**Christmas Edition**
**2007**

# The Top Sales Experts
## Share Their Top Articles

# Contents

## Contents

# Introduction

Welcome to Volume 3 of:

"The Top Sales Experts Share Their Top Articles"

Since the launch of our new site at www.topsalesexperts.com the team has expanded considerably and we very much hope you will enjoy this collection of our latest work.

Finally, at this very special time of year, we send you our Christmas message:

# That Very Important 1st Client Meeting:

By Jill Konrath

*"Intellectually you know it's important to focus on your customer and ask questions about their objectives, issues and concerns".*

Finally, after months of trying to get in to see one of your hot prospects, the day has arrived. The big meeting is set for early afternoon.

Sitting by yourself at lunch, you're planning what to cover in your one hour together. This may be the only chance you have to really show your capabilities, demonstrate your expertise or razzle-dazzle your prospects with the breadth of your product line. Plus you really need to update them about all the new things your company is doing.

So much to say. So little time!

Intellectually you know it's important to focus on your customer and ask questions about their objectives, issues and concerns. But inside you're in turmoil because you "have" to share all this information.

"Besides," you think, "What if I don't tell them about all our products or everything we can do for them? If I only tell them about one thing, what if it's not what they need right now. And I really need to impress them with all our capabilities."

What should you do?

If you're like most people who sell, the fear of missing out on a potential opportunity is just too overwhelming - especially when you may only get one shot at this company's business.

When you sit down in front of your prospect, even though you have good intentions of being customer-focused, it's virtually impossible to do.

Instead, like Santa Claus, you bring in your entire goody bag of products and services and spread them across your prospect's desk. Brochures, samples, case studies and more brochures. They're all out there for your prospect to pick and choose from.

And you can't stop talking, "Stop me when you hear something you like! There's bound to be something we do that you'll be interested in."

Your prospect asks just enough questions to keep you going and verify that this was the right approach to take.

But is this approach effective? That's what's most important.

Does playing Santa Claus work in selling? Unfortunately, the answer is a resounding "NO" when it involves dumping your entire goodie bag under your prospect's Christmas tree.

Here are five reasons why:

1. By showing customers everything you have, you enable them to rule you out!
Your product/service lacks ... (you name it). It costs too much. People don't want to change - and just because they have lots of options does NOT make them want to change any faster.

2. You sound just like a peddler!
By not focusing on their needs and asking lots of questions, customers think you're only interested in making the sale.

3. You have NO reason to go back.
You've told or shown them everything. Why would a customer ever need to meet with you again?

4. Good business relationships take time to develop.
You need follow-up meetings to demonstrate your commitment to helping customers achieve their goals or solve their problems.

5. You're not differentiating yourself from competitors.
Customers want to work with sellers who provide value with their ideas, insights, resources, knowledge and expertise. Instead, you become a commodity.

I'm not suggesting you play the Grinch, the miserly creature who totally lacked the holiday spirit of gift giving.

Instead, do what Santa really does:

- Find out what's on your prospects' list.
  What do they really need or want? What goals or objectives are they trying to achieve? What problems need resolution?

The only way you can find out what's on your prospects' list is to ask really provocative, insightful questions - ones that get them thinking. Make your own list of questions before your call so you're not tempted to dump your goody bag.

- Check your list twice.
  When you uncover a need or problem, don't jump on it right away. Explore it in depth finding out all the business ramifications and the pay-off for making a change. This means you ask more questions.

- Give them what they really want.
  Prospects don't want your product or service - only what it can do for them and their business. If you haven't asked questions, you'll never know if you can help them achieve their objectives or eliminate their problems.

When you're establishing a new business relationship, the most important thing to remember is that you just need to get your foot-in-the-door.

By focusing on a single business issue that needs addressing and making sure your offering delivers the results customers want, you prove your competence. Then the opportunities for you expand exponentially.

So please, don't dump your entire goody bag of products or services all over your prospect's desk. Don't try to impress your customers with your broad product line or the depth of your experience.

Santa wouldn't approve! It's not how he works.

Jill Konrath is a leading-edge sales strategist ... author of the instant sales classic, Selling to Big Companies ... an in-demand sales speaker who provides a much needed wake-up call to sales organizations ... a passionate spokesperson for women in sales ... and a strong believer that in today's business environment, the sales force is the competitive advantage.
Visit Jill's website: www.sellingtobigcompanies.com

# Psychometric Tests and Professional Salespeople – Uncomfortable Bedfellows?

By Jonathan Farrington

*"Psychometrics evolved from the need to examine ability. At the end of the 19th century, French psychologist Alfred Binet worked on some of the first tests to measure children's ability".*

I have to tell you that when I was first introduced to psychometrics in 1983, I was somewhat sceptical and that scepticism has remained with me ever since; I will explain why in a moment but first a little background information – this might be the boring bit but do stay with it!

Psychometrics evolved from the need to examine ability. At the end of the 19th century, French psychologist Alfred Binet worked on some of the first tests to measure children's ability.

The US army developed its own tests to help recruit fresh troops for the first world war, the so-called Alpha tests designed to work quickly through the hundreds of thousands of applicants and work out who had the required education and background. More notoriously, the tests went through a period of popularity with eugenicists – something psychologists are still trying to live down – with the invention of IQ and aptitude tests.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of psychometric tests. The first measures ability – verbal or numerical reasoning, for example. The second measures personality traits such as how a person might behave in a given situation or what motivates them. In the world of work, tests are increasingly tailored to the jobs they are used for. The choice of test is absolutely crucial: In order to decide to use a test, you must first analyse a job in terms of what makes one person more successful at it than another. You must be absolutely clear that what you're measuring is relevant to the job performance

So why my scepticism and why do I believe that psychometric testing and professional salespeople are uncomfortable bedfellows?

Pick up a typical company report and what words do you find? Verbs like analyse, forecast, plan, assess and schedule, are used by organisations that are efficient, productive and predictable. What set of people are required? Obviously, people who are efficient, effective, proficient, competent, productive and co-operative. These traits we can measure and predict using psychometric testing.

But I believe we need to go beyond – as business captains we need to be inspired, motivated, creators, who are enthusiastic and able to consistently deliver against our key objectives. We should be developing individuals who are not afraid to challenge paradigms, who are prepared to go that extra yard in search of excellence and who understand that success is 80% attitude and only 20% aptitude. And this where my sceptism has its roots because the "personality" element or the "attitude" in my Attitude + Skills + Process + Knowledge = Success selling formula, cannot be accurately benchmarked.

Witness the admission of John Rust, Professor of Psychometrics at City University and Director of the Cambridge Assessment Centre, "*Some skills such as numeracy or language are easy to test. Others – creativity, for example – are more nebulous. Lots of people criticise creativity tests because they are very hard to do".*

The question is, are any of these assessments reliable or valid? Rust does believe creativity can be tested. He cites the example, now used more often in psychology lectures than HR departments, of giving a candidate a brick and asking them to come up with as many uses for it as possible.(The mind boggles) Here psychometrics enters a grey area. "*Using personality tests for personnel selection is sometimes regarded as controversial. The difficulty is that people can often perceive what characteristics are desirable – you're unlikely to admit to having hallucinations. People who answer honestly might be at a disadvantage and this tends to show up if you look at the relationship between test scores and performance*"

"*Correlations between personality test scores and job performance are often weaker than a similar comparison with ability-based tests",* he adds. *"Ultimately, psychometrics can only ever used by companies in the context of a wider selection process, the test will only inform the decision – it won't make the decision*".

You see, returning to my ASP + K formula, at what point does a psychometric finding have reliable relevance? The attitude element is uncertain and for me this is critical, as it drives the motivation of all the other elements: Skills, including; negotiation, presentation, account management, relationship building, opportunity assessment etc, cannot be assessed. The individual's commitment to appropriate sales process which might include; forecasting, pipeline development, activity analysis etc, cannot be assessed. Finally, knowledge, that includes industry knowledge, sector knowledge, company knowledge, product knowledge and even self-knowledge, cannot be measured.

Having recruited, trained, mentored, coached and developed literally thousands of front-line sales professionals, my question is a simple one:

*"In the field of professional selling, have we been seduced into allowing psychometric testing to become our bedfellow?"*

What we can say for certain, is that Santa would easily pass the Attitude + Skills + Process + Knowledge test, after all, he would only need to take it once a year ☺

Jonathan Farrington is a globally recognised business coach, mentor, author and consultant, who has guided hundreds of companies and thousands of individuals around the world towards optimum performance levels.

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

Prior to that, he earned his spurs in some of the most demanding and competitive market sectors i.e. IT, Telecommunications and Finance; providing him with the opportunity to work with a number of the largest and most successful international corporations including: - IBM, Wang, Legal and General, Andersen Consulting, Litton Industries and The Bank of Tokyo.

Early in 2007, Jonathan formed Top Sales Associates (TSA) to promote the very best sales related solutions and products – the first initiative, Top 10 Sales Articles launched in April. TSA is now a subsidiary of The Sales Practitioners Group.

His highly popular daily blog for dedicated business professionals can be found here and you can read more about what Jonathan calls his 'journey' here: www.jonathanfarrington.com

In 2008, Jonathan will be launching his brand new range of sales products and solutions via The JF Consultancy

# Titles That Tease

By Anne Miller

Imagine you are the buyer at Lexus. You see sales presentations every day—every business out there wants to nail a contract with a firm as esteemed as Lexus. As you settle into your seat for yet another PowerPoint slideshow by another hopeful vendor, a title flashes on the conference room screen that actually makes you eager to see what follows. Is it:

- *"Proposal for Lexus by Innovative Plastics"*
- "Increasing Lexus's Market Share"
- *"Revving Up Sales at Lexus*

"Proposal for Lexus" is of course accurate, but it doesn't engage. Its promise to the listener is, this is going to be a by-the-book presentation (i.e., terminally boring). "Increasing Sales for Lexus" is stronger. It promises a bottom-line benefit, and that's something to perk up the ears of any manager. The third title, however, adds visual, emotional energy-simply by using a verb that speaks to us metaphorically. "Revving" sparks a chain reaction of associations: We see a souped-up car, we hear the throaty roar of its powerful engine, and we perhaps experience a surge of adrenalin. Suddenly sales figures take on a sound, an energy, an excitement. We can feel and hear them revving up. *Buckle up, listeners!* says this title. *You're in for an exciting ride!*

*"Effective presentation titles are like bestselling book titles: They both grab and inform your audience at a glance."*

*Tap Industry Associations*

I see so many presentations that begin with ho-hum dull titles. They put the presenter behind the eight ball from the start. "Today a new name has to work overtime to slice through the clutter," observes Steve Rifkin, the naming expert. "A new name has to hit the trifecta--it has to be distinct, memorable and meaningful. A lazy name is the kiss of death for a marketer." That sentiment applies equally to your presentation titles.

For instance, say you're presenting to the marketing executives at Marriott Hotels. You want to sell them on the benefits of a database marketing service. There's not a lot of imagery in those words—database sounds duller than binary code, and marketing is what everybody is selling. However, you know your audience's industry: Marriott is in the hospitality business. What can you do with that? Think about their industry jargon. Think about what the business is about: home away from home, a cozy bed for the night. Think of your own hotel experiences. What do you picture? A king-size bed? Fluffy pillows? Crisp sheets? Getting a good night's rest? Now think about what you're trying to sell to this group of executives. You have a way to boost their occupancy rates. It's a database you're selling, but it translates into…more heads in their beds. *Right!* So instead of your first slide saying, "Sales Proposal for Marriott," or even "Increasing Sales for Marriott," go with your image:
More Heads in Beds: *Plumping Up Sales at Marriott Hotels*.

### *Take a Lesson from Book Publishers*

Effective presentation titles are like bestselling book titles: They both grab and inform your audience at a glance. How? By using metaphor as a kind of shorthand. Metaphoric language packs a lot of punch. Every image-laden word or energetic verb or colorful phrase unleashes a torrent of associations in the mind of your audience.

.As *The New York Times* pointed out in "Recipe for a Best Seller: Analogies about Cheese or Anthills or Parenting," the most successful book titles rely on very un-businesslike comparisons—to sports, war, Shakespeare, Antarctic exploration, even peanut butter and jelly. To name but a few:
-*Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround. Louis V Gerstner, Jr.
-*Who Moved My Cheese?* An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life. Spencer Johnson.
-*Pigs at the Trough:* How Corporate Greed and Political Corruption are Undermining America. Arianna Huffington.

In each instance what empowers the title is an image, one freighted with appropriate connotations. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the image of an elephant twirling on its toe says it all about IBM's turnaround. The image of pig instantly communicates greed and dirt. With images this strong, the subtitle doesn't have to explain very much.

"Future Trends" could be a good book, but "Future Shock" will get buyer's attention every time.

### *Hook Them Immediately*

The opportunity to engage your audience begins with your title. It's your promise of what is to come. Metaphoric titles are the most effective at both engaging and informing your audience because metaphoric language is packed with associations—whole images and experiences your audience can draw on in an instant.

 Founder of Chiron Associates, Inc, Anne Miller is a widely respected sales and presentations speaker, seminar leader, consultant, and author. She helps high profile Fortune 1000 companies in media, financial services, and business present and sell products and services worth millions of dollars. She is the author of "Metaphorically Selling," "365 Sales Tips for Winning Business," "Presentation Jazz!" and her free sales newsletter, "The Metaphor Minute." Anne lives in New York.

 www.annemiller.com

# A Glimpse at Sales 2.0 - The Potential and Pitfalls

By Keith Rosen, MCC

For those of you who attended the first ever Sales 2.0 conference in San Francisco this past October, you're probably in a state of overwhelm as well as awe, like many of the people I met with were.

> *"Yet, with all the technology that is going to change how salespeople sell and manage themselves, I was surprised to hear the comments made by some of the people who spoke at this event"*

It's a testament to the new age of selling and the role technology will play in how we sell. Sales 2.0; the conversion of technology and sales and the symbiotic relationship between the two; how they can be integrated together and co-exist in harmony. As I was walking through the isles where these vendors were displaying their innovative solutions, it was mind-blowing to see that a majority of these well established high-tech companies were less than five years old.

The conference was a huge success, not only in the higher than anticipated number of people who attended but the sheer number of thought leaders who shared their vision of the future of selling and the technology that will drive it.

To that end, the keynote I delivered, "Managing the MySpace Generation:
Coaching Salespeople into Sales Champions" was available to view online the next day in its entirety (thanks to the technology that Altus developed) along with a searchable transcript of every word I uttered.

I had the distinct pleasure to interview a number of these innovators and CEO's who are charting this new course as it relates to how salespeople sell, how they are managed and how they are trained and coached.

Not only did I have an opportunity to connect with so many great people and innovators like AllBusiness.com's, Lori Richardson, Selling Power's Gerhard Gschwandtner, Jigsaw founder, Garth Moulton and its CEO Jim Fowler, and William Landers, CEO of xsellense, but here is just a sampling of the incredible roster of people I interviewed:

Bill Hoffman, Vice President of Business Development, CanDoGo.com Ken Luden, CEO of LucidEra.com Stu Schmidt, Vice President of Solutions for WebEx David Thompson, CEO and co-founder of Genius.com Evan Sohn, CEO of Salesconx Razi Imam, CEO of Landslide Sebastian Grady, COO of Altus Learning Systems

Sales leaders, business owners and sales managers need to prepare for the next evolution of selling and what it's going to take to make their sales team a leading force in their space. These are just a few of the companies providing revolutionary and unique services that are going to assist sales teams in developing and maintaining their competitive edge.

Yet, with all the technology that is going to change how salespeople sell and manage themselves, I was surprised to hear the comments made by some of the people who spoke at this event. Here are a few observations I heard that certainly stirred up quite a reaction in me as well as in many other attendees:

1. Cold calling is dead.
2. Technology is going to replace the salesperson.
3. Companies are going to rely less and less on the high caliber, professional salesperson who can take a prospect from the beginning of the sales cycle to the end when closing the sale.
4. Automated, asynchronous training solutions are going to replace training and professional development delivered by a live person (face to face, over the phone or through the internet.)

Sure, technology will automate and streamline many of the functions and tasks salespeople and management are currently responsible for. More specifically, how they manage their sales pipeline and the stages of their selling cycle, how they qualify and mine for new prospects, how they network with other business professionals, how they maintain their contact database as well as how they communicate with their prospects and customers. And the trend for companies to transition from what was once a face to face sale to a virtual, off site sale will continue to dominate more sales cultures.

Yet, as a pioneer in sales coaching and professional development, one thing is for certain. People like to buy from people. As such, the longer your sales cycle and the higher the price tag on your product or service, the more solidified the need will be and will remain for talented sales champions to drive sales and growth.

I have already seen the negative impact that some of these great advancements are having on sales teams across the globe as it relates to how salespeople are interacting with their prospects, customers even their managers. Many managers have reported spending far too much time reviewing a thread of email conversations between their salespeople and prospects when attempting to uncover where a communication breakdown occurred or when trying to identify how a great selling opportunity was lost. Misinterpreted and poorly worded emails between management and their staff are the cause of more costly problems and upsets which deteriorate relations than any additional time-savings they supposedly create.

Moreover, there's the ever-widening communication gap that some of these new technologies promote between the younger, MySpace generation and that of their boss, especially as more and more sales teams are built on a virtual platform where there's little, if any face to face weekly interaction with their manager. Rather than develop their core leadership and coaching competencies and skills, managers are relying far too heavily on these solutions to solve many of the managerial challenges they are up against when building and managing their sales team.

Salespeople are expecting their webinars, proposals, websites, online marketing campaigns and collateral materials to do the selling and prospecting for them. And what's worse, there are those salespeople who attempt to close a prospect or overcome objections via email rather than simply picking up the phone to facilitate a direct, one to one conversation that would appease the person's concerns. Here's just one example of a perfectly good opportunity and a valid reason to reach out to a prospect over the phone that salespeople need to take full advantage of, yet fail to do so.

The introduction of these new technologies into the selling process will continue to proliferate, for change is truly the only constant. After all, there will always be a need to make the selling process easier and more efficient for the salesperson, for your company and for your customers.

While more applications such as the ones I've mentioned are infused throughout each stage of the sale, the technology of maximizing human potential is far from tapped. And as more technology emerges to simplify the selling process, there will be an even greater demand for the elite salesperson who can manage and leverage technology as well as effectively communicate their message to their targeted audience.

The technology of interpersonal, result oriented communication; the language and true art of selling will still reign supreme in the selling profession. Sure, these new tools we have at our disposal will improve efficiency, cut down on travel as well as timely administrative tasks, and reduce prospecting time and the time it takes to convert prospects into customers, now that there is less of a need to meet face to face with prospects in order to sell your product or service to them. However, it will be the sales leader who is the rainmaker, the fearless and persistent prospector, the conduit to building and maintaining strong relationships and the master of the language of selling who will continue to dominate this era of technological change.



Keith Rosen, MCC - Author and Executive Sales Coach™

Keith Rosen, President of Profit Builders, is the executive sales coach that top salespeople and managers call first. As a prominent, engaging speaker and Master Certified Coach, Keith is one of the foremost authorities on assisting people to achieve positive, measurable changes in their attitudes, in their behaviors, and in their results. A best selling author, Keith has written several books including, *Time Management for Sales Professionals*, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Cold Calling* and *Coaching Salespeople Into Sales Champions.* For his work as a pioneer in the coaching profession, Inc. magazine and Fast Company named Keith one of the five most respected and influential executive coaches in the country. Software Sales Journal named Keith's company one of the Top Nine Best Training Firms.

Keith is also a frequent contributor for Selling Power Live, CBSNews.com, Sales and Marketing Management and has been appointed as the Expert Sales Advisor for AllBusiness.com. For more resources or to inquire about Keith's coaching and training programs, visit Keith Rosen at www.ProfitBuilders.com where you can also order his proven prospecting and cold calling template, Permission Based Prospecting that's guaranteed to get you in front of more qualified prospects, fast. Call Keith at 516-771-1444 or email him at mailto:minfo@profitbuilders.com. Subscribe to his newsletter, The Winners Path.

# Networking With Your "Tribe"
# Working Smarter

By Andrea Nierenberg

*"Several months ago a corporation invited me to conduct a workshop on "The How-To's of Internal Networking" for employees in many different departments and at all job levels."*

Anthropologists tell us that from the beginning we humans have been communal creatures. When food was low our prehistoric ancestors came out of their caves and formed hunting and gathering "workgroups." Later, the hunters and gathers came together around the "fire ring" to trade resources so that each would have what he needed. In addition to exchanging necessities, they shared their stories--discoveries were made, people shared valuable tips about how to do their jobs more efficiently--and the tribe advanced. We are naturally wired to want to work in groups.

Compare your office to our cave-dwelling predecessors. As members of a "business tribe," people enjoy trading stories and sharing discoveries. Yet, because our work world has advanced, we are now highly specialized. We have a tendency is to get stuck in our individual "caves" instead of spending enough time around the "fire ring."

So, how can we maximize the times that we spend with our co-workers so that together we can advance our business? How can we use our corporate meetings and even social events to network "within the tribe" in order to build alliances that will collectively help us attain higher levels of individual and corporate performance?

I. Company Meetings

One common "fire ring" opportunity is the company- or department-wide meeting. As much as we may dread them, these meetings are necessary for developing a vision and setting the course. Wise companies will also strategically use them for opening up lines of communication. How can we maximize these times for internal relationship building?

The Corporate Bored Report

Many companies now recognize the tremendous internal networking and relationship marketing opportunities provided at their annual meetings. Capitalizing on the fact that every employee is gathered in the same place at the same time, they have transformed the typical required-for-all-employees “show and tell” or “state of the department” managerial address into a cross-cultural, enjoyable “relationship marketing” occasion.

Several months ago a corporation invited me to conduct a workshop on “The How-To’s of Internal Networking” for employees in many different departments and at all job levels. I approached the assignment with the thought that although they come from different cultures within the company, they were all like-minded people with a shared interest in their workplace’s goals and mission. I was able to discuss the opportunities and advantages of meeting and developing associations with people across the firm, regardless of their position or title. I shared the observation that many times people tend to work in their own isolated “silos” or “caves,” cut off from the wide range of resources available to them in other parts of their organization. Once I laid the foundation for why internal relationship marketing is so essential for company growth, I ended the session with an exercise called “Random Acts of Networking Kindness” that facilitated some immediate connections.

- Random Acts of Networking Kindness

Here’s how the exercise worked: Each person dropped his or her business card into a bowl. On their way out of the meeting, they were asked to draw a card from a different division or department, call that person an hour later, introduce themselves, ask what their goal was from the meeting or session and then set a time for a follow-up call in two weeks. When the system works correctly, two calls are made--you make one and someone else calls you. This is a great way to get your “hunter” and “gatherer” workgroups to start talking and learning from each other. I always get positive feedback after these sessions about how this simple exercise opened up cross-departmental communication and often made a difference in the bottom line. Try this the next time you have all of your hunters and gatherers together in one place.

II. Company Social Events

In addition to company or departmental meetings, work-sponsored social events present some of the best opportunities to network with different groups from within the tribe. Use this time to de-stress and to build quality relationships. Two common examples of these corporate fun-fests are the company picnic and the holiday party.

The Company Picnic

Does going to a company picnic mean we take "business casual" to a whole new level? Should we fire off water balloons at our co-workers or soak them with squirt guns? I hope the word "no" popped into your head just now. The point is, business is business, no matter what the setting. However, there are ways to relax and enjoy the company picnic, stay professional and make some important internal connections:

- Pass the Relish

You're standing in line for hot dogs and find yourself next to the CEO of the company. He or she may not even know your name. This tempts you to think, "This is my shot to make a great impression." So you jump into a dissertation on the company's stock price or how you plan to reduce expenses in the coming year. Bad idea! This is not the time to discuss any serious business issues. To attempt to do so would place both you and the CEO in an uncomfortable position. On the other hand, this could be a great time to introduce yourself and say, "I'm so and so and I work in the marketing department. I just want you to know that I love being a part of the company. By the way, I really enjoyed hearing you speak at the sales meeting last week and took your comments to heart. Thanks for being so involved in the company." Then smile and move on.

- Play the Guest Interviewer

After you've eaten and have put down your plate, make have informal "interviews" with people in other departments whom you do not see every day. In a casual manner, ask the basics, "What department are you with? How long have you been with the company? What brought you to the company?" Then you can move on to non-invasive personal questions such as, "Where do you live? How is the commute to work?" By asking such questions you'll get to know about people in your company and you might even make a new internal friend.

- The Holiday Party

According to a recent survey, each American worker will attend an average of 2.7 office parties during the holiday season. Now that you know you'll be spending a least a couple evenings wearing eating Cheez Wiz and avoiding mistletoe, how can you make the most of these company galas?

- Limit Libations

Nothing spells bad year-end party like too much a-l-c-o-h-o-l. Remember, holiday party disasters don't just last a night--they follow you to the office. And people have long memories. You want to be remembered for your stellar job performance, not for your performance with a lampshade on your head. You'll make better connections and a better impression if you remain sober.

- Ho, Ho, Ho, It's Time to Build Connections

Make sure to connection with not only those in your daily workgroup, but also those with whom you only communicate only on occasion. I have found that it is at these times that we make those "serendipitous" cross-company connections that bear fruit over the coming year and beyond.

- Bring Mr(s). Claus

This is the number one way to make the most connects at holiday parties. If your company permits it, bring your spouse. Your loved one can be a real asset in networking with people at the workplace as you simply introduce him or her to people and find common ground to talk about.

The Tribe that Thrives

Since prehistoric times, people have relied on internal relationship marketing to advance their cultures. When you let others in your tribe know who you are, what cave you're in and what you do in there, you and your company will advance faster than those who aren't around the fire ring as much. The end result will be growth opportunities for you, more robust internal teams and a stronger overall "tribe" for everyone to live and work in.

Andrea Nierenberg is a master at helping companies build their businesses by improving employee and client relationships. Andrea's training methods all focus on one principle: take care of your business relationships, and your company will prosper.

Visit Andrea's website: www.selfmarketing.com

# Interpersonal Skills: How to Use Sales Psychology to Create Longer, Lasting Sales-Winning Relationships

By Greg Stebbins

A participant in one of my recent seminars asked me, "Can I rearrange my client's office during a sales presentation?"

The sales person had gone to an initial meeting where the chairs in the office were about eight feet from the customer's desk. He wanted to know if it was OK to just pick up one of the chairs and move it next to the desk and start his presentation.

How would you have answered this question? Believe it or not, your answer could have huge implications on this meeting's success.

Everything in a customer's office tells you a story about him or her—from the way the space is arranged to the items that have been collected and displayed.

Archaeologists can dig up ancient cities and create a pretty accurate description of the inhabitants' lifestyle just from the arrangement of the ruins and pottery fragments. As sales professionals we must do the same thing with the artefacts surrounding our customers. This way we can communicate better and develop longer lasting relationships with them.

Here's how you can promote a desirable impression and create sales-winning relationships by understanding space and the hidden message in things.

*"Here's how you can promote a desirable impression and create sales-winning relationships by understanding space and the hidden message in things."*

How to Promote a Desirable Impression by Understanding Space

In 1966, when anthropologist Edward T. Hall described set measurable distances between people as they interact he defined four distances:

- Intimate distance – 6” to 18”, for embracing, touching or whispering
- Personal distance – 1.5 feet to 4 feet, for interactions among good friends
- Social Distance – 5 feet to 12 feet, for interactions among acquaintances
- Public Distance – more than 12 feet, for public speaking

How does this relate to your sales process?

Think about one of your customers. Divide her office into concentric circles, starting from where she sits. The distance between the circles is about the width of her desk. Anything close to the person—usually within arms reach—is the most important part of her office. This space will generally contain what she considers most important to her. It is filled with clues that reveal to the trained sales professional a wealth of information about the customer and her needs and motivations.

As for the office the salesperson asked about rearranging, the chairs were set at the “social distance,” which the customer was communicating as appropriate for interactions among acquaintances (or in this case, sales people). For the sales person to pick up his chair and move into the next circle—personal distance—would have meant that he was declaring that the two of them were friends.

From the customer’s point of view this may or may not have been true. The customer could have reacted positively and allowed it. Or she could have reacted negatively and asked the sales person to leave. In any case, changing to another distance is likely to cause tension and would not promote a desirable impression.

A better strategy would be to ask permission to move the chair closer to the desk. Or, he could say that he had difficulty hearing the prospective customer clearly and then asked permission to move the chair.

How to Create Sales-Wining Relationships by Understanding the Hidden Message in "Things"

Analyzing your clients or prospects’ rooms will tell you their motivations and behavioral styles. By paying close attention and analyzing the hidden message in things, you will know how to best serve your customer.

If his desk is meticulous, it indicates a high degree of close tolerance, sometimes called *analytical*. Or his desk could be very messy indicating an engaging personal or social trait, sometimes called *influencing*. These are all clues to guide you in making a presentation that will have the greatest appeal and impact on your customer.

The books on the bookcase will tell you what is currently or has been important to him. Trophies, plaques and diplomas all tell you that he is motivated by *recognition*. While pictures of tropical isles indicate an *idealistic* approach to life and business. All of this information will guide you in presenting your case so the customer really "grasps" it.

Knowing how to analyze and use keys to the customer's psyche is what separates the ordinary sales representatives from the sales professionals.

By understanding sales psychology and enhancing your interpersonal skills you will make more sales. I guarantee it. With more than 30 years of experience and a Doctorate in Psychology I've applied a wealth of knowledge, know how, and high impact ideas to help over 10,000 sales professionals improve their sales careers.

So, please take my advice. Take a moment to scope out your prospective customer's office. It's vital to developing longer lasting client relationships. The information about the person's motivations and behavior is always available to you. Are you available to the information?

Sales Psychology Expert Gregory Stebbins has helped over 10,000 sales professionals become the point of differentiation while their competitors struggle with how to differentiate their product and service. In his book *PeopleSavvy for Sales Professionals*, he unveils for the first time his simple but groundbreaking plan to win your customers' trust and business forever. Get your free sneak preview at www.peoplesavvy.com/book.htm

# Sales Techniques & You

By Cheryl Clausen

Have you read, studied, perhaps even trained on the sales techniques offered by the best salespeople out there yet they just don't seem to work when you do them? Are you frustrated and confused as to why and how that could happen? Whether you've studied Zig Ziglar, Tom Hopkins, Jeffrey Gitomer, Neil Rackham, or any other of the biggest names in sales training there is one thing you know beyond a doubt, and that is that there is unequivocal evidence that what they're saying works; but somehow it isn't working for you.

*"So does this mean you're doomed as a sales failure because you don't have the right natural behaviors and motivators for sales?"*

And the fact that it isn't working for you has you in an emotional frenzy because you need sales, and you need sales now. First, calm down and accept that it isn't your fault and it isn't their fault that it isn't working for you. I'm going to help you to understand that there is a perfectly logical reason this is happening to you, and that there is a way for you to overcome your challenges.

Here's a big secret. There isn't one single selling system that works for everyone, and there really isn't anything new about any of the selling systems that exist there are just different twists. People have been selling since the birth of man, and we've been doing it pretty much the same way.

Is there a selling system that will work for you? Unless you happen to be one of the rare few who enter sales when you simply aren't wired to be a sales person, any of the selling systems out there can work for you. The one that will work best for you is the one that is closest in required behaviors to who you are.

If you've ever had children or have a sibling you fully understand that everyone is born with a personality. Each of us are our own person from birth. Now that isn't to say that we haven't been heavily influenced by those around us because we have, but children and siblings raised in the exact same environment with the same parents still think and act very differently.

Why is this difference important? The differences in our natural behaviors are very important because when we try to do things that aren't comfortable to us, or that are in conflict with our natural behaviors we do them poorly. It doesn't matter how often we try to force ourselves to fit into behaviors that aren't right for us we just won't ever be able to pull them off well.

When you try to be someone or something you're not other people sense it and they misread the signals. If you've ever had an experience where a salesperson said the right things, and they did the right things, but there was just something about the experience that set alarms off in your head you understand what I mean. Rather than thinking the salesperson must be new at this and uncomfortable your instincts were telling you that there must be something wrong with the offer or whatever was being sold and that the salesperson must know it. It wasn't that the sales technique was wrong it was how the sales technique was implemented.

So does this mean you're doomed as a sales failure because you don't have the right natural behaviors and motivators for sales? In most cases, no. It does mean that you need to understand your natural behaviors and motivators, and based on that understanding you need to adapt whatever sales system you want to use to fit you. And when you do that your sales success will automatically increase.

And that's where sales coaching can play a critical role in your sales success. Most people just can't see or figure out on their own how or why things aren't working for them. Plus it's very difficult for them to develop a plan for making slight adaptations that make all the difference in the results they get. When people do try to work through their struggles on their own they usually end up leaving sales in utter frustration, or it takes them years to figure out how to earn a meager living. And in the same time frame they could have resolved their underlying struggles, and moved on to perfecting their skills so they could become a top producer.

Are you ready to get unstuck and start increasing your sales success today? Increase your Sales Success with this free e-course.

Are you where you want to be? My experience working with my clients has been that many insurance agents, financial advisors, and real estate agents aren't where they want to be. At certain points in your business you just get really stuck, and you don't know what to do to get where you want to go. Well, my purpose is to help agents and advisors to get unstuck and get going again.

Could you sell more with a few Time Management Tips? Check this out.

Visit Cheryl's website: CoachingMegaAgents.com

# You Can Have Anything You Want in Life… Freedom, Wealth and Money with The Secrets To Goal Setting Revealed

By Joe Heller

Now you can have access to what only the select few know to use my exclusive Goal Blueprint to map out your Personal Destiny!

I'd like to invite you to advance towards the achievement of all of your life's goals and capture the abundance you deserve. Use the powerful techniques found in the Goal Blueprint for staying on top of your game so you can realize all your aspirations and dreams... achieve the freedom, wealth, and the control over your life you deserve... and more!

*"Do You Want To Be A Millionaire? Here Are Your Keys To The Vault - The Goal Blueprint"*

I've applied these simple steps to my life, and thousands more just like you. Now you have a simple plan to overcome the one thing that's holding you back from accomplishing your goals and live the life you've always dreamed.

Ask yourself, where do you want to be spiritually, intellectually and financially next month... next year... and five years down the road? Are you ready to completely change your life?

The Goal Blueprint was designed with you in mind to show you, and people like you, how to change your life and accomplish more and achieve your goals.

I promise you that if you begin applying the Goal Blueprint today that you will begin to see dramatic shifts to bring you closer to your personal and business goals almost immediately!

Do You Want To Be A Millionaire? Here Are Your Keys to the Vault - The Goal Blueprint

1) Start preparing your goals by making a list of your personal and professional dreams. These will include the things you want to have and what you want to be. (We will create parallel supporting mechanisms to strengthen how personal and professional goals interact.)  Our dreams are always stated in the positive and so must our goals!

2) Now, begin thinking about making your dreams a reality, considering when each goal can be achieved and consider the personal importance of each goal and the order in which your goals must be achieved.  Always stretch and make sure your goals are larger than you are at any time.

3) Pick out five of your foremost personal and five professional goals that you will target to achieve this year. Remember, stretching to reach your personal goals will help you reach your business goals. The achievement of goals is important but what is more important is who you become by achieving your goals.

4) Goals must always be presented internally and externally with a positive assurance of success to yourself and to your family, friends and peers. The only way to fail is if you don't try, everything else falls into a learning curve to create outcomes we learn from.

5) Goals must be specific to create an internal clarity of the goal and of the events that surround the achievement of the goal.  This clarity of personal vision can come in the form of a picture or a movie with you as the star and director of your mega hit.

6) Goals must have a story, a reason why you desire it. You must be able to describe the goal with such clarity so that others get excited. You become an engineer of the imagination, "imagineering" is where others can see, hear and feel your success as you discuss it.  This concept helps you 'own' the story, internalize it to become self-actualized. It is the 'life-line' to keep you on track.

7) Goals must have emotional ties or anchors. Consider once you have achieved your goal, what it looks like, what it feels like and what others are saying at its achievement. Tapping into your emotions will put you into a 'resourceful' state of growth and prosperity. Live in your dream until you make it a reality.

8) Goals must be self-fulfilling! They must be achievable, and not mythical. I believe that there is a genius inside of each and every one of us.  We must have a strategy that is grounded in reality. If we chase is a 'pot of gold' at the end of a rainbow we will never be fulfilled in our life's mission and if we are never fulfilled we can never be happy. Have a strategy and plan for your success!

9) To create success, there must have evidence that you are progressing closer to its achievement. In addition, there must be evidence to help your subconscious mind know that you have achieved the goal so it can be released to focus on your next goal allowing you to stretch as a person. Know how you are measuring the actualization of your goals.

10) Make a list of the resources you need to accomplish these goals. These include internal and external support mechanisms. External consideration are people (role models/mentors), education (knowledge) and internal considerations are non-limiting beliefs (unlimited potential), passion (congruency).

Next, consider pulling together a logic tree* for implementing the necessary resources, where to discover resources and how to collect/approach the needed resources.

11) Goals remove friction from the process, allowing us to more freely associate with reaching our dreams. A very wise man once told me - “there is no friction in thought”. Stop putting on the brakes!

12) Command the destiny of your goals. The formula $E=MC^2$ can apply to the energy generated by the mass of the goal times the force results in the giving rise to unstoppable goals. Believe in yourself and the power of your goals creating an unstoppable force.

13) Goals are our blueprints to formulate prosperity; they generate desirable outcomes for you and help you support the people whom you touch in your life.

14) Prepare a list of goals you have achieved (historical), and use these as foundational leverage for your life. You have achieved great things; you can achieve even greater things in your future!

15) Describe what kind of person you would be when you attain and then live up to the obligations of your goals. Be precise and exacting!

16) Write down what is self-made (internal) and man-made (external) constraints are limiting you at this point in time from achieving your goals. Think hard, these can be beliefs we’ve held since childhood. An example might be -- “don’t talk to strangers”. This limiting belief can inhibit your will to openly approach and talk with a stranger. Conversely, it will make you uneasy if a stranger comes up and tries to open a dialog with you.

17) Initiate a step-by-step plan to begin formulating the foundation for the five key personal/professional goals we outlined earlier.

18) Do some research, and discover who has achieved relative success in an area that you desire. Make them a role model and observe how they interact with others; you may also consider drafting them as a mentor for your growth process. Remember, success leave clues!

19) Identify what needs to happen daily, weekly monthly for the goals attainment by creating your ideal environment enabling your senses to perform at their peak state. What would bring out your best and most resourceful qualities? A lot of people believe that you must be in the right place at the right time… it is my suggestion that you can create the right time and the right place. Success will follow the courageous.

20) One final thought, keep score. Just as the old saying goes in business… "Know when you are working on the business verses in the business" (you are the business) the same applies to our lives; we must acknowledge and know "when we are working on our life verses in our life".

You now have access to the same proven success strategies that you can use to accomplish anything you want, have more free time and make considerably more money than you do now.

Do you remember when God's messenger whispered the Secret of Success in your ear?

In my case, the God introduced me mentors who became my guides. Everyone needs a mentor. Much of what I learned about Goal Setting and Success was taught to me by mentors.

I challenge you to Start Thinking Big -- PRINT this article out of the EBook you're reading, carry it with you and use the power of The Goal Blueprint as a 'virtual mentor' to empower you so you can realize all your aspirations and dreams... achieve the freedom, wealth, and the control over your life you deserve!

Joe Heller the Revenue Warrior consults with different types of businesses and professions showing his clients how to "out think" their competition. His clients see growth rates of 517%... 235%... 117%... or more leveraging Joe's business advice to create a greater life-time value through his profit acceleration system. Editor's note: Joe Heller can be reached at (713) 927-4494 or joe@joeheller.com or www.joeheller.com

# 15 Questions for the New Year: How to Adopt Better Strategies and Have a Better Year

By Colleen Francis

I spend a great deal of time talking about the strategies of the Top 10% of sales people use to fuel their success. Like most sales professionals, you know many of them already. Now that we're about to begin a new year, it's important to decide how we can put those strategies into action in our own lives, so we can take our careers wherever we want to go.

As you start your planning for 2008, below are a few questions you should be asking yourself to give you a clear focus of the areas and goals where you are committed to improving, and to help make sure that this year is your best year ever.

Be Nice

- How passionate are you about what you do? Loving what you do will ensure that you maintain the positive attitude you need to get to the top. Remember: your attitude has nothing to do with the mood you're in. Everyone is allowed to be in a bad mood from time to time. Attitude is what you do about the mood you're in, so that it doesn't get in the way of your success.
- Are your company, colleagues, family and friends life givers who support you in your endeavors, or life suckers who impede your progress? Only life givers can create an environment that fosters success.
- Do you want to become who you hang out with? Tony Robins says that our success is directly linked to the expectations of the people we associate with. Do you have the right associations? If not, you might have to go to different places, try something new or join new groups to meet new or different people.

*"Challenge yourself by going through these questions with candor and honesty. You already know many of the strategies you need to execute in 2008. Make them happen and reap the rewards!"*

- Are you the "it" person in your industry? Do people see you as a person with valuable information, and come to you first? This year, make sure you're a life giver.
- Do you take responsibility for your actions? You can complain all you want that it was shipping's fault for getting the order out late, marketing's fault for not giving you good leads or your manager's fault for not funding or training you sufficiently. But the fact is, in sales, the buck stops with you. Your clients don't want people who make excuses or whine about being victims. They want agents of success. They don't care whose "fault it was," only that you take responsibility for it. What are you going to do this year to take more responsibility?

Stay Focused

- Do you believe you have the skills, knowledge and strength to be successful? If you don't believe in yourself, no one else will, either. Develop a strong belief system that reminds you every day that you can be successful, and that you are the best.
- When was the last time you tried anything for the first time? This is a pivotal question in lifelong learning and development. If you aren't learning something new about sales every day, you are falling behind. What's something new you learned last year? How can you learn more new things this year?
- What goals have you set for this year? Are they written down? If I showed up at your office right now, would I see them posted where you can look at them every day?
- Are you focused on the customer first? Do you have all the information your customers want, in the way they want it? Notice that I said, "All the information your customers want," NOT "everything you want to tell them." Customers want answers to their questions, not yours. This means you must first be an expert at what you do or sell, and then document all the relevant information in a way that answers the questions your clients ask, and solves their specific problems. How good are your answers?
- How focused is your plan for success, and how focused are on achieving it? Top performers focus most of their time working on those activities that help them achieve their goals – such as prospecting, meetings and closing – and little time doing those tasks that earn them little or nothing. What are you focused on for the majority of your day?

Get to Work

- How aware are you of the opportunities that you encounter? Do you see opportunity on every street corner as you drive home at night, or are you only focused on the latest episode of Survivor that's waiting for you? Mediocre sales people complain that top performers are simply in the right place at the right time. Top performers know that they have to create their own luck. You have to be good to be lucky – how good are you?

- Are you making any mistakes? Are you failing? If you aren't failing, you aren't growing. My karate master is always pushing us to strike one more opponent, block one more kick, hold our stance just one more minute, until our bodies physically fail. Why? Because until you've pushed past your limits and failed, until you've stretched past your comfort zone into your uncomfort zone, you can never achieve more than you thought possible. What are you doing every day to reach your uncomfort zone?
- What risks are you taking? Like high performance athletes, high performance sales people are constantly challenging themselves to do better. Every time you play it safe, you lose. Every time you take a risk, you win – either you win the business, or you win the knowledge of what not to do the next time. What risks are you willing to take in 2006 in order to beat the competition?
- Did you give up on any goals last year? Thomas Edison failed 1,000 times before he invented the light bulb, and changed the world. Most sales people give up after hearing their first "no" on a cold call. Do you want to be remembered as a quitter, or as the Thomas Edison of your industry?
- Are you putting your great ideas into action, or just putting them on the shelf? Thomas Edison also said: *"Strategy without execution is hallucination."* Knowing the strategies of top performers is great. Executing them is what will make you a star. Take some time now to think about what you will do this year to execute on these strategies of the Top 10%. Then go out, and as Nike says: just do it!

Challenge yourself by going through these questions with candor and honesty. You already know many of the strategies you need to execute in 2008. Make them happen and reap the rewards!

Colleen Francis, Sales Expert is Founder and President of Engage Selling Solutions ( www.EngageSelling.com). Armed with skills developed from years of experience, Colleen helps clients realize immediate results, achieve lasting success and permanently raise their bottom line.

# Puppy Training for Salespeople?

By Clayton Shold

Friends of mine recently had a new addition to their family which they are very excited about. She is a cross between a golden retriever and a poodle and it is exactly what they were hoping for. As we spoke I could sense the excitement of being proud parents one more time after having two legged and four legged “kids” for many years. Jim commented how training methods have changed so much over the years. He is taking his counsel from the breeder and a book entitled Dog Training for Dummies. Gone are the rolled up newspapers to spank the dog and other punishment techniques, everything today focuses on positive motivation.

Jim and I have known each other for many years, having worked together in the sales arena as sales leaders. Our conversations typically gravitate to sales. He commented that for all the many ‘improvements’ in developing sales people it was sad that so much remains the same.

Some quick background. Jim came up through the ranks, proving his considerable selling talent, and then moved into sales management. In fact I recall very clearly the day he came into my office to apply for a Regional Sales Director opening. My first thought was he might be best to remain in his sales role given his exceptional performance and income level. My second reaction was he should follow our ‘normal’ progression route, taking a Sales Manager role before seeking a Director level. Did I mention Jim was a good sales person? He gave a compelling list of reasons why this role was the right one for him. I challenged him on every point, adding my concern the position was in a new town where he didn’t know anyone, have any established network, nor would he get the luxury of any ramp-up time as results were needed immediately. After some deep soul searching I gave him the job. Turned out this decision ranks up there with the best ones I have ever made.

Jim adopted many of the industry old methods for developing people. He focused on product knowledge, basic selling and relationship skills, with a heavy focus on activity management and 'the numbers'. He was a firm believer "activity leads to results." So how did Jim do? His regional office became number one in the country. He achieved this by incorporating a heavy emphasis on coaching, coupled with his attraction power which allowed him to bring new talent to the sales game.

As we spoke he commented he wished he could start over as a sales leader. When I asked why, he said he believes there is a lot to learn from the training dogs. He went on to explain, while he was a strong believer in his team and loved being a coach, he felt there was too much emphasis on the negative and not enough on the positive. I replied that I never saw him with a rolled up newspaper, he laughed and he said he didn't need one. Instead he would make public the activity levels of every rep and their sales results. He remained firm in deploying the corporate sales curriculum, which while solid, could have used some changes in focus.

*"Wouldn't it be incredible if your sales team had the same loyalty and dedication to their customer, you and your firm, as your dog does to you?"*

I asked Jim, "How has your thinking changed?" He responded he was always a champion for his people, tried to recognize their achievements often, and kept a positive perspective. He went on to say he perhaps should have looked at each one as a new puppy. A new puppy needs lots of love and attention at first until they understand the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Acceptable behavior is rewarded with immediate and frequent recognition and treats. Unacceptable behavior responses include a retraction of attention and a stern verbal admonishment. People he points out are no different than canines in that they seek acceptance and want to please.

Jim went on to say doing it all over again he would put far more emphasis on relationship building and questioning skills. He said he would consciously focus less on presentation skills and more on listening skills. He observed most consumers today are looking for an advisor, not a salesperson. They want to deal with someone they can trust and who truly is an expert at understanding their needs and wants, then helping them connect the dots to determine if the product or service they are representing does or does not, do what they are hoping it will.

I challenged him on activity management asking how he would address that. He confirmed it is important for the new sales rep to know they can get in front of people so there needs to be attention here in the early days. We talked about a transition over time where referrals began to take on greater weight and countered the need for other forms of prospecting. Jim mentioned if he could influence a person to have the right sales mindset, everything else looks after itself. If you see yourself being successful, others will too. If you see everyone you meet as a potential opportunity, they may indeed be receptive to your desire to help them.

Jim summarized by asking, “Wouldn’t it be incredible if your sales team had the same loyalty and dedication to their customer, you and your firm, as your dog does to you?” At the very least, the notion does give ‘paws’ for thought!

Summary
Today’s sales training might take some lessons from how dogs learn new and acceptable behaviors. The early formative years are important, but it is still possible to teach an old dog new tricks.


Clayton Shold is President and co-founder of Salesopedia.com "The World of Sales from A to Z". He now puts his many years of sales and marketing experience to work consulting with companies looking to improve revenue and streamline processes.

Sign up for his weekly newsletter or check out the Internet’s largest sales glossary at Salesopedia.com You can contact him at clayton@salesopedia.com

# Leave PowerPoint Behind and Make the Person-to-Person Sale

By Joanne Black

Death by PowerPoint: We've all been there. The lights in the room are dimmed; everyone is looking at a screen and listening to a product manager, salesperson or executive read what is on each and every slide. You look at your watch and can't wait to leave the room.

New, fancy technology is alluring. It's easy to get sucked into the PowerPoint universe. But you need to connect person-to-person first if you ever intend to make a sale. The power of connections is infinite—and I'm not talking about computers.

> *"It's easy to get sucked into the PowerPoint Universe. But you need to connect person-to-person first if you ever intend to make a sale."*

There's a saying among salespeople that customers buy with emotion and justify with fact. If our customers don't like us or don't feel comfortable with us, they won't buy from us. You can wow your clients with technology know-how now and try to win them over later, once they find out you're honest and reliable. But the reality is, you need people to start liking you within the first few seconds of your relationship. That's really all you have to get off on the right foot. And fancy gizmos won't make that happen. But a trusted referral and a personal connection will.

According to recent research at both Harvard and Stanford universities, the No #1 skill for success in the 21st century is the ability to talk to other people. If we don't "connect" with others, there is really no next step. And when we are referred, we have an immediate connection. We talk about the person who referred us and discard those first uncomfortable and awkward steps of the sales meeting—explaining who we are and what we do. We also discard the question we always wrestle with: "How am I going to begin the conversation?"

Here are some ways to connect with your clients:

1 Smile! A smile is the greatest connector of all. When you smile, people automatically smile back.

2 Salespeople are often the first to know what's new. Demonstrate your knowledge of your client's business and the problems they are facing. Many people are buried in their work inside their companies. They want to know what's going on "out there." They expect you to know, so be sure to have relevant answers.

3 Ask insightful questions and listen carefully to the responses. What you hear may be different than what you expect. Entertain different perspectives — read between the lines and understand the shades of gray as well as noting the black and white.

*“There is significant research about why clients make buying decisions. Bottom line: because they like and trust the salesperson and his organization”.*

4 Connect your solution to the business results your client can expect. Only discuss the key points that are pertinent to this particular customer.

Do not discuss the “features” of your product. Do not discuss “benefits” of your product. Do not talk about the weather. The only thing your client is interested in hearing are the ways you can contribute to his business. What can you do to help him implement his business strategy?

Connect with people, and you will have the business. If you connect with the business problem only and don’t take the time to relate one-on-one with your client ... you won’t have the client and you won’t have the sale.

Business is serious, but people aren’t, so leave the PowerPoint behind and make the person-to-person sale.

Joanne Black is America’s leading authority on referral selling and the author of No More Cold Calling™ The Breakthrough System That Will Leave Your Competition in the Dust, from Warner Business Books. She developed her No More Cold Calling practice in 1996 and now reaches thousands of people each year. Her Referral Selling System has increased the performance of many top companies including: California State Automobile Association, CCH Knowledge Point, Charles Schwab, Colliers International, KPMG, The Marlin Company, and The Mechanics Bank. Visit Joanne 's website: www.NoMoreColdCalling.com

# The Law of Reciprocity

By Jeb Blount

The Law of Reciprocity, states simply that we must give first in order to receive. In fact, one of the great truths of life is that the more we give the more we receive.

Unfortunately many people chose to ignore this universal truth and instead live by the motto - Me First. I'm sure you know who these takers are in your life. It is the employee who wants a promotion before paying her dues, or a raise before consistently delivering value to the organization, or children who beg for something today promising to make it up to you tomorrow, or the salesperson who expects to close the sale before providing real solutions to their customer's problems.

In sales and business this take first attitude has a significant and negative impact on relationships and long-term earning potential. Many salespeople view their prospects and customers as just commission checks - or another way of putting it - they see their business relationships as a means to an end. Instead of being genuinely interested in solving their customers' problems, they are genuinely interested in getting the sales and collecting commission checks.

Fortunately, wise customers and prospects see right through this insincerity and give their business instead to Sales Professionals and companies who always give first by staying focused on the best interest of their customers. Over the long-term these Sales Professionals develop prosperous and life-long relationships with their customers.

Of course we all know, and sometimes envy, people who have been rewarded, at least temporarily, for their take first attitude. However, the one thing on which we can be absolutely certain is, "what goes around, comes around". For everyone and everything, eventually the Law of Reciprocity will balance the scales.

Three PowerPrinciples for getting the Law of Reciprocity working for you:

Develop Empathy: Empathy simply means that you can see a situation, issue or problem from someone else's point of view as if you were standing in their shoes. Empathy is perhaps the most powerful skill you can develop as a Sales Professional. The key to developing empathy is to learn to be genuinely interested in other people. Practice this in every conversation you have by turning off your thoughts about yourself, opening your ears, and listening intently to what the other person has to say.

Listen Deeply: Focus all of your attention on the person in front of you. Listen to their tone of voice, their body language, and their words. When you listen deeply you will observe the areas that are emotional or important to them. Focus on these issues and you will quickly find where you can give of your time and talent to help the other person.

Solve Problems: Every person and every business has problems and when you make it your mission in life to find and solve these problems, without first calculating what is in it for you, your rewards, financial and emotional, will be great. In fact, the most successful sales professionals and entrepreneurs are often solving problems for their clients that have little direct impact on their own sales and profits. And because they give first, they've been rewarded with wealth, success, and happiness that most people can only dream about.

Jeb Blount is CEO of The Sales Leadership Group, author of PowerPrinciples, the creator of the popular internet sales community, SalesGravy.com and the host of the top rate Sales Motivation Podcast, SalesGravy: PowerPrinciples. Considered one of the leading experts in sales and sales leadership with over 20 years experience in Fortune 500 sales and marketing, Jeb holds a core philosophy that in sales and life there are a handful of basics, which if focused on intently, will drive peak performance and achievement. He seeks to remove complexity from inevitable challenges, and instead, focuses individuals and businesses on key actions that deliver quick and sustainable results.

Visit Jeb's website: www.salesgravy.com

# The #1 Biting Reason Why You're Losing Customers and Sales

By Kim Duke

I want you to think for a moment.

Think about the last time you didn't buy something.

I have Diva ESP and I would bet you've said NO to something or someone within the past 24 hours. (Told ya!)

Whether it was a small or large decision, a new chocolate bar, or the car you've been drooling over, plus a million other buying decisions – you decided to just OPT OUT.

Guess what?

Your reasons are just like your customers:

- Too expensive
- Don't need it
- Will it work?
- Bad timing
- It can't be that good
- Blah Blah

*"What are you currently doing to allow people to have a "bite" of your business?"*

However – if you'd known the product or service was going to work/taste great/make you look like you'd magically lost 10 pounds etc.....you'd be whipping out your wallet faster than I can say TOLD YOU SO.

The #1 Biting Reason Why You're Losing Customers and Sales?

This one is easy.

You're Risky. Risky. Risky.

Why?

Your customers don't know if your product/service will work.
They don't know if you'll help them.
They aren't sure if you're the real deal or if you're any better than the "other guy."

Sooooo they decide to do what all good people do.

- They don't buy.
- They use what they've always used.
- They just do without.
- They grind you on price.
- Or they pick another company who doesn't feel risky!

Did any of the above ring a bell?

Let Potential Customers Take A "Bite" Of Your Business

I don't know about you –but when I get a chance to try something in a variety of ways, it makes it easier for me to justify buying it.

Question for you.

What are you currently doing to allow people to have a "bite" of your business?

Sure. Sure. I know the obvious ones most people use.

Brochures and product samples are fine but they're limited wouldn't you agree?

6 Other Strategies For Customers To "Bite":

- Testimonials
- Articles
- Referrals
- Tele-seminars
- Seeing your company's product/service in action ie/ Video or live presentation
- Media coverage
- And much more!

How can the above "bites" make you less risky?

You Develop Over The Top Credibility

Not just "so-so" credibility.

But "where have you been???" type of credibility.

When you create “over the top” reasons for potential customers to trust you – something magical will happen.

Customers start finding you much faster and easier than ever before.

(And that doesn’t BITE!)

Don’t Forget To Measure What Was Bitten

And last but not least – keep track of what you’re doing and measure the results! Most sales people and entrepreneurs launch a million strategies and then forget to test and track. (Remember – you need to know what works as well as what doesn’t – so you repeat ONLY what performed the best for you.)

My Diva Dare?

Sit down and brainstorm 20 ways you can allow potential customers to “take a bite” – include the usual but also STRETCH into the unusual. (Hint: that’s where all the money is by the way!)

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

# Align Marketing and Sales to the Customer's Buying Process

By Kevin Dwyer

In many organisations, marketing and sales have different reporting lines. However, even in those organisations which have one reporting line, there is confusion between marketing and sales in what each do.

The end result acts as a handbrake on business performance.

For example, marketing thinks that its role is to create brand awareness. Sales knows that its role is to generate sales.

In search of leads, sales creates promotions with its distributors. Marketing gets upset because the proposed promotion borders on brand building. Not only that, the budget is held by marketing and they refuse to release the funds.

A debate ensues for a month as the issues are thrashed out at meetings between sales and marketing.

When these kinds of debates occur, the issue is not just one of marketing and sales having different ideas. It is more likely that there is no shared idea of what tasks are required to move customers along their buying process.

A customer's buying process can be broadly represented as:

1. Become aware that a problem exists.
2. Become concerned enough that the problem becomes your number one problem.
3. Begin to look for organisations that may solve your problem.
4. Find some organisations and have discussions about the problem and potential solutions.
5. Evaluate which organisations solve the problem best.
6. Ensure the budget and authority to proceed is available.
7. Call for proposals.
8. Evaluate proposals.
9. Sign a contract.
10. Monitor progress to solving the problem.
11. Re-contract or purchase something new if the problem was adequately solved.

Each of these steps in a customer's buying process can be broadly mirrored by a set of marketing and sales tasks.

For example:

1. Create the problem in a target segments mind.
2. Elevate the problem in the list of priorities.
3. Make your organisation well known for solving the problem.
4. Make your organisation's capabilities known to decision makers and influencers in target companies.
5. Understand the target company's needs to solve their problem and suggest potential solutions.
6. Understand who makes the decision and how much budget is available.
7. Help build the request for proposal, if needed, and where possible
8. Complete a proposal, if needed.
9. Evaluate and sign contract.
10. Develop reports to demonstrate solution of the problem.
11. Understand more about the company's business and other potential problems.

Each of the tasks which mirror a customer's buying process will have a series of sub-tasks. For example, "creating the problem in a target segment's mind" may be resolved by several different tactics, such as:

- Holding seminars on the problem.
- Addressing conferences on the problem.
- Writing white papers on the problem.
- Circulating case studies on the problem.
- Creating advertisements that communicate the:
  - bad feelings that the problem creates and.
  - actions people should take to avoid those bad feelings.

Tasks and sub-tasks understood at this level of detail can be allocated to either marketing or sales. Responsibility for advancing customers along their buying process becomes clear.

The benefit of understanding the appropriate allocation of tasks goes further than allocating tasks to departments. In some organisations, the structure of the departments may in itself be hindering customers moving along their buying process.

A reliable way of building or evaluating whether sales and marketing have an appropriate structure is:

1. Determine what competencies are required to carry out each task and sub-task. For example holding seminars requires presentation skills, rapport building skills and perhaps some specific technical skills. However, creating advertising may require a high level of communication skills, creativity and a moderate level of project management skills.

2. Determine what information is required to carry out each task. For example, customer information, product information, account information or database manipulation processes
3. Determine in what geographical areas each task must be undertaken.
4. Determine what authority levels are required to complete tasks efficiently and match the level of risk to which the organisation is willing to expose itself. For example, revenue and capital spending, hiring and firing and contract commitment value and duration limit.
5. Build structure first around like-competencies. For example, having a creative person at each of five regional offices is likely to be less efficient and effective than having all five creative people at the one location.
6. Extend the structure geographically when travel time, balanced against your ability to transfer information, increases costs and decreases productivity to unacceptable levels.
7. Build in as few layers as possible that meet the organisation's appetite for risk.

If your target segments create very different competency requirements, for example, retail buyers versus business buyers consider different organisational structures for the different target segments.

Marketing and sales organisations will always deliver less than they should when they are not aligned to the target segments buying process.

Organisations that do not have aligned marketing and sales processes and structure spend more time on internal debates than on creating opportunities for enhancing revenue.

How aligned is your organisation to the way your customers buy?

Kevin Dwyer is a pragmatic change management advisor and founder of Change Factory. He comes from an old school that experienced and led change first and learnt the theory later.

Kevin's interest in sales is in developing the reinforcing loops of corporate goal, strategy, marketing and sales tactics, KPIs, recruitment, career and competence development, coaching and counselling that influences more customers to move through their buying process with the selling organisation.

Visit Kevin's website: www.changefactory.com

# The Top 10 Cold Calling Mistakes

By Wendy Weiss

Feeling frustrated and defeated by prospecting? Tired of hearing, "We already have that covered?" Tired of hearing, "I'm not interested?" Tired of hearing "no?" These are the Top Ten Cold Calling Mistakes that 'The Queen' sees on a regular basis. Eliminate these mistakes and see your results change.

1. Not understanding the goal of the call
When you hang up the phone, where do you want to be? What action do you want your prospect to take? What commitment do you want your prospect to make? Too many prospectors don't identify the goal of their phone call and so they do not get the result that they want. Before you pick up the telephone, identify the goal of your conversation.

2. Sending literature when you don't have to
"Send me some information" does not translate to, "I'm going to read it." Too many prospectors get quite excited to send brochures to prospects and then call them back. Unfortunately, too many prospects use "Send me some information" as a polite way of getting off of the telephone. "Send me some information" generally really means, "I'm not interested" or "I'm too busy to talk." You want to find out why your prospect is asking for information and if they are a true prospect. If your prospect is asking because they do intend to look over it, agree to send it out and get their commitment to a time to continue the conversation.

*"Prospects will tell you everything that you need to know, if only you'll listen to them."*

3. Poor telephone etiquette
Chewing gum, eating, music or television blaring in the background, talking to other people while you're on the phone, mumbling or not speaking clearly, not getting to the point... These are all ways to turn your prospect off and reduce the chances that you can have a productive conversation.

4. Poor listening skills
Prospects will tell you everything that you need to know, if only you'll listen to them. Listen actively so that you'll hear what your prospects' are really saying. Unfortunately, poor listening skills go hand in hand with the next mistake on the list.

5. Projecting your fears onto the prospect
"The prospect is in a meeting," does not translate to, "The prospect knows that you are calling and does not want to speak with you." "I'm busy and cannot talk right now," does not translate into, "I don't want to speak with you and I'm not interested." Too many prospectors read extra and always negative meaning into statements made by gatekeepers and/or prospects. You will always do better by simply taking these statements at face value and assume that your prospect is in a meeting or is busy and cannot talk at the time that you called.

6. Inadequate or nonexistent questioning
It is vital to gather information about your prospect. Make sure that you have good questions planned to ask your prospect in order to qualify them and learn about their needs. Divide your questions into "Need to Know" and "Nice to Know" categories. Make sure to ask all of your "Need to Know" questions first.

7. Poor or no preparation
Few sales professionals would go into an important meeting with a top customer and wing it, yet that is exactly what far too many prospectors do when they get on the telephone. On the telephone you have approximately 10-30 seconds to grab and hold your prospects' attention and you will not get another chance. Prepare so that you can have the best possible conversation with your prospect.

8. Not asking for what you want
Fear keeps many prospectors from asking for what they want. Others simply do not understand their goals for each call (see # 1) so they either do not ask for what they want or they ask for the wrong thing. Identify your goal for the call and craft the verbiage that you will use to ask for what you want. Practice that verbiage out loud so that you become comfortable. You can even make a "cheat sheet" and have it in front of you when you make your calls so that you remember to ask for what you want.

9. Creating objections where none existed
If you do not have a good call opening, you will immediately create an objection from your prospect. Anything that you say to a prospect that does not resonate deeply with them will create an objection. You want to be prepared with a good call opening and good script that will pre-empt objections (see #7). If every prospect with whom you speak says, "I'm not interested," you're not saying anything interesting.

10. Not leading with the value
The value or benefit ("WIIFM—What's in it for me?") from your prospects' point of view is what will gain their attention. (see #7 and #9). Always, always, always lead with the value.

Wendy Weiss, *"The Queen of Cold Calling,"* is an author, speaker, sales trainer, author 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. Her recently released program, The Miracle Appointment-Setting Script, and/or her book, Cold Calling for Women, can be ordered by visiting http://queenofcoldcalling.com. Contact her at wendy@wendyweiss.com. Get Wendy's free Special Report, How to Write an Effective Cold Calling Script, at http://www.queenofcoldcalling.com

# Just 30 Minutes a Day - The Value of a Half Hour

By Kevin Eikenberry

Want to change your results next year? Want to reach a new goal? Want to get a promotion, be healthier or happier? Want to improve your work performance?

Give me 2 minutes to read this article and 30 minutes a day and you can achieve any of those things – guaranteed.

You read it right; you can change your life in just thirty minutes a day. What you do in those thirty minutes depends on what you want to achieve, but let me give you ten suggested ways to spend those 30 minutes . . .

- Reading positive, uplifting or spiritual materials
- Reading material that will help you learn something important to you – from team building to trap shooting, leadership to learning to garden
- Exercising
- Praying or meditating
- Writing or journaling
- Reflecting
- Listening with those you love
- Working directly on your goal
- Serving others
- Planning your next day or week

*"What is this guy, crazy? Doesn't he know how busy I am? How am I going to find 30 minutes a day?"*

As you read this list I expect you had two thoughts . . .

- There is some great stuff on this list.
- That is what I should do!

My advice is to listen to your intuition, and pick that one thing to do. You can't do all of these things each day, but you can do one. Pick one, and starting tomorrow, do it consistently every day; seven day a week preferably. Do it when you feel like it and do it when you don't. The key to the power of these thirty minutes is *consistency*.

And then you had another thought . . .

"What is this guy, crazy? Doesn't he know how busy I am? How am I going to find 30 minutes a day?"

I anticipated your concern, so I have made another list for you. This list is of 10 ways you can find the 30 minutes a day to devote to the task you selected above.

You could find your 30 minutes by reducing any one of these activities by the 30 minutes you are looking for. You could . . .

- Watch less television
- Read less of the newspaper
- Turn off the email
- Browse the internet less
- Sleep less
- Shorten your lunch "hour"
- Complain less
- Blame less
- Gossip less
- Watch less television (I know it is on the list twice, but it might the easiest one of all!)

You may be thinking, but I like the local news, or I love my New York Times Crossword puzzle, or I need my sleep. That is fine, pick a different one, there are plenty of items to choose from. But ask yourself this question: Which of these items would I give up in order to reach my goal?

Listen carefully to your answer, and then give it up.

You don't even have to pick the same one every day, but the best way to change your habit will be pick one; otherwise you are trying to "find" your 30 minutes everyday.

It will just take 30 minutes a day, every day, to get something extremely valuable to you.

The clock is ticking, your future awaits.

Potential Principle – How we invest our time will determine how much of our potential we unleash!

Kevin Eikenberry is an expert on team and leadership development and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group.

He has spent the last 15 years helping organizations all across North America on leadership, learning, teams and teamwork, creativity, and more. His client list includes: the American Red Cross, Chevron, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company, John Deere, Purdue University, Sears Canada, Southwest Airlines, TriHealth, the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Mint, and many more.

Visit Kevin's website: www.KevinEikenberry.com

# Features And Benefits And Sales – Oh My!

By Diane Helbig

Do you sell features or benefits? Do you know the difference? All too often salespeople think features are key. Of course, it's because that's what they've been shown. 'Look at all the bells, whistles, and gadgets!' It's as if the more gadgets, the more valuable the product or service. Well, that's only true if your prospect NEEDS all those things.

*"Stop talking. Stop thinking. And please, stop selling."*

Have you ever been shopping for something where the salesperson keeps telling you about all the features, yet never once asks you what you need? Or they ask you what you need but go ahead and tell you everything else? Is that how you sell? Do you think that if you don't tell them EVERYTHING, you'll miss out on the one thing your prospect is looking for?

STOP!

Stop talking. Stop thinking. And please, stop selling. Your prospect doesn't want to listen to you ramble on about things they don't care about.

Ask a few questions, listen, and then address only what you hear. Let's explore this process.

1. Ask a few questions
   And I mean a few. Examples are: -What are you looking for the product to do? What do you need or want to accomplish with this product? What matters most to you? (Here you can offer some suggestions – price, volume, speed, reliability . . .) With these questions, you are trying to get the prospect to tell you exactly what they want/need. You can also ask if they will need certain functionality that you know the product or service offers. Be careful to continue to ask and listen here – don't explain or sell.

2. Listen
Listen to the answers. This is where you'll find out which features solve your prospect's problem; which features meet their needs. Their answers may lead to more qualifying questions. Go ahead and ask them and then LISTEN. You are working to discover which features you should share with your prospect.

3. Address what you heard
Now that you've heard what your prospect needs, you can show them how specific features will benefit them. You have a well-rounded idea of what they are looking for so you can tailor a solution specifically for them. You won't regale (translated to: bore) them with features that don't matter to them.

When you use this process you will accomplish a couple of things. The first is that you will be showing your prospect that they matter to you. People not only like to be listened to – they like to be heard. They want to know that you find it important to discover what they truly need or want. The second thing you'll accomplish is that you'll have a very good understanding of what they need. This will give you the ability to really answer their concerns with your product or service. Your solution will be powerful because it will address the prospect's concerns – not what you think they should know. This is where the features come in. You present them as benefits – how they help your prospect based on what he/she said.

Remember, it's not about you telling your prospect all the features of your product or service. What matters is that you show them the benefit TO THEM of the features that can help them solve their problem; the problem you discovered when you asked them questions. So you see there is a connection between features and benefits – when you use them the right way.

As a certified, professional coach, Diane works with people in career transition, people starting their own business, salespeople who need and want to improve their skills and business owners who want to create more successful business development strategies.

Coupled with her business acumen are strong intuitive skills and a genuine desire to help other people excel.

Visit Diane's website: www.seizethisdaycoaching.com

# Supervising: Get Bad at What You Do

By Wally Adamchik

Manager. Foreman. Supervisor. Boss. These are all titles for the person who is responsible for getting a job done by directing other people. They might describe you or someone you work with. The key point, regardless of the title, is that this person is tasked with accomplishing a certain amount of work beyond that which one person is capable of doing. And, this person is expected to oversee the production of others to get that work done.

Often, this person is placed in this position of responsibility because of demonstrated proficiency at the task he or she is supervising. For example, an adept carpenter is told he will now supervise three other carpenters on a job; he becomes the foreman. No big deal really, as he generally works alongside the other three, setting the pace, and, if necessary, taking immediate corrective if one of his crew makes a mistake.

The foreman is commended for his ability to “make it happen,” and this reinforces his behavior. He may be promoted to superintendent, where he will oversee several foremen. Each time he visits one of his crews, he shows them the “right way to do it.” After all, he is one of the best carpenters, which is how he got to be in the position he’s in. With pride, he steps in and implements the corrective action. The work is executed well and the company is happy.

But the crew is not.

This situation is not limited to the field; it happens in the office, too. Consider the accounting supervisor who is known for her attention to detail. Nothing slipped by her when she was a clerk, and now, nothing slips by her as a supervisor. The reason for this is that she practically replicates the work of her team as she closely checks and re-checks their work. She puts in longer hours, but that’s what it takes to make the numbers right. Her people may not get it right, so she will make sure everything adds up.

*When the supervisor does the work, the subordinates lose the opportunity to train and grow.*

As you read the two scenarios, you could probably identify the same characters in your organization. The fundamental problem here is that these people fail to recognize they are no longer getting paid to actually do the work. They are getting paid for the work to get done – by others. Unfortunately, we often end up rewarding them for the result rather than the process. I'm not saying we should not hold people accountable for results. But we shouldn't reward them for repeatedly using the wrong method to get the work done. By insisting on doing much of the work themselves, they are failing to exercise supervision. They're still trying to be the best at what they used to do, rather than growing their team's abilities as well as their own. This creates several bad situations:

The first is poor morale. The vast majority of people pride themselves on doing a good job. They want the opportunity to make a contribution. When insecure supervisors jump in to "fix" a problem, they send the message that the employee is incapable of doing the work correctly, that they don't trust the employee. The employee is not held accountable, and is prevented from making the contribution to the company that he or she would like.

When the supervisor does the work, the subordinates lose the opportunity to train and grow. In the same breath with which they lament that there are no good employees, they berate their own subordinates because they can't do the work like they are "supposed to." But, how can the employee improve if the supervisor keeps jumping in to "help"?

Eventually, the supervisor gets tired. He/She is putting in longer hours to get the job done because he/she is spending too much time doing the work of their people. The supervisor gets burned out. This leads to a number of additional bad situations: turnover, low production and even lower morale to name a few.

If the supervisor is too busy jumping in and re-doing work, then they are not using their time to carry out their own responsibilities. These other things may not be directly related to production, so they may not be missed initially. But they will be caught later, after the problem has snowballed. For example, the superintendent may be in charge of filling out time sheets. Half the time, he turns them in late, and the rest of the time, they are inaccurate. Payroll is now forced to track him down to correct the problem.

Finally, this supervisor is holding himself back. By continuing to micromanage his staff, he is insuring that they don't develop. If there is no one to replace the superintendent, then he, in turn, cannot advance. Some people mistakenly think that, by not developing their subordinates, they are maintaining job security for themselves. In fact, what they're doing is hurting the company.

So, how does a company overcome this situation? Three basic steps are: 1) a thorough description of the superintendent position, 2) strong leadership from those who oversee the superintendent, and 3) training for the newly-promoted superintendent in time management, delegation, and profitability.

If you are the best in your company at the work you do, let yourself get bad at it. Your supervisors are not getting paid for doing your work. This is not to say that the leadership of the firm should forget all they learned about the business on their way up the corporate ladder, but it is saying others should learn the task and the leadership should be learning new things. The pace of change is rapid today and employees need to be doing what they are paid to do. Line employees need to produce, supervisors need to oversee the production of line employees, and senior leadership should do whatever it can to make sure those two groups have the right training and resources to do their jobs the best they can. If you are in charge of people, your goal is to help them get better at what they do, not to do it better than they do.

Tested in the US Marines and in business, Wally Adamchik knows leadership. Work with him and you will too. Strategy without execution will fail. Theory without reality will confuse. When you work with Wally you get relevant and usable content to help your teams improve.
Visit Wally's website: www.firestarterspeaking.com

# $13 Million Found with This Sales Strategy

By Leslie Buterin

The story you are about to hear is true.

With the implementation of one well-crafted sales tactic, Gene surprised himself by making one phone call and getting a meeting with a senior executive. A man Gene and his team had been pursuing for more than one year!

The contract ended up serving the executive so well he had no reason to renew current contracts with eleven of Gene's competitors.

What a day that was! Better yet, the days that follow continue to be lucrative with a steady flow of sales coming from the powerful strategy used that day.

One cold call, one meeting, one $13 million contract ... ba-da bing, ba-da boom!

Play-by-play reports of big sales bring shivers of delight to sales professionals. We meet. We talk. We share our stories of success. After all, that's where we get out jollies! We thrive on closing the deals ... and no one appreciates the sophisticated subtleties of these stories like other sales professionals

The best-of-the-best know that within each story are nuggets of learning that will ...if unearthed and applied ... add greatly to their own success.

*"The best-of-the-best know that within each story are nuggets of learning that will ...if unearthed and applied ... add greatly to their own success."*

Gene decided to try calling this executive cold, without a "warm" introduction. His reasoning was, "I've spent months trying to get a hold of this guy. I have nothing to lose by calling his office myself."

Gene called, spoke with his prospect's executive assistant, and requested a 20-minute meeting.
When the gatekeeper asked the question asked by all gatekeepers, "What's this meeting about?" Gene responded, "I want to know why he's using eleven companies to do what his competitor across town just uses us to do."

Those words prompted the executive to call Gene and schedule a meeting. During their face time, Gene outlined the benefits of: doing business with one vendor in terms of reduced paperwork, having easy access to one contact, and reducing expenses with volume discounts.

That's the sales call that resulted in a staggering $13-million contract.

Yes, such deals are as simple and complex as all that.

There are important lessons to learn from that brief phone message. A few sentences can result in a tremendous increase in *your* meetings with high-level decision makers.

First of all, Gene called the executive's office and let him know he wanted to meet.

Sounds pretty basic doesn't it? Now, ask yourself, how many executives have you called this week, better yet, today? That's the question Gene asked himself.

For months on end, he and his super sales team worked their contacts hoping for warm introductions right on up the organizational ladder. Contacts who had assured Gene they'd get him and his team in to see the President. Frustration mounted, as those folks inside the company were unable to follow through on their commitments. Twelve months after going down this path, Gene still wasn't in.

When introduced to the concept of successfully cold calling executives, the light clicked on for Gene. He could clearly see a new solution for an old problem. He returned to the office, called the executive, and gave a good reason why the executive would want to meet with him.

Let's take a few minutes here to scrutinize the few words that led to such powerful profits. You'll find several tactics you can easily implement!

- State the purpose of the call ... a 20-minute meeting with the executive.
- Leave a compelling message.
- Speak directly to the executive's interests in bottom line terms with numbers the executive can sink his teeth into.

Then, take note of what Gene did not do. Take note, he did not “burn daylight” elaborating on:

- Who he was
- The name of his company
- What his company does
- How long the company has been in business
- And so forth … there was no fluff!

His words, information, and delivery positioned him as an important player in the executive’s world. Those very words compelled the executive to act quickly so as to capitalize on a timely opportunity.

Now, it’s your turn to give it a go. Call the top executive of a company you’ve been prospecting for awhile, follow-through with these tactics, and get ready to be awed by the spine tingling stories of success that come *your* way!

Forward this article to friends—they’ll thank you for it!

For your mini-course “Jealously Guarded Secrets to Cold Calling Company Presidents” visit www.ColdCallingExecutives.com ! Or call Cold Calling Expert, Lead New Business Development Coach, Leslie Buterin (like butterin’ bread) at (816) 554-3674 9-3 CST (that’s Kansas City/Chicago Time)

# Three Steps to Becoming a Focused Salesperson!

By Steve Martinez

Focus is a power word. Essentially, it means to bring something to the center of attention. It also means to sharpen and to make clear. There are tools professionals use to create focus. For example, photographers use a camera lens to bring things into focus and astronomers use a telescope to focus on stars and distant planets. What does a salesperson use as a tool to bring prospects and customers into focus? Here is a hint. It's a tool that focuses on improving and measuring results which every salesperson should have. Unfortunately, only 20% of businesses and salespeople do. Do you know what we are talking about? We are referring to a sales plan for a business or a salesperson.

*"If a salesperson doesn't have a sales plan, look out!"*

If a sales plan wasn't your first thought, I'm not surprised. However, when you think about it, a properly written sales plan makes perfect sense because when it is used, it will focus the efforts of a business and a salesperson to dramatically improve results. Yes, a sales plan is a powerful tool that shouldn't be overlooked or taken lightly.

The Advantage of a Focused Sales Plan.
Since 80% of small and medium sized businesses don't have a sales plan, this means that when you prepare one, you will have an instant advantage over your competition. A sales plan puts in writing the details of where sales activities should be focused. Salespeople in particular need a sales plan to focus their sales activities. Without a sales plan, salespeople are left to form their own ideas about who to see and where to grow a business. This can be a huge problem because most salespeople are not in the position to know this information. It is one key reason why 43% of salespeople fail to reach quota?

If a salesperson doesn't have a sales plan, look out! They will take either the hardest route or the easiest route. It just won't be the best route to sales. This is the best reason to create a sales plan which outlines who they should contact, what they should be selling and other important factors of a sales plan. Additionally, they can use the sales plan to measure their efforts.

Step One: Know Your Business With SWOT.
One of the first things to do is prepare the traditional SWOT analysis and determine your business Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats list. This is a list that businesses have been creating for decades to help understand more about their present situation.

Strengths: Every salesperson should know what the strengths of their business are. This is a clear and complete listing of where you are strong compared to the competition. You will use this list to form your unique selling proposition and the infamous 30 second elevator speech in selling. Sales people need this listing to know where they can focus selling activities and find customers that need these services. This listing should be based on profitability of the company as much as capabilities.

Weakness: Every business has limits and weak areas. It is important to know where challenging areas are so a salesperson can avoid problems. Without this measured criteria, a salesperson can unknowingly seek out clients that are unprofitable and beyond the business capabilities. For example, if a business is only capable of servicing local and regional clients, salespeople should focus on local and regional clients only.

Opportunities: Every marketplace has opportunities for business. A business will have capabilities that match these opportunities. When a business can focus its efforts on the opportunities, this becomes an advantage. Salespeople need to know the signs of these opportunities so they can identify and leverage them. This list is really an important clues list for salespeople to focus on when they are contacting prospects and customers to reveal profitable situations.

Threats: Every business will have threats that develop. These threats may require a business to shift focus. These threats can impact the business which may cause a change in market focus. For example, a home building business can be threatened by a rise in interest rates or a large employer who decides to close and move to another region. Threats may include market trends and competitor adjustments.

Step Two: Define the "Perfect" Customer Profile.
The sales plan should also include criteria for finding the perfect customer. Salespeople should know "who, if, what, why, when, where and how" they should approach prospects and customers. For example every salesperson should be able to answer the following questions about their market and sales territory:

- WHO salespeople should be calling upon to maximize company sales?
- How to know IF prospects and customers are good matches for the company?
- WHAT services or products salespeople should be selling to reach company goals?

- WHY they are in business and why they sell certain products and services?
- WHEN is the best time to contact and nurture a relationship with a customer?
- WHERE salespersons activities should be focused to meet company objectives?
- HOW your customers prefer to be reached so you match their preference?

Step Three: Implementation of Communication Strategies. Once you understand what your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are and what your perfect customer profile is, your next step is to focus on the implementation of your communication strategies into the selling workflow. Your goal is to streamline, automate and simplify a sales and communication workflow so everyone who contacts customers can focus on the right sales activities. Your selling workflow checklist should include:

*"When your sales plan is complete, your business will have a stronger clarity of purpose."*

- Develop and implement a selling workflow to start new relationships with prospects.
- Create a selling workflow salespeople can implement and management can measure.
- Establish a follow-up system that nurtures customer relationships with communications.
- Create an e-mail follow-up communication system for customers who prefer e-mail.
- For customers who prefer letters, implement a letter system of communications.

When you are finished, your sales communication workflow becomes the way your business communicates with customers and prospects. We should note that there are only four ways to communicate; these are in person, over the telephone, by letter or via e-mail. Your business plan should use of all four methods. For some businesses, investing in sales automation technology has numerous advantages. With sales automation, you can automate many follow-up functions of delivering information faster and better than salespeople. Although it would be tough to completely replace a salesperson, a combination of using salespeople and sales automation technology has implementation advantages.

When your sales plan is complete, your business will have a stronger clarity of purpose. The selling workflow and communication strategies you implement will provide the focus you need to increase sales. If you would like a free sales planning guide, please contact us. www.sellingmagic.com/salesplan

Steve Martinez is the author of Sales Impactivator a sales e-publication for success oriented individuals. As the President of Selling Magic, his company teaches business professionals how to automate the selling process, preventing sales people and business owners from experiencing the hard lessons in selling. Steve has consulted with businesses around the country sharing his 25 years of sales and marketing experience to eliminate sales failure. Steve uses his experience as a National Sales Manager and National Account Executive to share the real-world lessons in sales.

Visit Steve's website: www.sellingmagic.com

# Winning Teammates: How Building Alliance Partnerships Increases Your Connections, Your Value, and Your Sales

By Lori Richardson

After working with thousands of businesses over the past twenty-five years, I've learned a lot and seen some great things. I've also seen some problem areas around growing sales and ultimately revenues and profits.

> *"This system will enable you to increase the number of referral prospects your way, and it will help you refer others to your alliance partners too."*

One of the biggest areas of potential for a professional seller is in building much stronger alliance relationships *with those who can recommend you in your community*. Endorsements from others are so much stronger than your own endorsement -- heck, you get paid to say good things about yourself. Others don't. The value in having business acquaintances and what I call "master alliance builders" in your network is H-U-G-E. The other option to growing business is in calling on "cold" contacts, with an aggressive prospecting strategy. Even professional sellers have some call reluctance around this - and for good reason - it is the longer road to success.

People buy from those they trust - and also quite often from those they like. It is a foundational element in professional selling. If someone YOU trust recommends to you that you contact a business for a product or service you are looking for, doesn't that recommended company have some immediate credibility, since they were referred by someone you already know and trust?
But how to do it? It is one thing to tell others what to do, and quite another to tell them how to incorporate it into their already busy work plan. Here are some quick ideas:

1. Track your prospective customers in some customer relationship management program or database or pipeline tool. This is pretty standard practice anymore, and even easier with the advent of web-based pipeline tools that are very inexpensive.

2. ALSO enter and track your alliance partners - these are the people, who don't do what you do, but they may do an add-on to what you do, or they serve the same market. They may just be really energized by your service and support and want to refer others to you. Record all of these people - these, "trusted partners" and put a field in the records of information to denote that they are an alliance partner. Work to have at least 20, and as many as 100.
3. Create a plan to "touch" these contacts on a regular basis - it doesn't need to be frequent, but it does need to be consistent. Think of a quarterly newsletter just for alliance partners, or scheduling coffee with three of them each month. Whatever works for you - keep it easy and sensible, but DO KEEP IN CONTACT.
4. When you are in contact with your referral partners, ask them what they need - what are they looking for, and do they have new products or services that you should know about? You are a potential referrer for them - and they must know this. Remind them that you will do whatever you can to help generate more interest for them. It is the old "giver's gain" formula. Give first - help your colleague's business, and that in turn will help yours.
5. Be interesting, and be someone that others enjoy talking to. Have value to offer them.

If you put some minimal effort into creating a group of alliance partner relationships into place, AND if you have a clear message of what you offer that adds value - you will see more referral business due to your partners' understanding what you do, and acting as "feet on the street" for you. Make it easy for them, and easy for others to do business with you.

This system will enable you to increase the number of referral prospects your way, and it will help you refer others to your alliance partners too. When customers get good value from you or your referral partners, it is WIN-WIN-WIN.

Lori Richardson is a speaker, author, trainer, and blogger on sales effectiveness and creativity. She owns Score More Sales, a sales consultancy for B2B sales leaders and their teams. The Winning Teammates program includes audio, plus web-based and live workshops. Visit Lori's website: www.scoremoresales.com

# Your Customer is Lying…Did You Catch It?

By Mark Hunter

As much as we hate to admit it, at one time or another, we've all been lied to. Sometimes the lie is exposed quickly and sometimes it takes awhile to surface. In sales, lying from a customer occurs more often than we are aware of.

Did you realize that nearly every sales call starts off with the customer not disclosing the entire truth? Salespeople rarely catch it right away. Unfortunately, they often believe the lie and then complicate the situation by building the rest of the sales call around it. When this happens, the salesperson is actually committing several fatal mistakes. To start, they are demonstrating their incredibly pathetic listening skills to the customer. Second, the "close ratio" winds up being lower than it should be. Finally, the customer winds up being cheated by not doing business with the salesperson and the products or services they're offering.

Let me explain. It is usually not the customer's intention to lie to the salesperson. At the start of a sales conversation, many customers don't know how to express themselves. Their lack of confidence in who they are speaking to causes them to withhold the whole truth. After the normal pleasantries have been exchanged at the start of a typical sales call, the first question posed by the salesperson often causes the customer to be somewhat uncomfortable. In an effort to make the situation as comfortable as possible, they wind up reverting to familiar comments that don't really communicate what they want to say. You know the drill.

*"Let me explain. It is usually not the customer's intention to lie to the salesperson"*

The salesperson asks the customer what they are looking for and then becomes excited about what has been shared with them. This is the point when the salesperson fails to realize they were not given the whole truth. The quick response by the customer and the innocent way in which it was spoken makes it seem accurate and complete. In fact, the customer may not even realize they lied! Because our nature is to give someone the benefit of the doubt, it makes their lie both harder to notice and, more importantly, harder to know how to respond to it.

How can you prevent the inevitable lie from ruining your sales call? First, accept the fact that you will be lied to. Second, never believe the first thing any customer tells you as the whole truth. In fact, you should never believe anything they tell you until you've heard the same thing twice. Every comment they make needs to be challenged with a question. However, be careful not to drill the customer as if in a police interrogation. Rather, you should probe deeper by asking for more information. This elevates the importance of what they are sharing, thus helping the customer become more confident in you. In addition, it gets the customer to elaborate on what they just said. This is where it's critical to listen carefully because the elaboration will contain the real information you're looking for.

*"In a sales call, challenge everything that is said with a follow-up question".*

For further explanation, consider the interaction that typically takes place when someone buys a car. At the start of the interaction, the salesperson may ask the shopper what he's looking for. He answers, "I'm looking for a 4-door that will fit my family." Although this response sounds normal and truthful, in reality, it is a lie because he left out the fact that he needs a car that also has enough storage space for the trip he makes every few weeks to his home in the mountains. Because he failed to disclose the latter information, the salesperson winds up showing him a 4-door sedan that he, the salesperson, might like. At this point, the customer becomes discouraged with the sales skills of the person helping him and either walks out or becomes disengaged. In this example, the customer's initial comment about his needs led the salesperson down the wrong path. What the salesperson should have done is disregard the initial comment unless it was repeated. He should have immediately asked a follow-up question regarding the customer's first response. By continuing to probe, the salesperson would be able to draw out of the customer precisely what it is he's looking for. In addition, the shopper will begin to repeat his needs and upon hearing something a second time, the salesperson would know he can take the information to the bank.

Although the example used above was very simple, the same thing happens in the most complex of buying situations, whether business-to-business or business-to-consumer. We're all human and we all have an innate sense of not wanting to share our needs with people we don't have confidence in. Because of the number of poor salespeople every customer has had to deal with over the years, the level of confidence is rarely high when a customer meets a salesperson for the first time. Unfortunately, human nature can cause this lying to even occur with those who we have done business with before. Customers will rarely walk into a buying situation with their thoughts scripted and their actions choreographed. Because of this, withholding information is just as likely to occur between two people who have an established relationship as it is with two people who just met. Finally, keep in mind that you will even have to deal with it with professional buyers. Be ready for it.

When you follow this method of asking follow-up questions, you actually do several things. First, you allow the customer to express what they are looking for in their own words. Second, you let the customer feel they're in control of the process. Third, and best of all, because the customer feels powerful, they will become less defensive and more willing to share with you their true needs much more quickly. This, in turn, allows you to draw out the best solution for the customer and when you do, you're in a much better position to maximize your profit because you're allowing the customer to maximize their desires.

In a sales call, challenge everything that is said with a follow-up question. Don't accept anything as fact until you've heard the customer say it at least twice. Avoid sabotaging the success of the sales call by being prepared to accurately identify the needs of the customer through questions. Catch them in the act and then use it to your advantage!

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.

# Six Easy Steps to Breaking Through the Fee Barrier

By Rochelle Togo-Figa

Many new business owners, entrepreneurs and sales professionals experience the fear of presenting their fees. It's a common fear that arises as a you are growing your business or selling a new product. It can be uncomfortable to take risks, to name your price and tell a prospective customer that you want to work with them.

Donna, a business owner, came to me seeking help in closing the sale. She had recently lost a sale due to her fear in presenting her fees. Donna had met with the prospect several times, uncovered their needs, answered questions, handled objections, presented a proposal, and discussed pricing. She thought she had done all the right things. It was now up to the prospect to make a buying decision.

After a few moments of silence, Donna's fear of fees set in. She thought, "Does the prospect think my fees are too high?" Feeling uncertain with the fees she had presented, Donna quickly said, "You may think my fees are too high. I'll draw up less expensive plans for you to look at." As soon as the words fell out of her mouth, she realized the impact of her actions. Donna's uncertainty about the fees had gotten in the way of closing the sale. She now created more work for herself to do and lost the opportunity to close the sale in that moment.

*"Many new business owners, entrepreneurs and sales professionals experience the fear of presenting their fees"*

Donna's fear of presenting her fees had stopped her from getting the business. Sound familiar? It's not uncommon to question whether the fees we're offering are within the range of what the prospect will pay. So how do you avoid this from happening?

It starts with asking the right questions, knowing your benefits, powerfully communicating the value of your product, and presenting different pricing packages. Here are (6) simple, yet powerful steps to follow that will help you break through the fear and give you confidence when presenting your fees:

1. Asked money qualifying questions either before the meeting or early in the meeting. Serious prospects don't mind hearing money questions. They expect to be asked these questions. Unqualified prospects run when they hear these questions because they're not serious about buying. Here's an example: "So I know we're in the same ball park, approximately how much were you looking to spend?"

2. Make a list of the benefits your product provides for your clients. A benefit is a result or solution the client receives from using your product. As you create your list, you'll begin to get clear on all the ways your clients benefit from using your product. Present the benefits your product provides during your meeting. Here's an example: "By adding window treatments to your home, the value of your home increases."

3. Make a list of the benefits your clients get from working with you. Of course, the benefits of the product are important, but so are you. In fact, most sales are based on the relationship you've developed with the client. Present the benefit your clients get from working with you during the meeting. Here's an example: "All clients I work with receive personalized service from the start of the job, to the end of the job."

4. Write the results clients have received from working with you. Think in terms of measurable results clients have achieved. This will instil more confidence as you become clear on the value you bring to your clients. Share with the prospect the results clients have received from working with you. Here's an example: "My client had no idea where to start with decorating her home. After working with me, she selected a window treatment that suits her living style and a fabric within her budget."

5. Communicate the value of your product. Practice saying aloud what the value of your product is and how it helps your clients. Hear yourself speaking with confidence, clarity, and from the heart as you communicate the value of your product. When you clearly understand the value of your product and can communicate it with ease, the fear of presenting your fees disappears.

6. Create several pricing packages your clients can choose from. Start to think of different price ranges and programs you can offer. Creating different pricing options, gives the prospect a choice and helps make the selection affordable. They're more apt to buy if you offer low, medium and high-end products.

*ASSIGNMENT:*

- Make a list of several money qualifying questions, product benefits, benefits your clients get from working with you, and results clients have received from working with you.
- Read over the lists so you can confidently state the questions, benefits and results the next time you're meeting with a prospect.
- Role play with a buddy steps 1-5. The more you practice, the more comfortable you'll be presenting your fees to the prospect.
- On a sheet of paper, create 3 different packages ranging in price from low (basic program), to medium (super program), to high (deluxe program).

If you would like to use this article on your website, or for your own ezine, not a problem; however, there's one thing you MUST include: 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 Power of One

By Kelley Robertson

One is a very tiny number. However, it can have a tremendous impact on your revenues. Here are some ideas to consider:

- Make one more cold call every day. One extra call a day equals 260 calls in a year. How many meetings could you set up with this number of calls and how many of those meetings could you turn into sales? Consider your current conversion ratio and think of the impact on your business.
- Suggest one additional item to every customer. This is particularly important if you sell lower priced items or work in a retail environment. Too many sales people are focused only on getting the initial sale. However, almost everyone has additional items, products, or services that could beneficial to their customers.
- Invest one day per month developing your skills. Many of the most successful people in business invest in themselves. They attend workshops, conferences, and participate in webinars and tele-seminars on a regular basis. Considering that the majority of people do not invest in developing their skill, you can quickly out-pace your co-workers and competition.
- Read one book every month. Expanding your knowledge will help you become more successful. Read books related to your industry or that will provide insight to helping you improve your skill in a specific area.
- Ask one more question during each sales call. Before you start "pitching" your product or service, ask your prospect one more question. This question might give you the additional insight you need to more effectively position your product or service.

*"Although it is a tiny number, one can make a very powerful impact both on your top line sales and bottom line profits"*

- Pause for one moment longer than usual before responding to a prospect's question or request. Known as the pregnant pause, this often prompt the other person to blurt out something they had not intended to say. The secret behind this strategy is that most people are uncomfortable with silence and will begin talking to fill the "dead" air space.
- Get to the office one hour early. Remember the expression *"The early bird gets the worm"*. That one extra hour first thing in the morning can be the most productive time of the day. You have a better chance to reach decision-makers, there are fewer distractions, and you can often achieve more in that 60 minutes than in several hours.
- Address objections one more time before giving up. Too many sales people give up too soon when faced with objections. I'm not suggesting that you beat your customer into submission in order to close the sale. However, I do recommend that you tackle each objection one more time before you give up.
- Send one more email to the prospect who has been sitting on the fence. Sometimes, people need that little push and encouragement to move forward. But, many cases, their time is occupied by other projects and priorities which means they are not focused on your solution. Gentle reminders are often appreciated providing you don't follow up so frequently you appear to be stalking them. Even though they may not be ready to make that particular buying decision, you will help keep your name in their mind.
- Ask for an endorsement or testimonial one more time. Endorsements and testimonials are greatly underutilized by most people in business today. Quite often we ask a client for a testimonial but because they have other priorities, they forget. Call them or send an email and politely request the testimonial again.
- Suggest one more idea to help a customer improve their business. Schedule a breakfast meeting or lunch with your customers but instead of trying to sell them something, focus on learning more about their particular challenges. Offer solutions that do not include your products or services and your customers will begin to see you more as a partner than a supplier.
- Send one more thank you card or note. Very few sales people make the effort to thank their customers. You can stand out from the crowd by sending handwritten notes to thank customers for their most recent order, meeting with you, or sending an on-time payment. You can also send a note when you see their company mentioned favorably in the news.

Although it is a tiny number, one can make a very powerful impact both on your top line sales and bottom line profits. One extra sale every day, week or month – depending on your business, can make a significant impact on your sales by the end of the year.

The next time you think about giving up on a high-potential prospect, consider the fact that you might be just one phone call, email, or letter away from making the sale.

Kelley Robertson, President of the Robertson Training Group works with businesses to help them increase their sales, negotiate more effectively, and motivate their employees. Receive a FREE copy of "100 Ways to Increase Your Sales" by subscribing to his free newsletter available at http://www.RobertsonTrainingGroup.com. Kelley speaks regularly at conferences, sales meetings, and corporate functions. For information on his programs contact him at 905-633-7750 or Kelley@RobertsonTrainingGroup.com

# Get Prospects to Listen by Avoiding 7 Common Vocal Business Card Mistakes

By Tammy Stanley

"*I will pay a man more for his ability to communicate than for any other quality he may possess*."

-Charles Schwaab

If you're like most sales professionals, you use your vocal business card 22 times more frequently than you use your paper business card. Thus it stands to reason that a vocal business card is a powerful form of marketing. If you hope to benefit from word of mouth advertising, it's vitally important that you learn how to craft your message in a way that makes you and your service irresistible. You must have a vocal business card that gets prospects to listen.

Attend a local networking meeting, however, and a particular observation is inevitable — few sales professionals understand *how to speak so prospects listen.* Don't believe me? Think about the last networking meeting you went to, and try to recall one person whose message was so compelling, you immediately thought of someone who needed that service and passed on a lead. The more typical scenario is that you came home with yet another stack of business cards that are still on your desk, waiting to be filed in the trusty ol' Rolodex!

The point of networking isn't to fill up a Rolodex. The point of networking is to build a network of people who understand what it is that you do so well, that they easily think of people they know, who need your service or product.

*"The point of networking is to build a network of people who understand what it is that you do so well, that they easily think of people they know, who need your service or product".*

Here's what you need to understand before you ever tell another person what you do for a living. You need to understand that your potential prospects could care less what you do unless what you do is defined in such a way that's critical to their wants and needs. Prospects are unimpressed with a long list of all the things your company does and even the awards it might have. In fact as soon as you begin talking about what you do, your prospects are looking for ways to discard you, unless your message is more about them and what they need or desire than it is about you.
I've narrowed down the most common mistakes sales professionals make in their vocal business cards to seven mistakes. When you avoid these mistakes in your vocal business card, you'll find yourself on the path to attracting prospects as easy as opening your mouth!

The 7 Most Common Vocal Business Card Mistakes

1. Your *Vocal Business Card* begins with what you are.

In order to attract customers you want, stop talking about what you *are* and answer the real question — *what do you do*? The single most significant thing that 95% of sales people, business owners, and entrepreneurs do that convinces their prospects to stop listening and reject them is they respond to the question, "What do you do?" with what they are — I'm an insurance agent; I'm a massage therapist; I'm a chiropractor.

When you tell prospects what you are, the most natural thing in the world for them to do is to discard you. After all, they probably already know or have an insurance agent, a massage therapist, and/or a chiropractor. At the very least, they have concluded what each of those people do, and they think that they don't need to know you.

2. Your *Vocal Business Card* is boring

Far too often, instead of getting inside the customer's shoes and thinking what a prospect would truly find important, individuals focus on facts that mean nothing to their potential customer, such as their name, their title with a company, their company name and how long the company has been in business. That's just boring.

It's true that most people follow that formula, but that doesn't mean you should copy it! The last time you heard someone tell you what he did, you probably couldn't remember his name right after he finished his introduction. Why not? Maybe you're not good at remembering names, but more likely is that he presented a boring message that failed to stand out enough to be memorable.

3. Your *Vocal Business Card* lacks emotional allure

Contrary to what plenty of sales people think, prospects are unimpressed with long lists of what your company does and its awards. The most effective way to install emotional allure is to put a monetary element in your vocal business card. Numbers create emotional allure instantly and without any necessary mumbo jumbo explanation.

Which book would you be more inclined to buy and read?

*- How I Went from $25,000 to $1,000,0000 in 12 Months*

*- How I Went from a Small Wage to a Big Wage in a Short Period of Time*

If you're like most people, you have infinitely more desire to learn how to become a millionaire in 12 months than a big wage earner in a short period of time. The reason why is that the numbers in the first title answer all kinds of questions that the words in the second title don't.

4. Your *Vocal Business Card* appeals to everyone

Sales people often assume that everyone is their prospect, so they try to get other people's attention by spouting out as many features and/or benefits about their products as possible. Obviously their goal is to appeal to as many people as possible. It might sound like a good plan, but it usually backfires because you fail to speak to the individual, when your message is for everyone. By trying to appeal to everyone, it's more likely that your Vocal Business Card won't appeal to anyone.

When you let go of the need to sell to everyone and focus on a particular target market, your message stands a chance of being heard. Once prospects hear your message, they can respond. Define a concise and articulate way to tell people what makes you and your product or service unique.

5. Your *Vocal Business Card* reeks of ballyhoo

Ballyhoo is a clamorous and vigorous attempt to win customers. In the end, it has a negative effect on your prospects because all that clamor and bragging frightens prospects away. As soon as you start the ballyhoo of talking on and on about how great your product or service is your prospects begin to put up their guard and close the door.

The famous marketing expert and author of, "*How to Start with Nothing and Create Great Wealth*," Mike Enlow, once put the following offer in the newspaper:

*I'll give you $1,000 for every dollar you give me!*

Would you believe that not a single person responded to his add? Would you have responded? The interesting thing is that Enlow didn't expect anyone to respond. In fact, he ran the advertisement to prove that no one would. The more you blow up a balloon, the more likely you are to see it burst. Ballyhoo often destroys the very things you need to convert a prospect into a customer — credibility and believability.

6. *Your* Vocal Business Card *lacks specificity*

Why should your prospects use you as opposed to anyone else out there who does what you do? In order to answer that properly, you need to become specific about what your product or service does, whom it helps and how. Now, instead of pondering the answer to that question on the last five minutes of your drive over to a networking meeting, I challenge you to work on this *right now*. It can't wait until tomorrow because every time you talk, you have the opportunity to increase your network of people who will remember and recommend you.

Imagine yourself sitting in desk in a classroom. Your instructor says, get out a piece of paper, write down a message for me, and then get that paper to me without leaving your seat. What would you do?

If you try to throw the paper as is, it probably won't get far. If you know how to turn that piece of paper into a paper airplane, you'll probably succeed in getting it to go further, but you can't be certain that it will fly right to the instructor. However, take that piece of paper, crumble it into a ball (hmm, it's like narrowing down your message for a specific group), and now throw it. Chances are you might even hit the instructor right on the head with it.

The secret to generating new customers with ease lies in identifying something that your prospects would either love to have or fear happening and then presenting those prospects with a specific yet concise irresistible offer.

7. You have yet to develop a *Vocal Business Card*

If you've never set aside the time to develop an effective vocal business card, you have plenty of company. However, one simple way to gain an advantage over your competition is do what most won't take the time to do. When you have an effective message and you practice it to the point where you don't have to think to say it, as soon as you tell prospects what you do, they'll know instantly that you are different than others in your profession they've met.

The key to ending the indifferent responses you get after telling people what you do is to get off the hammock of lassitude, when it comes to developing a well-crafted vocal business card.

Pay attention to what your prospects are most likely thinking instead of reasons your company or product is so great. Prospects don't care about your products, your business opportunity, or you, until you give them a reason to care. And that reason almost always concerns *them*, not you. Maybe you've heard the song that goes, "*It's all about ME, hey, hey, ah ha!*" Prospects tune into the radio station that plays *that* song.

If you want to turn strangers into prospects, tune into the radio station that plays the song they most like to hear. Listen very carefully to what your prospects are saying and learn what it is that they desire, they fear, and they need. Only then will you be able to learn if you even have the solution to help them get what they desire, to overcome what they fear, or to fulfil what they need.

Tammy Stanley teaches sales professionals, business owners, and entrepreneurs how to master the secret of increasing their prospects by as much as fifty percent. She directs The Sales Refinery; a sales training firm that assists sales professionals generate more business through powerful marketing, selling and leadership strategies. Sign up for her free ezine, The Sales Refinery Insights, and receive her FREE Bonus Reports "3 Simple Secrets to Attracting More Business" and "7 Keys to Easier Prospecting" at www.tammystanley.com

# Seven Easy to Implement Strategies to Increase Client Referrals

By Paul McCord

*The top producers who run their businesses from referrals have learned a disciplined process of referral generation. Even without learning their process, you can implement these seven strategies they use to increase the volume and quality of the referrals you get from your clients.*

Referrals. We all want them. Yet, few of us generate many quality referrals from our clients and prospects. For most of us, referral generation is a hit or miss proposition—and it's mostly miss.

In reality, the fault doesn't lie with us. It is the way we've been taught to ask for referrals that is the culprit. Most of us have been taught to simply "do a good job and ask for referrals." And we've found that that process doesn't work well. Sure, we may get a name and phone or two here and there, but these are usually to companies that either don't want or need our products or can't afford them. Consequently, our "referrals" turn out to be time wasters. We get a sale from a referral here--another sale there. Just enough to keep us asking—maybe.

Furthermore, we look around at our peers and find that they are as unsuccessful and frustrated with referrals as we are. Nevertheless, we keep hearing that referrals are the best marketing tool there is. And we see a few associates and competitors—a precious few—who manage to not only generate some referrals, but generate enough to build top performing businesses from them.

*"For most of us, referral generation is a hit or miss proposition—and it's mostly miss".*

What do these highly successful salespeople who can run successful practices almost strictly from referrals do differently? Do they know some great secret that the rest don't know?

In a sense, yes, they do. Like most everyone else, they discovered that the traditional way of generating referrals doesn't work well. They discovered they needed a disciplined, detailed PROCESS that could be intergraded with their sales process that prepares the client to give referrals and that virtually guarantees the client will give them a large number of high quality referrals after the sale.

Rather than the typical hit or miss, "hope I get one," format most salespeople use, these mega-referral generators turn referrals into a predictable process—they don't ask for referrals, they GENERATE them.

Although we don't have the space to delineate a full process in a short article, we can steal 7 quick strategies from these referral superstars you can implement that will immediately increase both the quantity and quality of the referrals you receive from your clients:

1. ASK: Sounds surprisingly simple, right? But studies have shown that over 50% of all salespeople DON'T ask. If you don't ask, you can't expect to get them.

2. ASK MORE THAN ONCE: Studies have also shown that over 70% of the salespeople, who do ask for referrals, only ask once. However, those who ask twice receive over twice as many referrals as those who only ask once—and those who ask three times receive over four times as many referrals as those who only ask once.

3. REALLY ASK: Many salespeople think they are asking for referrals when all they are really doing is SUGGESTING referrals. Instead of a direct request, they will try to soften the request by saying something like: "Jan, if you happen to run across someone who could use my services, would you mind giving them one of my cards?" Or, "Dave, if you know of someone I could help, would you mention me to them?"

Suggesting referrals isn't referral generation. It's trying to generate Word of Mouth marketing—a passive process where the salesperson has no control of the process. IF the client does hand a card to a prospect, the prospect may or may not call. Moreover, most often the client never makes the suggestion to a prospect in the first place.

4. TELL THE CLIENT WHOM YOU'RE LOOKING FOR: Few salespeople help the client make quality referrals by letting the client know whom a quality referral for them is. They assume the client understands enough about what they do and what they sell that the client can figure out on their own what a good referral is. Bad assumption.

We know what a quality referral for us is and we think it is obvious to our client. But that client isn't in our business. What is obvious to us isn't obvious to the client. We have to let them know exactly who we're looking for.

5. GIVE THE CLIENT TIME TO THINK: Most salespeople wait until after the sale has been completed to bring the subject of referrals up. Often the request for referrals comes literally, as they are walking out the door.

By waiting until the last second to spring the request for referrals on the client—and then standing there waiting for an answer, the salesperson has given their client only 10 or 15 seconds to go through their mental file cabinet to come up with quality referrals. That isn't realistic. If you want quality referrals, you must give the client an opportunity to think about whom to refer.

6. HELP THE CLIENT MAKE QUALITY REFERRALS: Despite your best efforts to educate your client on what a quality referral for you is, many clients will claim to have none for you. But these clients DO have great referrals to give—they just don't know it.

Help your client by suggesting specific companies you know you want to be referred to that your client probably knows. During the sales process, you need to be doing your homework. Discover who your client's vendors are; who their customers are; even who that client worked for in the past. Develop a list of 15 to 25 companies you know you want to be referred to that you have reason to believe your client may know and then ask if they would refer you to these companies. If you have a list of 15 to 25, your client will probably know 5 to 8. And if you've done your job well, they will refer you to them.

Make it easy for your client to make referrals.

7. DON'T GET NAMES AND PHONE NUMBERS--GET INTRODUCED: Most salespeople are thrilled to get a name and phone number or two. They run back to their office and immediately make a major mistake. They pick up the phone and call the prospect.

Mega-referral producers don't get names and phone numbers—they get direct introductions to the prospect from their client. They don't want to make a warm call--they want an introduction. A warm call is little better than a cold call. An introduction almost guarantees a meeting with the prospect.

Mega-referral producers use a sophisticated process to turn referral generation into a science that is an integral part of their sales process. But if you incorporate these seven strategies into your selling process, you'll immediately increase the volume, the quality, and the effectiveness of the referrals you receive.

Learning how to generate a large volume of high quality referrals takes time; it takes learning a proven process; and it takes perfecting that process. Nevertheless, by simply asking and then helping your client give quality referrals, you'll find it much easier to get the referrals you want.

 Paul McCord is a leading authority on prospecting, referral selling, and personal marketing. He is president of McCord and Associates, a Houston, Texas based sales training, coaching, and consulting company. His first book, *Creating a Million Dollar a Year Sales Income: Sales Success through Client Referrals* (John Wiley and Sons, 2007), is an Amazon and Barnes and Noble best-seller and is quickly becoming recognized as the authoritative work on referral selling. His second book, *SuperStar Selling: 12 Keys to Becoming a Sales SuperStar* will be released in February, 2008. He may be reached at pmccord@mccordandassociates.com or visit his sales training website at www.powerreferralselling.com