breath...then you're going to love hearing this!

Years ago I had a sales manager who said something to me when I was going through a TOUGH STRETCH of selling. I couldn't close a deal if my life depended on it.

(Now forgive me here because what he told me is a football metaphor - he WAS a guy after all!)

The Easiest Way to Make Sales When You're Stuck

What did the sales manager say?

"Kim - if you can't make the BIG PASS then PUNT instead."

So what does that mean?

"Kim - if you can't make the BIG PASS then PUNT instead."

If you're getting **down in the dumps** because you're NOT CLOSING any deals, signing those contracts or selling boxes of product as much as you want or need...

...then it's time to BREAK THE DOWNWARD CYCLE!

You need to PUNT (which in football is a short forward kick of the ball).

It's not pretty.
It's not fancy.
It's not huge.

What it DOES do?

It gives you a taste of success again.

He was so right. I came up with a small promotion package and took it to a bunch of smaller clients and BINGO they went for it and it broke the dry spell of hard luck.

Even more importantly, it created confidence in me again.

Sell Something Small To Feel Tall!

Sooooo - get out there and sell something small to a bunch of people.

Or sell a small order to a smaller, reliable client you love!

You'll break the cycle of despair and panic you're feeling right now.

Because you know what lady?

"This too shall pass."

...and amazing things are headed your way soon!!!

So there.

What it DOES do?
It gives you a taste
of success again

Love From Your Bossy Sales Diva,

Kim

P.S. **I need a favor from you!** Can you please send this ebook to as many of your friends, clients and business associates that you can think of? Just think how much they will LOVE YOU! And encourage them to sign up for **my weekly tips - they get a 30 page report on the** 5 Biggest Sales Mistakes Women Make! All they have to do is sign up for Free Sales Tips. Thanks Lady! **http://www.salesdivas.com/tips.php**

KIM DUKE, The Sales Diva, provides savvy, sassy sales training for women small biz owners and entrepreneurs. Kim works with clients internationally, showing them The Sales Diva secrets to success! Sign up for her saucy and smart FREE e-zine and receive her FREE Bonus Report "The 5 Biggest Sales Mistakes Women Make" at **www.salesdivas.com**

Sociable! Selling Integrating Social Media Into Your Sales Process

By Shane Gibson

Today your front desk secretary who operates your customer service account on Twitter can have a larger positive impact on your brand than the transit ads you run, or the direct mail campaigns you execute. A junior executive who lands on a competitor's blog and posts the wrong comments can undo your positive branding and marketing efforts in one click as well.

Being a highly effective but also hard to control marketing tool, many senior sales executives are opting not to use Social Media to drive business. Some people will claim that there are no case studies measuring or quantifying Social Media Marketing, but this is far from the truth. There are numerous documented social media success stories from companies such as Comcast, Ford, and individual entrepreneurs such as Gary Vaynerchuk of Winelibrary.com. (From $4 million in sales to over $40 million in sales using video blogging, Twitter, etc.)

"Social media is making past management approaches obsolete. The new strategies must recognize that the new backbones of influence are now networks of ordinary people." – Peter Aceto, CEO of ING Direct (From Itbusiness.ca May 12th 2009)

Social Media Tools and Networks are a significant force that is growing. We cannot afford to avoid using them. In sales the key is to be where the customers are, and your customers are on these networks. The truth is in the numbers:

- **Facebook:** 190 Million People
- **Linkedin:** 35 Million Professionals representing every company on the Fortune 500
- **Twitter:** 6.5 Million People 1.3 billion messages / year and growing
- **Youtube:** 1 Billion Views Per Day (2nd biggest search engine behind Google)

Being a highly effective but also hard to control marketing tool, many senior sales executives are opting not to use of Social Media to drive business.

The consumer is already talking about your brand online, and if you're not online listening and engaging, you have lost control of your brand. The great news is that, by getting pro-active, you can begin to positively direct and amplify these online conversations, and develop relationships that can turn into clients.

In order to profit over the long-term from social media we need to have a well thought out plan.

Here are 6 steps to implementing social media into your sales process:

1. Identify Your Goal

Getting on FaceBook, because some marketing guru said you should is a bad idea. Blogging, because your competitors are, is equally bad in its strategic significance. Here are some good examples of annual goals:

"To increase staff recruitment by 5% this year through engaging 18 to 23 year old men and women in BC through interactive blogs, community driven video content and Twitter."

"To reduce marketing costs by 90% by ceasing all print advertising and focusing on blogging, Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter to market our Real Estate developments."

2. Identify Your Target Audience

Having a message that rises above all of the noise online is critical. Do this by targeted "nano-casts" as Jay Levinson calls them. Traditional media is about broadcasting; social media is two-way nano-casting. You will have to drill down and really define several niche target groups.

The consumer is already talking about your brand online, and if you're not online listening and engaging, you have lost control of your brand.

3. Pick the Right Platforms

12 months ago, Twitter was not a great place to engage a CEO or connect with elected officials. Today it's the perfect tool for that. Be careful in looking at historical data or what is happening right now when choosing your platforms. Invest in existing networks and platforms, but also look at which ones have the biggest opportunity for growth. Invest in building your network before the masses rush in.

4. Map out Social Etiquette

When you choose a platform (FaceBook, Linkedin, Twitter etc.) each has their own social rules and norms, if you're not sure what they are, connect or follow someone who is established and observe their habits, conversations and types of content they post overtime.

5. Implement a Listening Strategy

Social Media monitoring, social search and reading other people's blogs are all part of your listening strategy. In order to be effective at influencing people, we must have a high amount of empathy and understanding of them. If we listen intently enough, our market will expose the missing solutions and pains that need fulfillment. Listening tools include **http://search.twitter.com** and **http://www.google.com/alerts.**

6. Know Core Pains and Communicate your Pill

Hopefully by listening and directly engaging your target markets you will develop a grounded and complete view of what ails them or their business. The next step is through an engaging, contribution focused social media campaign: Communicate why your solution is unique and valuable.

In summary, social media adoption by consumers and companies is happening at a break-neck pace. With a strong strategy and an understanding of the core principles of being "Sociable!" you can benefit from this open and transparent method of marketing and sales through engagement.

SHANE GIBSON is a professional speaker, author, and a sales and marketing strategist.

Connect with Shane on:
Twitter: @ShaneGibson [**http://twitter.com/shanegibson**], or his blog at Closingbigger.net.[**http://closingbigger.net**]

This article is based upon excerpts from Shane Gibson and Stephen Jagger's new book "Sociable!" which will be available at Sociablebook.com [**http://sociablebook.com**] in Summer 2009.

Memorable Sales

By Somayeh Bayat

Do you sometimes feel your customers completely forget you?

Would you like to create a memorable sales experience, supported by lifelong customers?

What makes your business memorable?

Good customer service, prompt and understanding manner, courteous and energetic behaviors, which your customers will remember.

Here are 12 points to make your sales memorable:

1. **Start attractive**
   Provide a feeling of safety, faith, confidence and familiarity. The Beginning must be very pleasant for your customer. Start with a new and exciting story.

2. **Create a picture**
   Create a unique picture in the customer's mind – which has recognition cues; using words, specific and significant words. Replace technical jargon with everyday language.

   The art is using words which create pictures in your customers' mind. If you can describe your products or services in a way that it forms images, then you've just created something that will stay long after the marketing is over.

Create a unique picture in the customer's mind – which has recognition cues; using words, specific and significant words.

3. **Keep your passion**
   Make up your mind if you have passion and extraordinary feelings about your products and services, then you can transfer it to the customers. It satisfies them after buying. But be careful: don't ever praise your own products and services - it's boring for customers to listen to your praise. They like to know what the benefits are and you have to respond to this.

4. **Have fun**

   This is your opportunity to present a product, which you are passionate about, to customers who are on your side. Customers love and reward a compelling, fun presentation which will always stay present in their mind.

5. **Keep it short**

   It is important to keep the scarcity of the attention capacity of people in mind. Most people can only hold three thoughts in their short-term memory at one time. If you try to make more than three points, the customer will start to forget them. If you can, get it down to two. Know about their needs and just present products that are related to their needs.

6. **Keep it unique**

   Undifferentiated products look like commodities and will get commodity prices. Make sure that any benefit that you present is unique to you and your company. Customers like unique products and services, which they never forget over the years.

7. **Keep differentiated**

   You must first differentiate yourself in your customer's eyes by building rapport and focusing on the most influential buyers, the ones who makes up to 85% of all purchasing decisions. Find very clear differences and send it to the customer's mind by creating pictures. The difference must belong to you and your company, not to others.

8. **Keep innovating**

   Focus on interesting and new presentations for your products or services. There are all sorts of ways you can use to help people understand and appreciate the value of your products and make them unforgettable.

   You can sell very usual products by innovating in the presentation and introducing them to the customers - and by doing that encourage them to buy.

Most people can only hold three thoughts in their short-term memory at one time.

9. Meet customers' needs

Successful salespeople focus on winning good business by knowing about the needs of their customers instead of their egos, targets, commission plans and personal challenges. Their objective is always to find the best "mutually beneficial" solution to the business challenge their customer faces. They must create a win-win situation or withdraw from what would likely prove to be bad business.

You must ask questions designed to discover the needs of your customers. Then, you must listen carefully to your customer's concerns, so that you can accurately diagnose their needs. This method will enable you to effectively tailor new products, designed to meet the customer's exact needs.

By approaching each sale opportunity this way, not only will you generate increased sales, you will also create loyal customers who will continue to refer new business to you in the future.

It is important to have data on the demographic, geographic, economic, religious and racial situation of your customers.

10. Keep them beneficial

The more vague the benefit, the less likely it is that the customer will remember it. Find some ways to let them test your products and services, so that they will be able to trust them. Record live testimonials from your satisfied clients that could then be easily incorporated into other marketing,

11. Keep them repeatable

Repeat and repeat their benefits which are important and effective for customers in different and new ways.

It is important to have data on the demographic, geographic, economic, religious and racial situation of your customers.

12. Memorable closing

You must create an unforgettable and eternal closing. With words and a creative end which gives them positive feelings about their purchase. They should leave you satisfied, because then they will come back again.

What mental processes go on in a customer's mind before they make the purchase decision?

- People buy from a sales person they like
- Similarities – we like people who are like us
- We like those people who we cooperate with towards common goals
- Social proof: Provide people with evidence that others like them have made this choice which we're recommending for them
- Highlight your ability: your expertise, your background, and your credentials in a particular arena
- Commitment and consistency: A sales person has to deliver what he/she promises

With a background in marketing and sales, **SOMAYEH** co-founded Hooman Tab H.T.T, a Marketing and Strategy consulting firm in 2007.

Her advisors and her professional team have helped many companies of different sizes, and in a variety of market sectors, with building and implementing their marketing and management plans as an integral part of their overall growth strategies.

Visit Somayeh 's website: **www.hoomantab.com**

Three Keys To Getting Into The Buyer's Office, Version 2009

By Nigel Edelshain

Through our consulting and inside sales activities, we've noticed that the biggest bottleneck in the sales process, for most companies. is getting in-the-door in the first place.

Buyers can do so much of their research online now, they don't need to see sales people for updates. Time-starved, over-stressed buyers will only meet with sales people if they sense you have something they really need.

Through observing what works in getting you into a buyer's office (and what doesn't), we have come up with three critical factors that determine whether a prospect will meet with you:

1. Speak to the right people
2. Leverage trigger events
3. Use your relationships

1. Speak to the Right People

The first critical point is whether you are actually trying to speak to the right person. This is determined by the accuracy of your prospect profile, which then feeds into your prospect lists. OK, so this is obvious. Obvious but very often executed very poorly.

This is about preparation. You need to do the preparation needed to know which companies, and which people in those companies, they are targeting. You need to figure out which companies are "ideal clients" for you. This is about the usual demographic criteria: revenue, industry, geography etc.

Buyers can do so much of their research online now, they don't need to see sales people for updates.

Then think about the people in those companies you need to speak to. Be a little careful on this point. The world has changed quite a bit. "Selling high" is not that effective any more. Yes, the concept of "selling high" is great but given the reality of getting your message through it's a long shot to try to only sell to the CEO/CFO etc. What you really want to do is get through to anyone in your target company who ultimately gets involved in buying your product. The hardest part is getting a conversation going with your target company (and you can learn vital account-specific information from this conversation) so anyone relevant is better than dead silence -- the default situation.

A great statistic from Marketing Sherpa's research is that for a technology product of over $25,000 in value selling to a prospect company with over 1,000 employees, there are twenty-one (21) people involved in buying that product these days. OK, so a bit scary that so many people can nix your product, but on the plus side it implies you have a lot of people who know how this procurement process works. So you've got a bunch of targets to speak to get in. And getting in is the hardest part -- so this is good news!

2. Leverage Trigger Events

A trigger event is some kind of change in the prospect's environment that upsets the status quo. Examples are new executives, new product launches, cost-cutting, fast growth, mergers and acquisitions.

Trigger events are our big friend in sales, because if there's a trigger event for your prospect, there's some kind of change in their company or in their environment and that creates pain. And pain creates need. And need is our friend, because people solve need with products and services. Buyers in "status quo" generally don't buy. They are the "no, we've got that covered club".

Yes, the concept of "selling high" is great, but given the reality of getting your message through, it's a long shot to try to only sell to the CEO/CFO etc.

There are almost always trigger events behind why people buy things, but the tricky thing about trigger events is that many of them are not observable from outside a company. Sometimes we can overcome some of this problem by finding "proxy trigger events" for the trigger event that actually creates a need for our product.

For example, if my service is the integration of data centers, then it's unlikely I will see an announcement from a target company that they are merging their data centers - but it is likely they will announce a merger with another company. In this example, since I know from my knowledge of my product and market that company mergers often imply data center consolidations, I can use the company merger announcement as a "proxy trigger event" for the trigger event I really want to know about which is a data center consolidation.

3. Use Your Relationships

Sales is about people. In the end it's people who buy things. The larger the item and amount of money involved, the more trust we need to buy things. If there's one factor that determines whether you will get in to meet an executive (or start a sales conversation), this is it: relationship.

Just imagine your sales job if you knew the decision-maker in every target company in your territory. How would that be? Nice picture, right? Well, most of us are not that lucky in reality. We sales people often start with the opposite situation: we don't know any of our target buyers. We're on the outside.

In what I call "old school selling", sales people used to spend lots of time developing relationships with buyers at dinners, lunches and on the tee at the golf course. But buyers are less-and-less likely to want to spend this amount of time with you. They are under too much pressure to deliver results.

But there is hope. There are new ways to build relationships. In fact these ways allow us to build relationships far faster than we could before. And build more relationships that we could before.

Just imagine your sales job if you knew the decision-maker in every target company in your territory.

This way of building relationships is about taking advantage of "social media". This way is about using the social networks to start relationships with people in your target market -- often without even leaving your office.

Now, this is not just about using the Internet to build relationships. You can build initial relationships through the web, but you need to get offline at some point and make these relationships "real". You need to speak to people on the telephone and meet them physically where appropriate. Not much has changed about how we humans interact and build trust, but how we are willing to start relationships certainly has changed (not to mention how the under-30 generation sees this!)

Times They Are A-Changin'

The world is changing fast. The way into a buyer's office is changing fast. The bar is being raised on getting in. It's a good time to start learning some of these new tools. In a few years, it won't be optional.

NIGEL EDELSHAIN is CEO of Sales 2.0 (LLC). Nigel sets direction for the company and manages the company's lead generation team. He delivers consulting and training that provides clients with sales improvements of 2-3 times.

Nigel has sold millions of dollars of IT solutions to major Fortune 500 firms. He was head of sales for the financial services vertical for Starpoint Solutions (a 600-person system integrator). Prior to Starpoint, Nigel worked for Platinum Technology (now CA) selling IT professional services.

Nigel is the chairman of the Wharton Business School Club of New York – the school's largest alumni association. Nigel graduated from Wharton's MBA program in 1993 and has an undergraduate degree in microelectronics (chip design) from Edinburgh University.

Visit: **http://www.sales2.com/home.shtml**

The world is changing fast. The way into a buyer's office is changing fast. The bar is being raised on getting in.

Would You Put That Lid Up!!

By Tom Ninness

Little boys heard it often…"Put the lid down". Little girls shrieked as they slipped into the water when brother 'left the lid up'. Mother would yell, "Don't leave the lid up!!!" as sister dissolved into tears and brother giggled over his latest accomplishment. Learning to put the lid down was a lesson in respect, responsibility and concern for others. In sales, the opposite is true. Learning to lift the lid means expanding your business, and helping others to create success. Great sales means the lid stays up.

John Maxwell's "The Law of the Lid" suggests that one's leadership ability determines a person's level of effectiveness. The higher you want to climb, the more you need leadership. The greater the impact you want to make—the greater your influence needs to be. Leadership ability is the LID that determines a person's level of effectiveness.

In sales, there are operation and system lids. Operation and system lids can cripple a business. If your operations people can only process 10 orders a month and your goal is 15, the lid has been slammed down on your ability to advance your business. Developing a sales team that can keep up with your progress is critical for business advancement. In the mortgage business processing is the key to success. Without efficient processors, and following in near even second, closers, a loan officer will see his/her business deteriorate before their eyes. Slamming the lid on these hard working folks is the last thing needed when your goal is to keep moving your business to the next level.

The greater the impact you want to make—the greater your influence needs to be. Leadership ability is the LID that determines a person's level of effectiveness.

It is not unusual to put a **self-imposed lid** on our sales success. If a loan officer or sales rep cannot envision making more money, then it will never happen - even if the rep is given the best territory in the region. If someone does well within a small territory - it doesn't mean they will be successful within a larger territory unless they can see it. Corporate offices are surprised that their highly successful reps within a small area don't make a dime more than in the smaller territory. The reps just can't see themselves making twice the money.

The thought of making more money is nerve wracking. If they would have lifted the lid, they would have seized the moment and risen to the challenge of greater opportunities for themselves and their families.

Dress for success. Even in casual Colorado, dressing down can be the Lid on your suitability for a new position. Granted, in Colorado it seems that we don't have much of a dress code. Shorts and blue jeans are seen at the theatre, weddings and funerals. If you can't see yourself dressing for the occasion, then it is likely your interviewer can't see you in the position. It is better to overdress to impress and be gently guided into the appropriate dress for your office, than to under dress because you are afraid of coming off too professional. By under dressing, you might just slam the lid down on your opportunities.

Every sales person has some kind of built in Lids in their makeup. Titles and positions do not eliminate them. The issue is not, do you have Lids, but what are you going to do about them? Face them head on….learn what your Lids are and 'plunge' into ways to lift them wider. Raise the lid of success. Tackle bigger opportunities and start planning on how to manage more responsibilities.

Confidence goes a long way. It does not compensate for a lack of sales skills. Educate yourself in the areas that are the hardest for you, develop prospecting skills and never assume that the potential client already has a service provider in place. One can never have too much **knowledge**.

Sometimes it's tough being a sales person. Perception creates a "Lid Down" experience for some. They won't tell people what they do for a living as they don't want to come across as a pushy salesperson. A GOOD sales person is never pushy. They listen to the client, they ask questions to gain a better understanding of client needs and they offer the client solutions to their problems. If the client says no, it doesn't mean they are shutting the lid on you - they are just not ready at that point in time. It is your obligation to lift up the lid and arrange for continued contact with the client, offering information, education and an opportunity to meet again in the future.

Even in casual Colorado, dressing down can be the Lid on your suitability for a new position.

Sales managers have the responsibility to be a Lid Lifter. If you're reading this and need to lift the lid in your business, then become the word of encouragement for others. Challenge yourself and challenge those you mentor. Lift the lid on your actions….. Increase your contacts, ask for referrals, change your behavior and start acting as a top professional. When you are able to overcome the Lids in your business, you can then help others with theirs.

Everyone has lids that limit their success and even the most successful people have some kind of lid that they battle. All lids can be lifted. Give it a 'whirl'. Great sales mean encouraging others, building knowledge and Lifting the Lid on all possibilities.

TOM NINNESS is Vice President/Regional Production Manager for Cherry Creek Mortgage in Denver, CO. He is also the President of Summit Champions, Inc. and creator of the "The 90 Day Journey to Your Sales Success", a powerful 90 day action plan for the sales professional. Tom also offers sales coaching for business professionals. To learn more about The Journey, coaching and Summit Champions, go to **www.90dayjourney.com**, **www.summitchampions.com** or contact Tom at **information@summitchampions.com** Office: 720-221-4396.

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5 Steps To Attracting More Sales Beyond Your Wildest Dreams

By Rochelle Togo-Figa

As entrepreneurs and business owners, we all have dreams of closing sales beyond our wildest dreams, signing up lots of clients, and making more money than we ever thought possible. Unfortunately, it doesn't always happen as quickly as we'd like it to.

Many entrepreneurs and business owners come to me frustrated with their lack of sales, hoping to learn specific sales skills to turn around their businesses. They hope by learning new selling techniques, their sales will quickly grow and their businesses will flourish.

Some of my clients quickly apply the sales skills I teach, reaching extraordinary levels of success, while other clients reach minimal sales success. Why was this happening for some and not for the others? Both groups had the same level of experience, yet the level of success was significantly different.

At first, I was puzzled, frustrated, and saddened I could not make a difference for all my clients. Over time, it became clear I could share all my sales knowledge and show my clients everything I knew about sales; however, it was up to them to make it happen. I realized it took more than just learning the right sales skills - it took shifting the mindset.

A crucial key to unlocking unlimited abundance in business and life starts with shifting our inner mindset. Unfortunately, many people work really hard getting minimal sales results because of their mindset. On one hand, they want to break through their barriers. On the other hand, they allow their emotions to keep them from making the changes necessary to expand their businesses.

Many entrepreneurs and business owners come to me frustrated with their lack of sales, hoping to learn specific sales skills to turn around their businesses.

You can learn all the skills, techniques, and strategies; however, without a positive inner mindset, your financial success is limited. If you want to create an abundance of sales and clients coming to you, it starts with shifting your mindset.

When you shift your inner mindset, you make the decision to rewrite the way you think. By changing the way you think, you're changing the direction of your life. You're now becoming the author of your life. Then you'll begin to attract everything you want with ease.

As a coach and mentor, I am always learning from my clients. I saw in my own business how I would reach a certain level of success and then stop. I knew deep in my heart I could achieve much more, yet I was afraid of taking the leap. So I started studying with the experts, taking personal growth workshops, and reading more self-growth books than I can keep count.

As I made these internal changes to my thinking, something magical began to happen. I began to appreciate what I have, started "being" in my business rather than "doing" and let go of the worry. I'm now taking bigger steps in my business and following my purpose. New opportunities are coming my way and it's because I'm letting go of the fear.

From the journey I've taken and I'm happily still on, I saw there was a process I followed that opened me up to receiving abundance in my business. I've taken what I've learned and created 5 key steps to follow that will change how you are being in your business and help you easily attract an abundance of everything you want.

Shifting the Mindset. You must first believe you can. As soon as you have a doubt, fear, or worry, those feelings take away from believing. Your thoughts, emotions, and actions must be congruent with your belief so that the universe can give you what you want. Your thoughts and feelings create your reality.

The Power of Choice. You get to choose the direction you want your life to go. Through the power of choice, you decide how you want to create your life to be. What occurs in your life is not by accident. It's a result of the choices you've made. Are you choosing to live your life powerfully or are you blaming others? Are you choosing to take responsibility for the growth of your business or are you blaming circumstances?

As a coach and mentor, I am always learning from my clients.

100% Responsible. Responsibility starts with being accountable for every aspect of your life. When you can recognize, acknowledge, and own that you are responsible for your life, you experience a new level of freedom, power and ease in your life. When you're being responsible, you're no longer at the affect of any circumstances that come your way. There's no complaining or blaming others. You know that the buck stops with you.

Moving Beyond What's Stopping You. What have you been putting up with, tolerating, or trying to change? Whatever you put up with drains your energy and keeps you stuck in the same place. Do you make excuses for not going forward in your business? What's the excuse really covering up? It's probably an underlying fear that you're holding onto. When you make the decision to move past where you're stopped, all tolerations, excuses and fears will lose their power over you.

Letting Go of the Past. Are you letting past experiences keep you from moving forward? Some of our past experiences keep us from appreciating what we have in the present because we believe it will happen again. These experiences affect how we communicate, relate to others, grow our business, and even stop us from going after all the things we really want. By letting go of the past, you're free to attract anything you want in your life and your business. You now have a blank slate from which to create anything and everything!

I believe by applying these steps to your business, you'll begin to experience a shift in how you sell and interact with clients. You're now becoming a master of the inner game of sales. I invite you to follow these steps to opening your mind to unlimited sales success. (I'm so certain that this is the pathway to creating your sales success that I've created a revolutionary new sales program, The Inner Game of Sales, that will change your mindset about selling forever!)

I believe by applying these steps to your business, you'll begin to experience a shift in how you sell and interact with clients.

ROCHELLE TOGO-FIGA, The Sales Breakthrough Expert, is the creator of the Sales Breakthrough System™, a proven step-by-step sales process that will help you close more sales, sign on more clients and make more money with ease and velocity. To sign up for her free sales articles and teleclasses on closing more sales, visit **www.SalesBreakthroughs.com**

The Six People You Are Likely To Meet At A Trade Show

By Barry Siskind

Exhibit marketing is all about meeting customers, clients and the public in a face to face environment. Your physical display, as well as your booth staff's skills, need to be well honed to capture the attention of people in your target market group. Knowing who these people are is the first step. The next job is to develop a strategy for handling each booth visitor. Here are six profiles of potential booth visitors:

Edgar Dunn

Edgar has a real and immediate need for your product or service. He is ready to make a decision that is compatible with your sales cycle, has the authority and the resources to act.

Edgar is a clever chap. He wears many disguises. Sometimes Edgar fits your customer profile to a tee, but sometimes he looks quite the opposite. The trick is not to let Edgar fool you by his clothes, grooming or personal style. Treat every booth visitor equally and in the first few minutes see if you can identify your real Edgar.

Emma Hope

Emma and Edgar act the same. She has a need for your product, service or information. She has a position of authority and the resources necessary to implement a decision. But here's the catch - Emma is not ready to make a commitment now or anytime within your sales cycle. Emma has long-term potential which is better dealt with when you have more time – after the show.

Knowing who these people are is the first step. The next job is to develop a strategy for handling each booth visitor. Here are six profiles of potential booth visitors.

Louis Fatale

Emma has a close cousin named Louis. Louis is an amiable fellow who shows a keen interest in your offering. He nods his head in agreement, says all the right words and is willing to listen to anything you have to say.

The bottom line is that Louis lacks potential. He can't use your offering now or anytime within the foreseeable future. Don't waste a lot of time with Louis. Disengage professionally and continue to look for people who can take advantage of your offering.

Ally McMate

Ally is a sensitive person. Her temperament is a learned response. She has met many boothers who have simply rebuffed her and assumed that just because she doesn't make the final decision, she has no worth.

Ally is a sleeping tiger. Wake her up abruptly and she will attack. But a gentle nudging and Ally can become a great friend who is willing to help you in many ways such as referring you to real buyers.

Zelda Post

Zelda asks lots of questions. But the reality is that Zelda has an ulterior motive - employment.

Trade shows are a rich quarry of potential employers. For those in the job market, walking a show can save countless hours of frustration sending unsolicited résumés or answering advertisements that attract hundreds of applicants. So, armed with her questions, she approaches. Refer Zelda to your HR department or if your company is not hiring, tell her.

Moe Lassis

Moe is the last of our players. Moe comes in many disguises. Moe can be the spouse of a delegate, someone coerced into attending the event by a friend, a fellow exhibitor or simply someone who doesn't get out much. While a conversation with Moe can be fun and fill up slow show hours, continuing the conversation leaves you engaged in conversation you may not be able to break away from when a real prospect shows up. The strategy is to disengage early in the conversation.

The bottom line is that Louis lacks potential. He can't use your offering now or anytime within the foreseeable future.

Before you participate in any show or event, know the people you will meet and develop a strategy for handling each type.

BARRY SISKIND, one of North America's most sought after speakers, brings 25 years of experience working with 1,000's of companies around the world who want to maximize their investment in trade and consumer shows to TSE.

Barry founded International Training and Management Company in 1983 when he realized the need for a sales and marketing company that could focus exclusively on solutions for clients who are looking to generate more revenue from their trade show investment.

Visit Barry at **www.siskindtraining.com** where you can ask for advice, request a copy of his exclusive "*Exhibiting Diagnostic*" or download his program "*Double Your Trade Show Results Guaranteed*".

Sales Leadership: Thriving In Chaos

By Steven Rosen

How to survive in a chaotic economy? As the leader of your organization, the year will prove to be more pressure-filled than you may have experienced in years. With decreasing prospects and the cost of doing business increasing, a squeeze on profits is inevitable.

Companies will look to cut costs, and the first place to start is the sales force. The sales force is your company's most expensive promotional resource. You will have to make some critical decisions: Do you cut costs or improve the performance of your existing sales team?

Cut back, down size and cut costs

I don't need to give you advice on cutting back. It's easy to cut back on sales people, promotion and training. While radical surgery may be financially prudent in the short term, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: first sales decline, then performance suffers and finally moral drops, completing the downward cycle.

How can you improve the productivity and performance of your sales force?

While radical surgery may be financially prudent in the short term, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: first sales decline, then performance suffers and finally moral drops, completing the downward cycle.

I believe that too many sales organizations operate well below their potential. Quick fixes abound during these times, but the secret to surviving difficult economic times is simple…

Unlock the potential in your sales organization and watch that potential turn into sustainable performance!

1. Invest in your front line sales managers

Who else is at the heart of change, productivity, accountability and performance in your organization? The front line sales manager is the key to unlocking the potential in your sales organization and to turn that potential into performance. Your success depends on these managers.

Coaching is the single most impactful activity that front lines sales managers perform. Studies show that effectual coaching can impact sales performance by as much as 19%! Great front line sales managers do a far better job hiring, developing and retaining top performing sales people.

If you had $1 dollar to invest in your business, the first dollar and best dollar would be invested in your front line sales management team.

2. Turn your farmers into hunters by focusing on unlocking the potential within existing customers

Many of my clients tell me that their sales teams are made up of a bunch of service people or farmers. The challenge in difficult times are that new customers are risk averse to trying new suppliers and that the cost of getting new business may come at the expense of profitability. The most economical way to grow your business is through existing customers. Train your farmers to cultivate more business with their existing customers. Programs targeted at growing and expand business opportunities can help stimulate sales people who have become complacent and find it challenging to go out and get new business.

3. Maximize the ROI on your training budget

Maximising your ROI on training really means ensuring that whatever training you do creates sustainable changes in behaviours that impact on business performance.

Coaching is the single most impactful activity that front lines sales managers perform.

The challenges relate to a lack of accountability and follow up.

Are there systems in place to measure newly learned behaviours or follow up programs to sustain lessons learned? The answer is no. Studies show that 90% of training is forgotten in the first 30 days, unless reinforced. Are you one of the many companies investing in T&D and little or no ROI? Unless there is a plan that measures and reinforces changes in behaviours, you are wasting your money! You must ensure that there is a plan to reinforce learning, and you hold individuals **accountable** for demonstrating newly learned behaviours.

Maximize your investment in training and development with a program that measures and reinforces learning and they will become business practice.

4. Strategically invest your resources

As you look how to manage your resources more effectively, the key is to **strategically** target your promotional dollars to maximise the ROI. Each sales person needs to be much more strategic on where they allocate their limited resources. This involves building customer specific plans, based on factors such as existing business and potential business, and holding sales people accountable to executing their plans. Strategically investing your promotional dollars on the right customers and holding sales people **accountable** will be one of the keys to unlocking your star results!

Feel free to comment on the article above or post a question to other sales executives. Steven Rosen, B.Comm. MBA, Sales Management Expert

STEVEN ROSEN is the founder and Chief Performance Officer of STAR Results. Steven is a performance coach, trainer and advisor. His expertise is sales leadership development.

STAR Results is a sales leadership consulting, training and coaching organization dedicated to leadership development. Our mission is to inspire sales leaders, managers and sales people to achieve their full potential. Visit us at **www.starresults.com**

Unless there is a plan that measures and reinforces changes in behaviours, you are wasting your money!

Are You Selling Your L-Factor?

By Niall Devitt

A person's likeability factor is often referred to by people such as Simon Cowell when assessing contestants for TV shows like Pop Idol. While it might be a commonly used term, how many of us really understand what it means? How can you use your own L-factor to improve your sales performance?

Definitions of "likeable" can be vague. Terms such as "Easy to like", "attractive" or "appealing" are just some of the descriptions that are often used. In the book "The Likeability Factor" author Tim Saunders tells us that it is only when we enter the fields of psychology, physiology, and personality that a more concise description of likeably can be found.

Tim defines our likeability as, "An ability to create positive attitudes in other people through the delivery of emotional and physical benefits" He identifies four key factors that go to make up each individual's L-Factor, they are:

- Friendliness: your ability to communicate liking and openness to others.
- Relevance: your capacity to connect with others' interests, wants, and needs.
- Empathy: your ability to recognize, acknowledge, and experience other people's feelings.
- Realness: the integrity that stands behind your likeability and guarantees its authenticity.

Definitions of "likeable" can be vague. Terms such as "Easy to like", "attractive" or "appealing" are just some of the descriptions that are often used.

We refer to actions in sales, where both the prospect and the salesperson benefit, as win-win. Improving your L-factor is also win-win, because not only do those who know you benefit, but as Tim points out - you also benefit. You win more of "the popularity contests" that define your life.

In sales, your likeability is vital in creating good first impressions, building rapport and allowing the prospect to trust you. These are critical building blocks to creating strong relationships with customers.

Likewise, in a competitive situation where two solutions are evenly matched, the salesperson's L-factor could quite easily become decisive.

So what are some practical steps you can take to increase your own L-factor with your customers?

1. **Friendliness** - Be more open to creating a lasting Impression with your Customers.

   One of the first ways that you convey friendliness to prospects is through non-verbal communication.

   - An open posture
   - Using open gestures
   - Maintaining eye contact
   - Interested facial expressions
   - Smiling
   - Laughing

Note: Remember that later evidence is only interpreted by customers in light of their first impressions of you.

2. **Relevance** - Let your Customers know you are listening to what they want.

   Active listening is how you communicate your listening to customers. This means nodding, conveying expression in your face and making good eye contact. Also important are not interrupting, asking the customer checking questions and taking notes. Remember, it's how you dramatise and convey you're listening that really matters.

3. **Empathy** - To better know your customers, first get to know how they are feeling.

   Developing empathy with your customers requires that you manage your responses to:

   a. Your customers and their circumstances.
   b. Your customer's reactions to you.

   - Be careful not to pre-judge an emotional state, tone or reaction, as there are nearly always circumstances beyond your knowledge.
   - Rather pose questions to better understand where the particular emotion (good or bad) is coming from.
   - The best way to develop empathy with customers is to ALWAYS try to look at things from their perspective.
   - Remember, the first step in getting customers to feel strongly about you is to first understand what they already feel strongly about.

4. **Realness -** Guarantee your Customers nothing but the Truth (even when it hurts).

   Honesty is an integral part of sales. Without it, there cannot be trust and without trust, there cannot be a relationship. The ability to develop strong relationships is the critical aspect of a successful outcome in sales - which in turn makes honesty so vital.

   Remember (Honesty ● Trust ● Relationship ● Sales)

   Most salespeople are never intentionally dishonest, but there are times when pressure or temptation creates traps that we can fall into. These sometimes result in salespeople venturing into grey areas and telling customers white lies.

Honesty is an integral part of sales. Without it, there cannot be trust and without trust, there cannot be a relationship.

Traps to be very careful of:

- When a customers asks a question where you don't know the answer to or only know some of the answer. Not wanting to appear foolish - the temptation here can be to bluff - don't do it!
- When a solution only partially meets a customer's needs, but they continue to be interested - the temptation can be to fail to highlight that the solution will not meet all of their needs - don't do it!
- When a competitor makes very ambitious claims - the temptation can be to follow suit - don't do it!
- Where a customer is still struggling to grasp how a solution will work, but still wants to buy - the temptation can be to choose to explain after the deal is done - don't do it!

The easy rule to apply to any circumstances is, if in doubt - DON'T do it!

Getting prospects and customers to like us more is by no means easy. The challenge to building great person to person relationships, very often comes down to our understanding and acceptance of the individual's uniqueness (warts and all). The skill is in finding the common ground.

There are certain traits that we all find appealing in others - business and sales are no different in that regard. Becoming a better salesperson may require that you become a better person.

Applying these 4 simple, yet effective, principles in both your personal and professional life will help.

Oh yeah! And your customers will trust, respect and LIKE YOU MORE for it.

NIALL DEVITT is the founder of Beyond the Boardroom (**www.btbtraining.com**), a leading Irish business development consultancy specialising in providing highly tailored solutions in the areas of sales training and recruitment. Having previously recruited and managed high performance sales teams in the IT and Financial Services industries, Niall understood that there was a need for a results driven sales training solution in Ireland.

There are certain traits that we all find appealing in others - business and sales are no different in that regard. Becoming a better salesperson may require that you become a better person.

Working With Gatekeepers Three Part Discussion Document

By Marguerite Mcleod-Fleming

Part 1 OF 3

The importance of gatekeepers

How important are gatekeepers in getting the attention of decision makers? Extremely important, in the estimate of most experts. A survey conducted by Menlo Park, a California-based office team for administrative assistants, revealed that 91% of executives consider their assistant's opinion an important factor in the employee selection process. Just five years before, only 60% percent of executives felt this way.

What does that mean for you as a prospector?

It means that the opinion the gatekeeper has of you will make or break your first impression with the decision maker. Let's tread lightly as we examine this subject matter over the next three issues.

Let's take a look at the role of a gatekeeper. Gatekeepers' job descriptions specify that they will block communication between you and the real buyer.

Gatekeepers generally come in two flavors.

We are most familiar with the administrative gatekeeper. However, the type of gatekeeper who is put in place specifically to guard over a buying process—for example, an evaluation committee member—is definitely more difficult to get around.

If you respond to RFPs or work with large projects, there is usually a gatekeeper put in place to manage the selection and purchasing process. These gatekeepers are not the decision makers, but their mission is to ultimately make a recommendation to the real buyer. Their power can be much more damaging to you than an administrative assistant.

Let's take a look at the role of a gatekeeper. Gatekeepers' job descriptions specify that they will block communication between you and the real buyer.

An administrative assistant may not let you through to the real buyer or may even, in the worst-case scenario, hang up on you. If this type of gatekeeper is offended by something you do, such as attempting to go over their head, you can wind up eliminated from consideration.

In this series of articles, we will focus primarily on the administrative assistant, as this is the type of gatekeeper you will encounter most of the time while prospecting.

Before we dig into how to circumvent gatekeepers, let's look at what happens when you are blocked by an administrative gatekeeper.

- You don't have access to the real buyer
- You may find yourself directed to a low-level person who has no influence over the buying process

How to get the most out of gatekeepers:

Work with gatekeepers to research the business to better position yourself.

Recognize gatekeepers as vital to your information gathering mission. Learn more about the decision-maker, his/her department, recent trends, internal machinations within the company, from the gatekeeper.

Recognize gatekeepers as vital to your information gathering mission. Learn more about the decision-maker, his/her department, recent trends, internal machinations within the company, from the gatekeeper.

Gather information with every call you make, whether or not you accomplish your primary purpose in calling. Ask appropriate questions and gather pertinent information on the decision maker, his or her schedule, what else is happening in the department of company at the time you are calling. You're also interested in insights into the psychological make-up of the person you are calling. For instance, when is the best (and worst) time to call? How do you pronounce your decision maker's name? Does he or she prefer an informal name, like "T" for Hortence or Condy for Condelezza?

You may also need to utilize multiple forms of communication to make contact. Calls alone may or may not result in success. Consider using calls, postcards, faxes and emails to make contact.

Some consultants/vendors/candidates ask decision makers (and their gatekeepers) what the best way is to communicate. Some managers prefer email, while others like formal letters or faxes. Once you know their preference, play it their way.

The objective of the research call is to identify the decision maker, obtain his/her fax number, email address, permission to send information, and hopefully some other qualification information.

Your objective is not to talk to the decision maker at this point.

Never identify yourself unless asked. It is necessary at this point.

In Part 2 of 3, I cover the two approaches most commonly used to get in front of decision makers when working through gatekeepers. You won't want to miss it… **http://www.theresultsource.com/gatekeepers.html**

MARGUERITE MCLEOD-FLEMING is the President and Chief Catalyst of The Result Source. In operation since 2001, The Result Source helps companies get in front of more qualified prospects through her sales consulting and appointment-setting services.

Marguerite has worked on over 100 programs with local and international companies. During this time, Marguerite has defined a new approach to the cold-call process development and delivers seminars and boot camps to organizations to build sales organizations that consistently deliver high-quality results. She has recently authored the Cold-Calling 2.0: The Next Generation of Prospecting Whitepaper which is available from **http://www.theresultsource.com/coldcall20audio.html**

Check Your Lost and Found File For Hidden Sales Treasures

By Nancy Bleeke

Want to increase your probability of winning more business? "Lost" customers may be the key! Many salespeople hit the 'delete' key on former customers and focus on new prospects. Big mistake! These former customers can make great future customers. To increase your sales - earn business again from customers you've "lost" over the years.

How valuable can this be? A study done by Marketing Metrics shows that we have a 20-40% chance of re-engaging a former customer vs. a 5-20% chance of turning a new prospect into a customer! Not bad probabilities for a little work upfront, is it?

Why is now a good time to focus on former customers? The consolidations, bankruptcy filings, and workforce reductions leave many struggling to do more with less. Maybe they didn't need you these last few years and the new business world creates that need again. There are HUGE opportunities for those who are ready to capture more business now.

What can you do to look for these treasures? First, **look BACK to qualify they are a good renewed prospect!**

1. **Review** your past three years of sales data. Make a list of customers who have not bought/worked with you in that time. Then, for each organization, note:

    - When was your last contact with them?
    - Do you know what/whom they are working with in lieu of you?
    - On a scale of 1-10, how likely is it they would welcome contact from you again? If the score is a 5 or higher, they are a good prospect!
    - What do you know about them that you can use to reconnect? History, experiences, and challenges they had, people they work with, hobbies or any shared stories?

Why is now a good time to focus on former customers? The consolidations, bankruptcy filings, and workforce reductions leave many struggling to do more with less.

2. **Research your primary contact** at each identified organization. Use the Google, LinkedIn, FaceBook, Twitter, bizjojrnals.com search tools. Find out what he or she has been up to. Are they still with that company? In the same position?

3. **Review past business** you did with this organization. What product/ service did they use? What was their experience working with you and your company - favorable, neutral, and bad? Why did they stop working with you? Do you know?

   Identify whether this was a valuable customer to you/your company. Sometimes customers can be more work than the value they brought. No sense in reconnecting with a customer who drained you

Second, prepare to **move FORWARD** using this background information.

1. Are the reasons they stopped being a customer relevant any longer?
2. What value might you provide them today?
3. What experiences have you had since you last spoke that would help them?
4. What information would help them right now?
5. What questions should you ask them?

Next, **make CONTACT!**

"Hi Gary, it has been a long time. We continue to help companies such as yours increase xyz or decrease abc. When we worked together, we provided you with the product you needed at exceptional cost and delivery time. With all the market changes we've still been able to help companies with increasing xyz. And I didn't forget about you!"

Then turn the focus to THEM! Be prepared to listen…maybe there is information you don't know about why they are no longer a customer. This should be addressed first. Then you can move into a series of open-ended questions that will allow you to see if there is an opportunity to work together again.

Some examples:

- "What are you currently working on?"
- "How has this economy affecting your business?"
- "What is most important to you these days?"
- "How happy are you with your current supplier?"

Looking for lost customers works! In the past month we've reconnected with former customers. And we found that some of them have done NOTHING since we worked with them. They haven't left us for someone else at all. And yet we haven't done business with them in a while. Now that we made the effort to open the discussion again, we are moving through the sales process to see how we can help them again this year. And the process is easier because they know us and we know a lot about them.

This search for sales treasure does take work - but the upside of the effort is HUGE! You never know what hidden gems of business you might FIND in your lost customers.

NANCY BLEEKE is the Founder and President of Sales Pro Insider, Inc. (www.salesproinsider.com). She is a sales expert focused on "Building performance, profits and people" with results-producing sales training and assessments.

Download her free EBook, *10 Timely Tips to Recession Proof Your Sales* when you sign-up for the Timely Tips ezine at **www.salesproinsider.com**. And for more great tips to increase sales, visit the SalesProInsider blog **www.salesproductivityinsider.com** often.

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Selling In A Recession Might Be The Best Thing For Your Sales Career

By Jonathan London

As painful as this economy is, it might be the best test of your ability as a salesperson and, it might prove to reveal what you need to be most successful in any economic condition. There are 4 ingredients or elements you should be focusing on that will help you get through this terrible time and maximize your success in a healthy economy:

1. Attitude
2. Hard Work/Perseverance
3. Intelligent Work
4. Sales Skills

1. Attitude:

I start with this because it may be the most important aspect of your success today and in the future. I teach my students that companies will be taking 3 basic approaches or be in 3 different phases in today's recession:

- Be aggressive and grab market share
- Stay the course and be positioned to grow when the economy recovers
- Drowning and having a hard time staying alive

The same is true of us as individuals. We can:

- Work harder and smarter including doing everything we can to find and align ourselves with the companies in the first category
- keep your focus and work as hard or a little harder than you have been
- get worried, depressed and downtrodden and stop working as hard

I am in the same situation as my clients. I am selling (and trying to sell) to the industries that are growing (yes there are some) or being less affected by the economy (selling or in verticals that are less affected by the economy). I am staying away from bad news (without being Pollyannaish) so that it doesn't overwhelm me. I am protecting my accounts and doing what I need to keep them and help them.

There are 4 ingredients or elements you should be focusing on that will help you get through this terrible time and maximize your success in a healthy economy.

I am being creative in winning deals. Finally, I am watching my own personal financial assets so I don't worry too much and can maintain my confidence.

2. Hard Work/Perseverance:

There is no substitute for hard work in any economy. In a bad economy it will help you make up for the short fall in business. In a good economy, you can reap the rewards of people spending money. If you are working 9 hours a day, work 11. If you are working 11, work 12 or work much smarter in those 11. Don't fool yourself into thinking just working smarter is the answer.

Perseverance is a different story. Even in the best of times there is a lot of rejection in selling. Multiply that 10 fold in a bad economy. One must find ways to keep at it, not scare themselves. Celebrate small victories. If you made 100 prospecting calls and only got 1 appt, congratulations, at least you made the 100 calls (most people aren't even doing that). Surround yourself with people who are thinking and doing the same. Don't get down for too long. It is hard to get back up.

3. Be Intelligent:

The smarter you are, the more you will sell. What does that mean?

- sell to clients that aren't suffering as much
- protect your base
- be creative with solutions, packaging, pricing, terms and conditions, bundling, etc. What ever was working prior to the economic downturn won't work, or won't work as well.
- Use your time more judiciously. Don't waste time on anything that doesn't directly affect what you want to achieve.
- Get more organized personally and organizationally. Stop wasting time in meetings or with bureaucracy that prevent you from selling or being in front of customers. Reduce steps and less bureaucracy so you can be more responsive to clients and sales situations.
- Incentivize people for doing the right things. Avoid as best you can the temptation to reduce earnings or commissions.

Surround yourself with people who are thinking and doing the same. Don't get down for too long. It is hard to get back up.

- Get to higher levels in your customer's or prospect's organization. If anyone has the will to do something, spend money, invest, it is at these levels.
- Sell in smaller pieces so it is easy for a prospect or customer to digest. Big numbers will scare people away.
- Only spend money where it directly impacts your goals

4. Sales Skills:

Finally, you have to be skilled. You can do all the things above but if you are not good at selling, all will go to waste. What are the most important skills, now and when the economy recovers?

- Prospecting networking and marketing to get more opportunities
- Qualifying, discovering and taking control of the sales cycle early
- Creating and presenting unique and compelling solutions that address the objectives of your prospect or customer
- Resource management to help you expand your ability to do more things than you can by yourself
- Objection handling is huge since it will help you through out the sales cycle and in the final stage of negotiation

This is not to say other skills are unimportant, but in my opinion, these are the most essential. If you do the things discussed, you will get through this dire economy and develop the right habits to make more money when the economy recovers. Good luck and good selling!

If you do the things discussed, you will get through this dire economy and develop the right habits to make more money when the economy recovers.

JONATHAN LONDON - President of the Improved Performance Group, Jonathan has been in sales and management for 34 years. He has been the #1 performer worldwide, (and in many cases industry wide) for such companies as Olivetti Corporation, NBI Word Processing, IBM/Rolm, BusinessLand, Wyse Technologies and PictureTel. Jonathan founded IPG in 1994, has trained over 15,000 people in 23 countries using the same techniques that made his own selling career so successful. His book "An Entrepreneurs Guide to Selling" will be published Q2 2009. He has successfully sold through 3 recessions. Visit Jonathan's website: **www.ipgtraining.com**

Sales Coaching For Survival: Skip The Myths And Get Real

By Danita Bye

We're facing a recession that's being compared to the Great Depression, and the CEO's, business owners, and senior managers I've talked with are desperate to survive. They're concerned about the feelings of hopelessness and despair that have settled into their sales organizations as sales opportunities dwindle, and competition for them is fierce.

Provincial sales solutions won't solve our current economic challenges. Sales organizations that make it through this tough spell will do so because they are well managed. Strong sales management processes— coaching, motivating, accountability, recruiting—can help power sales organizations through this tough time and in all market conditions.

NOW is the time to step up to the plate and be a strong sales leader and coach your sales team through this tough time and beyond. There are many myths about sales coaching I want to dispel, and share proven techniques that will help you engage your sales team in the right activities to get them on the right track.

Myth: *Assessing sales people is a waste of time and money. I can identify development areas myself or at the very least, use the cheapest assessment I can find.*

Truth: *An accurate assessment ensures you focus on the right issues to leverage as a sales coach.*

Provincial sales solutions won't solve our current economic challenges. Sales organizations that make it through this tough spell will do so because they are well managed.

An assessment tool provides objective information about personal selling beliefs that could possibly be sabotaging performance. Without a clear idea of what the roots of the problems are, the time and money you'll spend on solutions could likely be a waste. Each interaction you have with your sales force provides you with the opportunity to observe them and then to coach accordingly. Don't miss a single one.

Myth: *Since my salespeople will learn through their mistakes, given enough time, I don't need to assess and coach them.*

Truth: *Given enough time, you could lose market share and sales opportunities. Provide resources to address weak spots now. While your salespeople may be able to recognize their own weaknesses, they may be floundering at resolving them. Survival in this economy doesn't allow floundering. Help them resolve their issues as soon as possible through a coaching program that clearly documents plans, processes and progress. Each salesperson must have a customized plan based on the findings of a proper assessment that indicate weaknesses and areas requiring development.*

Myth: *Salespeople shouldn't be bothered with constant feedback on performance.*

Truth: *Keeping salespeople in the dark about their performance is counterproductive. Metrics provide salespeople a tangible way to track their performance at any given time, so they and you always know where they stand.*

There are metrics and ratios in each step of the sales process that are harbingers of issues and weaknesses that may be vital in determining coaching needs. For instance, how many dials convert to conversations with a decision-maker, how many conversations is it taking to land an appointment, how many appointments before a proposal is presented, how many proposals turn into revenue. Once metrics and expected performance levels have been established make sure your salespeople are constantly aware of their level of performance against these mutually agreed on benchmarks. Immediately address any gaps through coaching.

Myth: Since my salespeople will learn through their mistakes, given enough time, I don't need to assess and coach them.

Myth: *As the sales executive, I should establish revenue goals for my sales people, so they'll know what I expect from them.*

Truth: *Your expectations could actually limit performance. That's why it's important to establish goals with each individual and clarify minimum- and high-performance expectations with regard to every activity.*

The foundation of an effective motivational success system is an accurate understanding of each activity that contributes to sales performance, as well as results expectations. In addition to revenue, a goal for each activity should be documented early—prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. These goals help sales people stay focused on achieving their personal goals within a range of acceptable performance. This arrangement actually spurs exceptional performance, because salespeople typically have egos, even though they may keep them invisible, and are therefore competitive.

The biggest mistake sales leaders make is discussing expectations late—after a salesperson is hired. This process should commence at the interview stage to weed out slackers and, most certainly, before the official hiring. Imagine your new hire's jaw dropping when you cover his or her goals. And, believe it or not, there are sales managers that actually wait until the annual review to introduce objectives vis. a vis. performance. Anyone who waits that long, well, that ship is long gone. Those unguided salespeople essentially operated in the dark.

The foundation of an effective motivational success system is an accurate understanding of each activity that contributes to sales performance, as well as results expectations

The new breed of sales leader is in tune with each salesperson on their team. They understand their personal strengths, weaknesses, what revs their engine, what causes them to lose sleep. And they use that information to create a coaching plan that's tailored specifically for the individual. This sales leader goes a step further by understanding their own personal profile and how they must adapt their communication style to reach each salesperson.

Good luck and good coaching.

DANITA BYE

Danita has carved a track record in building and inspiring high-performance sales teams that achieve bottom-line results regardless of economic or market conditions.

Her unique Fortune 100-turned-entrepreneurial perspective enables Danita to help CEO's and presidents take their local, regional, national and international businesses to the next level by increasing sales, boosting profitability and creating predictable revenue streams while reducing sales costs.

Wielding a passion for excellence, extensive knowledge of today's market, a unique approach to establishing strategic sales management systems and processes, and a staunch commitment to "The Best of the Best", Danita has been highly successful in Achieving Bottom-line Results for her clients.

Visit: **www.salesgrowthspecialists.com/**

How Do You Measure Sales Success?

by Ken Thoreson

Some easy dashboard metrics for organizations who want to squeeze as much as they can from their strategic sales-management plans.

In today's tough economic times, the companies most likely to thrive are those that invest time in scrutinizing their strategic sales-management plans. They review everything from their forecasts to their pipelines, looking hard at important numbers such as cost of sales, percentage of market share, salesperson-effectiveness ratios and customer lifetime value.

When we see our client companies struggling, it's often because they lack such blueprints. Effective plans require combining an organization's goals and individual salespeople's business plans with a set of metrics designed to gauge everyone's progress in meeting those objectives.

Following are what we believe are the fundamental metrics that companies should include in "dashboards" for measuring their sales teams' effectiveness:

- Accuracy percentage for monthly forecast, by salesperson
- Dollar value of pipeline by stage; number of opportunities by stage
- Dollar value of pipeline ratio to future monthly quotas
- Actual sales activity compared to a defined set of standards
- Average order value
- A Win/loss rate percentages, by salesperson

When we see our client companies struggling, it's often because they lack such blueprints.

Beyond the Basics

As you continue developing your company's dashboard, you may wish to build in additional metrics such as the following:

- Value of net new account sales as percentage of total sales for month and year to date
- Existing account sales as percentage of total sales, month and year to date
- Rev salesperson profitability to sales volume
- Revenue per current customer per year as percentage of total sales
- Cost per lead, by source
- Sales-cycle time from initial contact by salesperson to decision
- Number of days with sales outstanding, goal vs. actual
- Blended billing consultant rate, goal vs. actual
- Realization consultant rate, goal vs. actual
- Utilization consultant rate, goal vs. actual
- Consultant backlog days, goal vs. actual
- Direct sales expense as a percentage of volume, margin and quota

Looking Ahead: Leading Indicators

In addition, smart organizations increasingly rely on what we call "leading indicators." These are activities or ratios that can predict revenues at least 60 days out. While simply looking at future pipeline values can provide a similar forecast, growth-focused partners may find these indicators useful as well. In most cases, sales events occurring early in the sales cycle are most likely to lead to high-percentage sales opportunities. If these begin to fall, future pipelines and revenues will probably follow the same pattern. Potential leading indicators include the numbers of:

While simply looking at future pipeline values can provide a similar forecast, growth-focused partners may find these indicators useful as well.

- New-prospect calls made per week
- Face-to-face sales calls made per week
- Subject-matter expert calls made per week
- Discovery calls made per month
- Demonstrations and executive presentations made per month

We also recommend creating graphs comparing these numbers to dollars booked or margins generated, which can help salespeople see the relationship between indicators and results.

Finally, remember that the ultimate goal is "improving your ratios and results" each month and each quarter-not simply tracking them! That's the real reason for developing a dashboard-and the real route to success.

KEN THORESON is President and Managing Director of the Acumen Management Group Ltd., a consulting organization focused on improving sales management functions within growing and transitional organizations. You can reach him at:

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Does Your Bio Sell Or Repel?

By George Huang

When it comes to selling your products and services, your personal biographical information can either attract or repel your potential buyers. And with the explosion of social media marketing channels, your biographical information is even more important than ever. Everything you put out there has to affirm that you are a COMPELLING, INNOVATIVE and UNIQUE service and/or product provider.

Unfortunately, most people involved in marketing and selling don't appreciate the true power of a really good (or really bad) bio. Nor do they understand how to craft a bio that helps them to 1) sell to more and better clients, customers, and patients, 2) entice them to buy more from you each time they buy, and 3) keep them coming back for more.

While leading a workshop for entrepreneurs on "How to Craft a Bio That Sells, Rather Than Repels", I was not surprised that most participants' pre-existing biographies started out by describing their unique approach to problem-solving or what's so special about their product, along with the requisite listing of their education and training, background, and accomplishments.

While this is important information, leading with this information makes your bio all about you; but all your potential buyers really care about is WIIFM… "What's In It For Me?" Naturally, your best buyers are more interested in what your services and products can do for them, than they are in what's so great about you, your products, or even "how you do it."

Unfortunately, most people involved in marketing and selling don't appreciate the true power of a really good (or really bad) bio.

So, let's take a look at the "anatomy" of a biography that "sells, rather than repels."

- **Clearly state who your target audience is**. In other words, make it clear about who you provide services and products for. Properly done, your potential clients, customers, and patients will immediately know that you're speaking directly to them.

- **Describe the problem that your target audience is dealing with**. Maybe it's not so much a problem, but it could be thorny issues, a challenge, barrier, or obstacle. Whatever way you and your potential buyer describes it, it's still something for which they are searching for solutions and that they are looking for relief from.

- Clearly state the **specific results, improvements, outcomes, and experiences** that your clients, customers, and patients can count on from you. Ultimately, these are the reasons that people buy anything. If you go out and buy a car, it's not really the car you care about; you care about how safely, reliably, and economically it gets you there. And, you care about how you look and feel while you're driving it.

- **Describe your general approach to providing outstanding service or delivery a great product.** The right time to describe your approach to solving your potential buyer's problem or issue is only after your potential buyer recognizes that you are speaking his or her language, have acknowledged their pain, and you have given them a sense of confidence that you can help.

- If a potential buyer is still with you at this point, it's now the right time to **strategically weave in references to your specific education, training, background, personal accomplishments, awards, and publications**. Just be sure to tie them back into why and how they benefit your potential clients, cutomers, and patients.

The **sequence** in which you present information in your biography is critical. To review:

1. Clearly decribe your target audience by name.
2. Describe their particular problems, issues, challenges, barriers and obstacles.
3. Describe the specific results, improvements, outcomes, and experiences they can count on from you.
4. Then and only then, describe how you would go about solving their problems and needs with your services and products.

5. Present your achievements, education, training, and experience only as they relate to particular benefits, results, outcomes, and experiences that your buyers are looking for.

Without a doubt, structuring your biography this way can be challenging as it bucks tradition. Yet, a properly crafted biographical sketch can make selling easier and faster. Conversely, your bio can inadvertently repel some of your best clients, customers, and patients.

While there may still be an appropriate place for a traditional biography, one written according to these parameters will serve you better when it comes to sharing your bio information on your website, blog, social media outlets, press kits, speaking introductions, and articles.

If you're stuck and aren't confident about creating a bio that sells, don't hesitate to hire a professional writer who can relate to the approach described here and can help you craft one. The return-on-investment of a well-crafted biography can be enormous – well worth your investment of time, money, thought, and energy.

DR. GEORGE HUANG helps conscious entrepreneurs who are unsure how to turn their purpose and passion into greater levels of prosperity and profitability. They know they have great products and services, but they aren't certain of the best ways to package, present, promote, and manage their businesses. The result? Their business performance is lackluster, they don't make the impact they are committed to, and they frequently miss their revenue targets

As the leading authority on designing the "freedom-driven" business, George has helped entrepreneurs from around the world achieve greater levels of freedom, contribution, and prosperity.

To read his bio that sells, go to: **www.freedompreneur.com/aboutus.html**

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Selling Personality - Getting The Full Value For Your Services

By Alen Majer

A person's largest commercial reward in the world is receiving their full value for their services. Some receive less than they are worth, but what we hope for is that we receive our just and earned shares.

Who wants to buy a stock that misses or waives dividends, stands still, or decreases in value? You'll find your answer in stock offerings that have no takers.

What company wants a treadmill runner who stands still or back-pedals? You'll find the answer to that question in the army of unemployed.

One morning Elizabeth Potter wakes up to find she is out of work. Her firm has been purchased and will be moving to another region of the country. Elizabeth is not in a position to move, so she begins to look for another job.

Along with hundreds of other emails, Elizabeth's application slowly hits a company that is interested and grants her an interview. This position was carved to fit the person who is satisfied with what life chooses to give out to him or her – food, clothes, place to lay his or her head, and the right to exist.

But as she progresses, she is not satisfied with just a liveable wage, and presents a well prepared portfolio of what she can do. She is hired for a gain in income.

Who did she beat out for this job? Hundreds of applicants both inside the company and out, who did not fight for what they were worth. Elizabeth showed what she could do. It was not just words. The amazing thing in this case is how the internal employees failed to demonstrate that they had the performance ability for the position.

Who wants to buy a stock that misses or waives dividends, stands still, or decreases in value?

By hiring someone who could demonstrate their abilities it may mean the company can save hundreds of thousands of dollars. No inside employee could match her ability to sell her competencies. It doesn't mean they might not have those competencies; it does mean they didn't sell them.

In another case a company is searching for a new auditor. Outsourcing costs are running too high and the international business work seems too much for the current auditor. In the New Z-Laser Company in Pittsburgh, a thirty-five-year-old dynamo, Bill Marin, is making a name for himself in the auditor's position, and as a leading member of the professional auditing association. On top of it he has sought international finance and marketing expertise.

His ability has been noted by outsiders as well as by those above him. So, winding slowly through the grapevine, word reached the searching company that a right person for their open position exists. They send an invitation to Bill Martin for lunch.

One month later, entrenched behind a mahogany desk in a private office, Bill Martin is on that success road to a six figure salary.

In this case the job found the person. The CXO's are congratulating themselves on having secured Bill's services and are doing everything in their power to help him get a fair, square start.

Think it over.

Both Bill Martin and Elizabeth successfully sold themselves, purveyed their strong personalities, while hundreds of others, many that should have had an advantage by being current employees failed to make the effort. It did not happen overnight: both Bill and Elizabeth trained, expanded their talents, developed, and as their personal worth grew their incomes as well expanded. One of their trademarks was their dedication to a constant repetition of intended and steady tasks.

But an in-house employee should have been in line for that job. A person out of their own organization who had delivered every step of the way would have been far preferable at the time in the eyes of the employer. This person had overlooked the necessity of selling themselves and their possibilities to his employers.

There are three classes of workers:

1. The person who doesn't try;
2. The person who builds their ability but fails to demonstrate it.
3. The person of success: a combination of ever-increasing ability and constant personality selling, who wins in spite of person barriers.

And, after all, you can be what you make yourself. Often just a little longer pull and a little stronger one and the sky is your earnings limit.

On the other hand, the person, who lies down and rests; who is satisfied at any point is lost. They become one of the vast wayside army which acts as background and scenery for the ones who really follow through.

For Bill and Elizabeth the future wore a cloak of question marks, too. But they pulled back that curtain and traveled the identical road that you are following. Therefore, there is no reason under a blue sky above why you can't do as much.

Now I'm going to repeat: **Step by step-constantly adding to your store of knowledge** - constantly fitting yourself for the step ahead, that is a step above you: study and work; use every capability within you; develop your talents and create new ones; then build yourself, your ability, and your possibilities day by day; and sell yourself all the way.

And, after all, you can be what you make yourself.

When you stop to analyze it, a salesperson selling products has just exactly three things to do:

1. first find a customer,
2. then make the sales to happen,
3. and last, but not least, that sales person has to cultivate customers to buy more.

It all comes down to selling yourself - **selling personality**.

You are your own wares. The person who employs you is your customer. You've got to find your customer by locating a business that offers opportunity for you and needs what you have to offer. You have to make your first sale: actually land the position.

And then, where the salesperson's work is to make his customers buy more of his products, your task is to **build the value of your services** and get a cash return - promotion - if you follow these steps. First, as insurance against under-payment, **learn to sell your personality and ability at its full market value.** Second, keep on building and adding to what you have to sell; day by day making yourself worth a little more, and year by year collect for it.

You are your own wares. The person who employs you is your customer. You've got to find your customer by locating a business that offers opportunity for you and needs what you have to offer.

ALEN MAJER consults businesses on a variety of topics ranging from improving sales processes and developing better customer relationships to improving internal sales forces skills. He knows the secret of sales and is sharing it, and after over 15 years in sales he still believes this is the most exciting, best payable, and most secure job position in the world!

Alen holds seminars about different sales topics, from "How to Find the Customers" to "How to Be a Professional Sales Person," in order to assist the development of salesperson skills suitable for the 21st century. He is the author of *Trigger Events - How to Find Your Next Customer, Crucial Points to Succeed in Sales (and Life), and How to Sell to Americans.*

Also *The Sales Process (in Croatian language - "Kako prodavati")*

Visit Alen's website: **http://alenmajer.com/**

Yoda Needs To Follow His Own Advice!

By Harlan Goerger

Skipping the steps can cause you problems ...

Finally the president is back in town for a few days. I call Mary, my key contact in the potential clients company to set up a meeting with her, the president and myself.

Mary is excited and really likes the proposal we worked on and wants to see it go through.

I've strategized the key motivators of the president whom I've worked with before. So I am very confident this has a better than 90% chance of going through.

I grab the phone, call Mary and ...

"We were just talking about you and the proposed changes." states Mary. "But, the president does not want to change anything. I guess the current supplier and he are best of friends and under no circumstances will he consider another source, even if it is better!"

My brain immediately states, "How stupid can you be, you skipped the most important step!"

I of course questioned Mary on her thoughts and exactly what the president had said. Yes she was disappointed and whished she had thought about that relationship more, but the choice was made in no uncertain terms.

So how did a very nice piece of business slip though the "teachers" hands?

So how did a very nice piece of business slip though the "teachers" hands?

Very easily because "Yoda" did not follow his own rules.

Knowing several contacts in the company and having worked with them before they knew the service offered would be quality. The president was gone for some time and was very difficult to get in touch with. One of the VP contacts suggested I talk with Mary as she really coordinated this particular area and had all the information I would need.

Being over confident I knew enough about the company and the president, the appointment with Mary was set and the information was gathered.

My supplier did their do diligence and invested the time to make sure the proposal was right and I drafted up the perfect cover letter.

Here is where I missed the mark:

1. I did not contact the president to verify his level of interest in such a change.
2. I did not ask Mary or my VP contact about the current relationship.
3. I made several assumptions about the company, the president and the potential barriers to the proposed change.
4. I violated rule #1, always start at the top!

Yep, I was not the happiest of campers that morning. I had invested a good chunk of time, the supplier had invested time and so had Mary.

If I had followed Rule #1 we all could have been doing something else!

So how often have other salespeople experienced this scenario? Far too often!

The sales manger asks, “How are you doing with the Anderson account?”

“Great, I have a contact that says they can handle it and I don’t have to go any higher in the company! The neat thing is they are so easy to get a hold of and really seem interested.” exclaims the salesperson.

So how often have other salespeople experienced this scenario? Far too often!

The sales manager tries to control his exasperation and keeps his eyes from rolling back in his head. It's the time waster, non-decision maker, no authority and information collector for the company.

The sales manager responds, "So who else in the company would make this decision if this person was not there? Shouldn't we get them involved as well?"

"I guess that wouldn't hurt, just to be safe." is the response.

Yes it seems like we are accomplishing something when we talk to people other than the decision makers. Yes we can gather information and insight, but they can not and most likely will not make or push the decision for you.

You need to make the contact with the authority that can and will make the decision, even if it is not what you want to hear!

It will save you time, your team time and get you in front of more decision makers because you are not tied up with the non-decision makers.

Rule #1: Always start at the top!

As Zig Ziglar says, "I'll see you at the top if you do!"

Till next week, be all you can be!

HARLAN GOERGER, National Director of Training

The Secret To Getting More Done And Making More Money Aligning Your Activity With Your Objectives

By Karl Goldfield

In an effort to get ahead many people lose track of the basic tenets of success. Sales people are finally starting to see that being the best is not merely some artistic nuance, but involves systems. If you measure and manage your sales process like any other process, you will find that it is possible to become more effective and climb the stack rank. The first thing to look at is your habits. Then you must dive into mechanics.

One habit that seems neglected by team leaders and team members is aligning your day to day activity with your short and long term objectives. Segmenting your day by activity and only doing the things that move your day along are two obvious objectives that most sales people ignore. An example is making calls during prime business hours and leaving other activity for earlier and later in the day. Another example is not reading e-mail when you first arrive in the office. Another is not visiting a prospect for a discovery session in the last week of a month.

First let's talk about segmenting. There is a reason that Henry Ford became an industrial legend and it was not just because he built cars. It is that he designed a methodology that when utilized makes any repetitive process, AND I MEAN ANY, more efficient. Assembly lines work, whether you are making planes or appointments. If you are making calls, MAKE CALLS! Do not stop to send an e-mail or a fax. Do not walk around to talk to people or find someone in support, use IM or email. If you are going out on appointments, BOOK 6 in a day. Do not drive half way across town to see one client.

Do your mindless tasks at the end of the day. After a long day of prospecting, objection handling, closing, and delegating, you are mentally spent.

One habit that seems neglected by team leaders and team members is aligning your day to day activity with your short and long term objectives.

This is the time to send faxes, write intro e-mails, send out mailers, and clean up databases. If you segment these activities into clusters, you can do more.

Second, you will benefit from always holding yourself accountable. If you do not blame others you will find yourself becoming more effective. You will excuse your self from less important activity and more often focus on what you need to accomplish. Be sure to set realistic expectations and allow time to execute only what you can do in a given day. Ask for help when you need it, especially with getting your priorities straight. This is my we have managers and mentors, to give us guidance.

Planning who to contact and why is easily as important as getting your activity in order. What most mediocre to good sales people do is come in every morning and blast out a lot of calls to whoever is next on their list. They then take any meeting or follow up call they can get until they have created a great deal of continuing activity. From this flurry comes sales, but unfortunately it is hand and hand with an exuberant amount of wasted activity.

What coaches teach great sales people to do is plan their contact by value and objective. Sales stars do not just make calls and meet with contacts. Sales stars make the calls and have the meets that produce results. This means knowing who you are calling before you make the call. This means listing out your objectives and reviewing them before you meet with your contact. Most of all it means spending the time to know what you are doing before you do anything.

This may seem like massive change to some of you. Let's break it down into smaller and easier chucks to administer.

1. Take a look at your customers. What is similar about these contacts? How did the sales process align? What triggers made these contacts become customers? Now build a few statements that show the common denominators.

2. Take a look at your pipeline and rate the quality of your opportunities from A through D. Now when I say quality there are multiple factors beyond probability to close. One is the initial value of the sale; another could be the long term value. Also consider things like the company's size and reputation. How quickly they will make a decision. These are all critical and this process should take some time. If you rush this, you will not have true rankings.

3. Now take 1 and 2 and find your best opportunities. These are the ones that align with who you have sold to and who in your pipeline is valuable and worth your time. There may be a huge company that is just like five that you have closed that is only at the beginning of the sales process that requires five times more energy than something that is small and out of focus that is near closing.

Once you have completed this activity, it is imperative to list out your objectives for your next contact with each. Write out and visualize your objectives. Read them aloud and listen as you do. I know this can seem cheesy, but all of these methods of communication trigger different parts of your brain. The more you wrap yourself around something the clearer it becomes. Finally, stay proactive in your activity and your communication. This might not seem like it is part of planning, but oh it is! If you do not act in a proactive manner you will let some of these habits slide. One slip takes you down and then it is twice as hard to get back up.

Sales people love to talk about a lucky sale, but if they dive into what made the sale, it is usually a compilation of what is noted above. To me the following quotes sum it up:

- *"I never knew an early-rising, hard-working, prudent man, careful of his earnings, and strictly honest who complained of bad luck."* (Henry Ward Beecher)
- *"I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it."* (Thomas Jefferson)
- *"It's hard to detect good luck - it looks so much like something you've earned."* (Frank A. Clark)

2. Take a look at your pipeline and rate the quality of your opportunities from A through D.

- *"I've found that luck is quite predictable. If you want more luck, take more chances. Be more active. Show up more often."* (Brian Tracy)
- *"You only get lucky if you expect to be: The really successful people in this world made their own luck"* (Jonathan Farrington)

My quote: "To constantly have good luck you must constantly practice good habits."

I am an open networker, but by joining my network you are opting into my startup sales mentor newsletter. To read more check out the blog.

http://salesblog.karlgoldfield.com

In the new global community, there are advantages and challenges never before fathomed by the entrepreneur. The modern day startup is faced with new concepts in financing, new challenges in competitive landscapes, and real time needs and abilities. What is consistent and will always remain so, is that the startup must deliver on expectations by selling their offering.

KARL GOLDFIELD is passionate about developing teams for emerging companies. For the past fifteen years, he has shown the ability to deliver beyond expectations through continual innovation. By establishing a plan then testing the boundaries of that plan, Karl provides methodologies that help to address particular challenges. He delivers strategies that allow startups to mold sales teams from the clay of their own attributes.

Karl's philosophies stem from planning before execution, sound processes, and educating the evangelists. A company that reacts to problems as they arise is not a fluid as one that builds a plan, trains to that plan, and retools the development of their organization to define success. In today's business world we need to coach and be mentored, not tracked and managed. Sales strategy is an evolving part of society. Every day the manner in which people respond to stimuli is changing. Old practices continually have to give way to new principles and personalities. Karl believes the paradigm must always adapt to the masses.

Stop Blaming The Economy! Three Tough Questions For Winning More Business In Today's Soft Market

By Tim Wackel

The experts have started to whisper recession and you can almost hear the collapse of sales funnels everywhere. Account managers are complaining about how difficult it is to close business in this slowing economy. This doesn't come as a big surprise.

Less than half of today's business-to-business sales professionals have ever weathered a true economic downturn. These folks learned how to sell in the nifty '90s which was one of the longest business expansions in U.S. history. Hey, it's not that hard to hit quota with double digit market returns and huge growth in the number of new jobs. But what should you do when the economy starts to tap the brakes?

Rule one—don't blame the economy

Companies still have to buy goods and services no matter what the economy is doing. They may buy different, they may buy less, but they still have to buy. If you can't convince prospects that what you're offering is a solid investment with meaningful return, then maybe the problem lies closer to home.

Let's look at this a different way. The major objection most reps face during slow times is, "I have no money." How is that possible? If your customer has no money then they're out of business. What they are really saying is, "Your ideas stink."

What can sales organizations do to close more business in a slowing economy? Start by answering these three questions that will put you back on the path to success. I can't guarantee that they work for everyone, but I can guarantee that they work.

Less than half of today's business-to-business sales professionals have ever weathered a true economic downturn.

How much energy are you wasting on insignificant activities?

You've probably heard that business will improve if your account managers just make more appointments, increase the number of demos, and give more presentations and ramp up their number of cold calls. Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with increasing these selling activities; especially if you sell low-value products to one time customers.

Experience tells me that chasing everything that looks like an opportunity keeps account managers busy but it doesn't make them effective. They'll be working hard, but they won't be working smart. Eventually they will burn out their prospects and themselves – toast for two!

Start today by re-evaluating every opportunity in the pipeline using these three questions. The quality of answers determines the quality of your future business:

- Why should this prospect buy—what compelling business reasons have been identified and agreed to?
- Why would they buy from your company—does the prospect understand and value your unique differentiators?
- Why buy now—what negative consequences will the prospect experience if this opportunity stalls?

Focus your team on the best selling opportunities and invest there. You'll create more success by investing the right resources into ten solid opportunities than you will by chasing twenty five half baked leads.

Experience tells me that chasing everything that looks like an opportunity keeps account managers busy but it doesn't make them effective.

Are you making every conversation count?

Challenge your sales organization to create a list of compelling reasons why decision makers should give them 20 minutes. This list needs to be focused on the real benefits in meeting with the account manager—not the account manager's motivation in wanting to meet with the decision maker.

I know this is hard work but it's an exercise that too many sales reps have ignored for too long. Get other members of your organization to participate, brainstorm ideas and scrub them until they are clear and compelling. These ideas are the springboard for getting in front of the right decision makers and motivating them to explore ideas.

Clients should also be impressed with the preparation around each sales interaction. When your team demonstrates that they've done their homework prospects will be more willing to have an open and honest dialogue with them. When the economy slows down, people get nervous. They don't want to waste time unless they see potential value and they're comfortable that your reps aren't just trying to sell them something.

Encourage your sales professionals to start client conversations with this simple phrase, "In preparing for this meeting I took some time to…" Then simply have them highlight the two or three critical things that they did to prepare and watch what happens to the atmosphere of the call. They'll blow away the last rep that opened their meeting by announcing that they were just "checking in" to see if anything new was going on.

The goal is to stop trying to educate your customers. They don't care unless they are engaged. Talking about your company, your products and your reputation will not engage customers. Talk about them, ask about them, provide ideas for them and communicate in terms of them.

Who are you talking about—you or them?

Do you have any questions?

Knowledge is a key ingredient to sales success, especially in a slowing economy. The more your account managers demonstrate knowledge, the more prospects will take time to listen. And the best way to establish expertise is not by pitching features; it's by asking questions. Questions that can differentiate the value your account managers bring to every call.

When your team demonstrates that they've done their homework prospects will be more willing to have an open and honest dialogue with them.

Many selling professionals fall into the common trap of asking questions that are self serving. “What does your purchasing process look like?” is a mind numbing, self serving question that doesn’t create new insights. Your customer hears these types of questions every day and they bring zero value to the dialogue. Instead ask questions that get customers to stop and think. Ask questions they haven’t been asked before. Ask questions that get the customer to pause and say, “That’s a really good question.” Here are some simple examples to help jump start your thinking:

- "There’s a lot of information that I could share with you, but I’d like to know what your specific goals for this conversation are. What are the most important things you feel we should focus on to make this meeting a valuable use of your time?"
- "At the end of the day, what’s going to be the biggest differences between the one representative that will win your business and the 9 others that don’t?"
- "What questions need to be asked that no on else is asking you?"

Creating high impact questions takes extra time. But it’s worth every minute. Start investing more time doing research and preparation, less time running from sales call to sales call. I know this contradicts traditional wisdom, but this isn’t a traditional selling environment. Don’t pick up the phone or walk into the lobby until you’re absolutely ready to engage in a meaningful dialogue. You’re not going to get a second chance in a slowing economy, so make sure every one counts!

TIM WACKEL is one of today's most popular business speakers who has mastered the ability to make information entertaining, memorable and easy to understand. He combines more than 20 years of successful sales leadership with specific client research to deliver high-impact programs that go beyond today's best practices. His list of clients includes organizations like Allstate, Cisco, Hewlett Packard, Philips Medical Systems, Raytheon as well as many professional and trade associations. Tim's keynotes and workshops are insightful, engaging and focused on providing real world success strategies that audiences can (and will!) implement right away. Visit: **www.timwackel.com**

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