

SALES AND SERVICE Excellence

THE MAGAZINE OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

SEPTEMBER 2011

**Face the
Fear Factor**

**Competing
on Service**

**Big Presentation?
Eight Steps to Success**

**Patricia Fripp
Consultant**



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Sales and Service Excellence

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SERVICE/CUSTOMERS

Competing on Service

Beat competition — hug customers.



by Ed Hess

YOU FACE THE DIFFICULT TASK of doing *much more with a lot less*. You may need to make cuts to your prices and budgets, but don't start cutting back on great service. You can't always compete on price, but you *can* compete on service. And providing great customer service doesn't cost you an extra penny.

Cutting costs alone likely won't save your business. Customers are concerned about *their* financial security. When they enter your business, they need to feel cherished and special—to be *hugged* by great customer service.

Great service starts with employees who are trained in *the science of service*. Your employees will treat your customers as they are treated; if you treat them in a respectful, caring manner, they'll transfer that care to customers. *Happy employees make for happy customers.*

Many companies excel in *great employee relations*. In the **Best Buy** culture, for example, customers are *kings and queens*, employees are *royalty*, and managers and leaders are *servant leaders* serving employees and customers. At Ritz-Carlton, employees are *ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen*.

To improve your customer service, learn and apply valuable lessons from both the good and the bad sides of service.

Learning from the Bad

In tough economic times, you need a laser-sharp focus on great customer service, doing all you can to ensure your customers feel respected and loved. *It costs much more to attract a new customer*



than it does to keep an existing one. So, do everything you can to keep current customers happy. Sadly, that's not always the case. You and I often experience bad service. Here are six lessons to learn:

1. Disgruntled customers won't complain—they just won't come back. If you don't give your customers the courtesy of providing them with *excellent service*, they won't tell you how to improve your business. Beyond not coming

back, they'll likely tell others about their bad experience. The ripple effect of just one bad customer service experience can be very damaging. So, seek to provide *consistently great* customer service.

2. Provide special training for front-line employees who interface directly with customers. Their attitudes, communication skills, and style of service are what customers associate with your business. Train them to handle the *potentially stressful task* of serving customers.

3. Make sure a customer is happy before moving on to the next customer. Often, customers value *quick service* as much as they value *quality service*. But you can't sacrifice one for the other. So, ensure one customer is satisfied before you move on to the next. You might ask, *Is there anything else I can do for you today?* You're not done serving the customer when you think you're done; you're done serving the customer when the customer is *completely satisfied*.

4. Compensate for mistakes. Never shortchange your customers. If a mistake was made or some circumstance prevents you from providing the best customer service, find a way to make it up to your customer. I gladly return to a business where I once received poor service if the service employee makes amends. If the employee allows me to

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feel shortchanged, I don't return.

5. Provide solutions. Never make your *business problem* or *employee problem* your customer's problem. For example, an employee who serves the customer doesn't do the inventory, so she may not know how to remedy a situation when a product is unavailable. Give employees the latitude to provide customers with solutions when they can't satisfy a need. The employee might offer a discount coupon or offer a substitute. Any offer would be better than having a better-luck-next-time attitude.

The Good: Zappos.com

Once I ordered some shoes from Zappos that didn't fit. I sent them back using the provided prepaid shipping form. I immediately got an e-mail acknowledging that my shoes were being shipped back to Zappos, and I could follow their progress on the Internet. When they were received at Zappos, I got another e-mail telling me *my refund was being processed* and thanking me for shopping at Zappos. I thanked them for the great service. Then I got a personal e-mail from a customer service rep thanking me and telling me that *Zappos loves its customers*. She upgraded me to the Zappos VIP site. Wow! I felt cared about and appreciated. And so, I went online and ordered a different pair of shoes. Zappos truly gets it.



Learning from the Good

Happy employees = Happy customers. Zappos understands that employee satisfaction translates to great customer service. I can't say for sure if the customer service rep who upgraded me to the VIP site was completely satisfied with her job, but I can say that *she took the initiative to go the extra mile for a customer when she really didn't have to*. She cared enough to provide me with high-level service, which makes me think that she also cares about the company where she works. Creating that feeling in your employees will pay you back exponentially.

Always respond quickly. Your customers are busy. They have big concerns of their own. They don't deserve to be left wondering what kind of service they are going to receive or when they are going to receive it. "Address customer questions and problems as quickly as possible. Even if it's just a message to say, "I am looking into this for you," the customer will appreciate being told where they are in the process."

Make it easy to do business with you. Never make your customers jump through hoops to do business with you. Have a return policy that is easy to understand and that puts the interests of the customer first.

Provide refunds quickly and efficiently. My experience with Zappos was great. Sure, the shoes didn't fit, but everything after that was so easy that it made me want to do more business with them. Such customer service can keep you afloat during tough times.

Keep customers informed of what's happening. When customers know what's happening with their order, it reduces their anxiety. And they enjoy doing business with you. Zappos has a great system for keeping customers informed online, but it's also easy to do in face-to-face customer service. For example, instead of just leaving the counter, you might explain, "I'm going to check to see if we have what you need in our stock room." Or if you're handling a return, you might explain, "I'm just entering the date of purchase and the product number so that we can give you the maximum refund possible."

Use technology to provide quick, efficient customer service. Email, message boards, and

online stores provide us with the means to provide service more quickly than ever before. You might assume that customers don't like to be communicated with online. For some older customers that might be true. But most people appreciate the ease that *online shopping and communication* provide. As long as you make sure your messaging is detailed and easy to understand, your customers will appreciate the quick service these technologies provide.

Make your customers feel valued. Understand that *each of your customers is special*. As Peter Drucker said: *The sole purpose of business is to serve customers*. Ensure all employees understand this—and focus on making your customers feel *valued* and *appreciated*. There's never a bad time to throw in a special perk for a customer, to shake a customer's hand, or to provide a **hug** with great customer service.

Your business is not about *you* but about *them*—your employees and customers. Making cuts to employee perks or customer service perks might buy you time to stay in the game a little longer, but *it won't make you a winner*. Today, you have to do everything you can to hang on to your customers and to encourage them to keep coming back to your business. There's no better way to do that than through *consistently great customer service*.

You might not always be able to slash your prices, but *you can make the experience of doing business with you superior to all competitors*. Never be afraid to take your customer service up a notch!

SSE

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ACTION: Take your service up a notch.

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Fear of Selling

Yes, you can overcome it.



by Julie Steelman

REMEMBER THE HEART-wrenching scene in *Grey's Anatomy* where Meredith pleads with Derek, "Pick me, choose me, love me"? We've all been in situations where we wanted an outcome to go a certain way but ultimately had little or no control. With a fear of rejection hanging on each word, it was easy to relate to her raw emotion.

Selling can feel that way, too. It's like setting yourself up for rejection day in and day out. And many people often do what they can to avoid it.

Here's something that will change your paradigm around selling and help you let go of your fears: When a customer hesitates, questions, or even says *no*, it isn't about *you*—it's about *them*. Taking a customer's reaction personally is a mistake. If you allow the fear of rejection to control you, you often repel the very thing you want. And when you don't get it, you convince yourself that your fears were founded.

So, how do you overcome your fear of selling? It's a three-step process:

1. Find your sweet spot. When I started in sales, I took customer reactions personally. If they bought what I was selling, I thought they liked me. If they didn't, I thought they were finding fault in me. After leaving too many meetings in tears, I knew I had to shift my mindset so *the sale wasn't about me*. When I looked at what I had to offer, I learned *I could help people in ways they couldn't help themselves*. Something inside me started to shift. I discovered selling was a way to express my ideas and provide my customers with value. It sounded like a juicy *win-win* to me, and that was because I had identified the *sweet spot*. In fact, for me, the ability to claim your *sweet spot* is one of the most gratifying parts of selling.

Your *sweet spot* is *the thing you do so well that no one else can do it in quite the same way*. Customers will instinctively know they want to work with you or buy from you because of *your ability to help them get what they want*. It is this memorable uniqueness that makes you stand apart from competitors or those who claim they do what you do.

Your *sweet spot*—what Gay Hendricks calls your *zone of genius*—is an intrinsic thing that produces *powerful results* while enhancing the lives of others. As Hendricks says: "Your *zone of genius* is the set of activities you are uniquely qualified to do. They draw upon your special gifts and strengths. Your zone of genius beckons you with increasingly strong calls as you go through life."

Once I found my *sweet spot*, my motivation hit an all-time high. I could now see how *selling is an opportunity to serve*. The emotional validation I was looking for came from serving and helping others. It had nothing to do with whether or not they bought. I couldn't call clients fast enough and schedule meetings soon enough.



2. Decide—don't hope. There is a big difference between *deciding* and *hoping*. The reason you *hope* to sell something instead of *decide* is to avoid being responsible for the outcome. You would rather rely on luck than play an active role in making sales happen. Taking action to achieve what you want can cause you to feel frightened and vulnerable. Even though you say you want to earn a lavish income, you work hard to avoid doing the work that pays off—namely, *selling*. Instead, you hope a miracle will happen, and your products and services will sell themselves. Hope feels good. It takes you off the hot seat and lets you fantasize about your dreams coming true without having to take action. *The most effective salespeople have a clear mindset and believe wholeheartedly in what they are selling*. They know that their product or service delivers big and have an *unwavering belief* in what they're selling.

You, too, can possess these qualities. Decide your *sweet spot* is so important it's worthy of *enthusiasm beyond your*

comfort zone. Set aside the fear, doubt, and hope and *decide* to increase your sales as much as you want.

3. Dust off your moxie. Your *confidence* is important to the customer. When you're selling, you are the authority and in charge of managing the special relationship between the buyer and seller. Unfortunately, you may be uneasy in this role. You might feel like you have an overdeveloped sense of audacity. You ask yourself: Who am I to be so bold and declare the value someone else will get? But the more prudent question, originally proposed by Marianne Williamson, would be: *Who are you NOT to stand in your greatness and tell others about your products and services?* The truth is that the secret ingredient to selling successfully is having the audacity to declare that what you do will benefit others greatly. You must be the biggest and best advocate for your products and services.

I have won more sales by *demonstrating enthusiasm, holding my ground, and remaining confident in my belief that the buyer would benefit immensely* than by using any fancy strategy.

How sure your customers feel is highly influenced by how sure you feel. Customers use it as way to *affirm their decision*. It doesn't matter if they say *yes* or *no*; what matters is that you take a stand for what you believe to be possible and true. That assuredness is what most buyers use to gauge the emotional validity of their choice, making a final gut check before they say *yes*.

Stop waiting and take action toward your desires by honoring yourself and your customers. Begin to sparkle and *fully believe the value you offer is something your customers crave*. Dust off your moxie and step into the empowered audacity waiting for you.

What other people say, do, or think has nothing to do with *you*—it has everything to do with *them*. The confidence I was seeking lived *inside* of me, not *outside* of me. No one else could give it to me. What gave me confidence was having a *strong purpose* for selling my product—knowing the *why*. I made a vow that day that *I would do my best to provide my customers with tremendous value and clearly show them how they could benefit from what I was selling*.

The big difference was that I *decided to be of service*. You can sell brilliantly. You simply have to choose it. **SSE**

Julie Steelman, *The Entrepreneur's Selling Mentor*, is author of *The Effortless Yes: Get the Sales You Want and Make All You'll Ever Need* (Franklin-Green Publishing). Visit www.EffortlessYes.com.

ACTION: Overcome our fear of selling.

Big Presentation?

Prepare in these eight ways.



by Patricia Fripp

THE DAY HAS COME FOR YOUR big speech or presentation. You're an expert in your subject and know your content—so what could go wrong? After all, you feel confident in your message and delivery and are ready. Right?

Perhaps you have overlooked a few details that could derail your impact and confidence. To ensure success, take **eight final steps** before you present.

1. Check in early: Arrive early to check out the room where you'll be speaking. Is there a platform; where is it? Where will you stand when introduced? How many steps to reach the lectern or center stage? Is the audience close enough to where you'll be speaking to build intimacy? Is the light on you instead of the banner or lectern? Is the sound right (if the sound is up and the lights down, people think they can't hear).

2. Make friends with the stage: When the room is empty, walk on the stage and block your presentation, or plan where you'll stand and when you'll move during your speech. You do not want to distract from your message with unnecessary movement. Go through the outline of your talk. Imagine an enthusiastic response. The more time you spend feeling comfortable on stage, the more you can relax and focus on the audience.

3. Take a clock: Make sure you can see a clock to keep track of the time. I travel with a large kitchen clock that I can see from a distance without having to wear glasses. Few people know how long they've been speaking. If you include Q & A, have a dramatic close, or a *must-end-by* time. Scheduling this adds to your professionalism.

4. Microphone: Do you have your preferred microphone: hand-held, lavalier, or lectern? Practice talking into it; the proper placing is chin level for a handheld. Ask someone to walk around and check that you can be heard from all parts of the room. Make friends with the audio technicians. Make sure you are on time for your microphone check, and thank them for their help when you have finished.

5. Audio visual: If you are using a PowerPoint presentation, make sure: the equipment is working well, your

slides are in sequence, you have a remote control so you can move around and turn the slide to black when not addressing what is on the screen, your slides are visible from the back of the room, and your talking points are presented as a *build* or *reveal*. Your visual aids are a *support tool*, not a *crutch*.

6. Connect with the emcee: Be clear about who will introduce you, and where you'll be. Will you walk on from the wings or up from the floor? Will you shake hands, or will he or she exit once you hit the stage and before the applause dies down. Nod and mouth "Thank you." Check that you have a clear path to the microphone without tripping over wires, chairs, or diners.

7. Pre-written introduction: Send your intro in advance to the person delivering it. Carry another copy with you. Put it in an 18-point, bulleted list,

so that it's easier to read. Be sure your introducer knows how to pronounce your name, is comfortable with the intro, and uses it to set the tone.

8. Be your own warm up act: Connect with as many audience members as possible before you speak. When they see you are extending yourself, they'll return the favor of giving their attention. That only lasts a few minutes, so make sure you grab their attention with a great opening.

After the presentation, conduct an *After Action Analysis*. Ask what you did well, and *what could be improved*.

Focusing on positive impact will help you deliver the best speech possible. **SSE**

Patricia Fripp is a keynote speaker, speech coach and sales presentation skills trainer and author of Get What You Want! and Make It, So You Don't Have to Fake It! Visit www.Fripp.com, or PFripp@ix.netcom.com.

ACTION: Prepare well for big presentations.

MANAGEMENT/POSITIVITY

Be Positive

Here are three reasons.



by Kevin Eikenberry

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE a positive attitude to have a management or leadership role or position, but you definitely must have a positive attitude if you want to manage and lead people and projects successfully over time.

I define *positive attitude* as *an expectancy that good things generally happen (and even when they don't, there is likely good that will be found in the challenges) and a healthy optimism for the future for your company, team, yourself—and for life.*

I'm *not* saying that a positive attitude requires you to be a cheerleader or a Pollyanna who ignores challenges and thinks that *attitude alone will carry the day*. It is something deeper and can be shown *in your actions in a personal way*.

Here are *three major reasons* why having a positive attitude is important for you as a manager or leader.

1. You are in the energy business. I have Clients in both the electric utility and the petroleum businesses. They would justifiably say they are in the energy business. As a leader, whatever industry you are in, you, too, are in the energy business. Remember that whatever energy you bring to your work will be noticed and amplified. Your personal attitude is a huge part of the

energy you inject into your team and organization. If you aren't injecting positive, supportive and encouraging thoughts and actions into the workplace, it is far less likely that others will either. You can't rely on someone else to do this for you—you are a leader.

2. Positive attracts. If you think you are *leading*, but *no one is following*, you are just taking a walk. If you want to or need to lead, you need to have others *choose* to follow. Think about the people who *you most want to be around*, those whom you are attracted to. Are these people more positive or negative? You choose to spend time with people who encourage you and are proactive! *Positive attitude and energy are attractive.*

3. Positive creates productivity. Are you more creative, engaged and productive in a *negative* or a *positive* environment? If you are looking for a numbers-driven, bottom-line reason why a positive attitude matters, look no further than *productivity*. You will get *more done* in a *positive* environment.

It's possible for one person to change the attitude or culture! Enthusiasm is contagious, and you must inject that energy into your group, team, or organization in order for it to grow. *Positive energy* doesn't happen automatically—you **must go first**. *Focus on your attitude*. As you change your thinking and attitude, your actions will change your work, team and world. **SSE**

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ACTION: Be positive in your management.

Face the Fear Factor

How you can lessen sales anxiety.



by David Mattson

YOUR SUCCESS OFTEN HANGS on your ability to sell products and services to your customers. However, many managers and leaders have no previous sales experience and, for them, the process of engaging a customer in a sale can be a daunting task that can lead to much stress and tension.

What steps can you take to reduce the *fear factor*? Fear comes from the unknown—it's a response to a perceived threat. You can chip away at this fear by *creating a sales process and following six simple steps* that give you confidence:

1. Recognize that selling is more of a science than an art. You can use calculations, numerals and formulas to approach the sales process in a measured and practical manner. You can track every step of the sales process and monitor the results along the way in order to develop a *formula for success*. It is possible to train and coach inexperienced managers to develop an *ideal sales process* that really works for them.

2. Deactivate unconscious scripts. In sales, most actions and behaviors that you've learned become counterintuitive. To succeed in sales, you need to reprogram your perceptions of what is and is not acceptable. Messages like, "don't talk to strangers," and "never talk about money," may linger in your mind. Accept that *your behaviors need to change*. Be prepared to talk to every stranger and discuss difficult subjects, such as money, openly and honestly.

3. Don't practice on prospects. Before every sales, call write down *five pieces of information that you need to get from the conversation* and create a set of goals that you can use to assess your performance once the call is complete. When faced with the daunting prospect of meeting a new customer, you may be tempted to create an extensive presentation that you can use as a prop and support throughout the meeting. Don't fall into this trap. Open the meeting by *inquiring about the issues that your customers face* and use this information to drive the rest of the meeting. Showing an interest in your prospect will put them at ease, and

they're more likely to buy from someone that they feel comfortable with. If you approach the sale in a relaxed, informal manner, you'll find that *people are more receptive to your sales messages* and will share information with you. Always have *confidence* in your product knowledge and expertise. You may not be a natural seller, but you do know what you're talking about.

4. Don't get emotionally sucked in. Without an established sales process, you can easily get caught up in your emotions during a sales call, and this only generates fear and nervousness. Rehearse and refine your sales messages, preferably with someone you know and trust who can give you *constructive feedback*. The more familiar you are with your pitch and the information that you need to share with your prospects, the more *confident* you'll feel. Always *visualize a positive outcome* before every sales meeting. Your thoughts can strongly influence the outcome; and if you are able to imagine a situation in an optimistic manner, then the result will be much more likely to be positive.

5. Use free tools to start the sales training process. You may lack the capital to invest in outside sales training, even when that might be one of your greatest needs. That's why you should look for *online sales tools*. For instance, we have made available a *free multi-media library* that provides businesses with sales training tools. The library contains over 60 video training segments covering various sales tactics and techniques from some of our top trainers. We also offer daily sales tips and inspiration. You can view and choose video segments that are relevant to your training needs in sales training, sales profession, sales development, closing the sale, negotiations, leadership training, business consulting, customer relationship management, and more. Content is updated daily and users of the channel can subscribe to receive alerts when new segments are added. The channel also includes excerpts from Sandler's bestseller, *The Sandler*

Rules: 49 Timeless Selling Principles and How to Apply Them. It is designed to help small businesses, start-ups, and non-profits by sharing our sales knowledge, and thus invest in their success.

6. Discover what the best sales teams do. You can now discover the *most closely guarded secrets* of their success—how they consistently make and exceed their sales quotas and how you can learn what these *best-in-class* companies do differently, and measure how your process, approach, and technology stack up against those companies, while identifying actionable recommendations for closing gaps.

The materials are based on an executive survey, *Sales Training: Deploying Knowledge, Process and Technology to Consistently Hit Quota*, (conducted by The Aberdeen Group). It examined 835 organizations' sales effectiveness, and identified which companies exceeded their sales quotas, and the behaviors,



philosophies, tactics and technologies that those companies have in common. Leading companies who use outside sales training have a 14.8 percent average year-over-year increase in revenue while increasing their deal size by 7.2 percent; while companies that do not use outside sales training show a 3 percent decrease in revenue, and decrease of 2 percent in deal size.

The leaders of *best-in-class* companies believe in the value of face-to-face sales training, reinforcement training, and training their entire organization and their distribution networks on a common methodology to create a common sales culture. They collect sales and management training assets, and share the information via technology.

Sales training is a *must have* rather than a *nice to have*. While spending cuts reduce your expenses, sales teams can refresh the gap between the bottom and top lines. Provide them with the processes, technologies, and services to do so effectively.

Once you have effective sales processes and practices in place, you will start to develop your behaviors and establish routines and milestones. Soon the selling fears that initially paralyzed you will diminish, and the selling momentum will take shape. **SSE**

David Mattson is CEO of Sandler Systems, a sales trainer and management consultant, and author of The Sandler Rules and Magical People Skills. Visit www.sandler.com.

ACTION: Reduce your sales anxiety.

Asking For a Referral

It's not the same as asking for a favor.



by Joanne Black

WHEN YOU ASK FOR A FAVOR, you often assume that people expect something in return as soon as possible. (While technically, a *favor* is something provided out of goodwill, the connotation suggests that reciprocation is expected.)

You may erroneously think that asking for a referral is the same as asking for a favor and represents a risk—in the sense that you risk losing a relationship or a friendship. So, you either *never* ask for referrals or you ask in such a way that you might as well never ask in the first place. In fact, by assuming the *favor/risk* position, you undermine the power of the referral. The diluted *favor/risk* referral request sounds like this: “If you know anyone who could benefit from my services, please let them know.” When you say such things, nothing happens!

Referrals are positive, powerful, and upright—built on truth and integrity. So, re-wire your referral brain. Think of all the referrals you easily and willingly provide: You tell people about a great restaurant, movie, mechanic, and app for the iPad. You give referrals all the time—they’re neither *favours* nor *risks*.

Value and Trust Prevail

Think of people you know well. You like them, trust them, and know they’re good people. When they ask you for a personal or a business referral, you want to help. Think of a super-likeable salesperson you know. You want to buy from him, but you don’t need his product. Still, you go out of your way to connect him with others. Conversely, think of a salesperson who has the product you need, but he’s pushy and arrogant. No way will you buy from him or refer him.

You refer people you know, like, and trust. When you refer, you help someone. You introduce a credible resource and save the other person valuable time. In addition, you are elevated in the minds of the recipient. If you must use the word *favor*, the *favor* is presented to the recipient of your referral (not for the person asking for the referral).

Yes, you must earn the right to ask. You know when that happens. Sometimes you meet a person, forge a connection, and look for ways to help each

other. Done. *You’ve earned the right.*

You’ve earned the right with your current clients, *but have you asked every single one?* They want to refer you, but *you must ask.* Don’t think that when you’ve done good work for them, they’ll automatically refer you.

Deliver Value

Ask for a referral anytime during your sales process when you deliver value. How will you know? Most likely your client will say *thank you*, let you know that you gave them a good idea, or delivered useful information.

So, delete *favor* and *risk* from your referral lexicon and insert *value, trust, confidence, truth.* You know you’re good. Show it. Share it. *Ask for referrals.*

Done right, asking for referrals may even eliminate the need to hire salespeople. Finding and hiring a salesper-

son is *expensive* and *time-consuming*, and it takes at *least six months* for your new person to ramp up. And consider the costs of hiring the wrong salesperson before you make a decision. It’s not just the cost of salary, commission, recruitment, and training, but also *the costs of lost opportunities if the salesperson fails.* And don’t forget the cost of your time in the recruiting, hiring, training, supporting, and managing the person.

You need to *leverage your connections* and *adopt a disciplined referral-sales process.* Sales means *creating strong relationships, connecting with people, keeping in touch, helping others as much as you can, and leveraging your connections to gain profitable, productive referrals!* **SSE**

Joanne Black is author of *No More Cold Calling.* Call 415-461-8763 or visit www.nomorecoldcalling.com.

ACTION: Start asking for referrals.

SALES/TRAINING

Training Millennials

What must we do differently?



by Richard Ruff and Janet Spirer

MILLENNIALS, THE GROUP FOLLOWING Gen X, will have a huge impact on sales training! *You need to understand how they operate before you can know how best to communicate with them:* 1) They have a need for speed—wanting *instant gratification* and early, frequent feedback—since *they expect to progress rapidly;* 2) they’ve received constant praise—nurtured by parents who were very involved in their lives; they believe there are *no losers* because *everyone wins a trophy;* and 3) they want *meaning*—they are *eager to learn* and make an impact.

Given these traits, how can you best conduct your sales training?

1. Millennials are eager to learn, so take advantage of that mindset. They come to a sales training program with a positive mindset when pre-program communications share how attending the training will improve their performance—resulting in an impact for their customers and for their careers.

2. Use only fast-paced, interactive designs. Traditional stand-up training where an instructor walks through a slide deck doesn’t succeed with Millennials for two reasons—the pro-



gram is too slow and too restrictive for an audience used to video games, texting, and Facebook. They are also too solitary—Millennials were raised to value *collaboration over competition*—seeking input, knowledge, involvement, and feedback from their peers. Training that succeeds with Millennials must be *fast moving*—and *interactive!*

3. Build on their receptivity to feedback. Millennials are open to coaching and feedback to improve—so, share best practices and critique their performance as a *developmental opportunity.*

4. Create a fun atmosphere. Everyone likes fun—especially Millennials. Build fun into sales training to engage them and connect and capitalize on their talents. Just putting Millennials in a room and sharing slide after slide won’t work—nor will just sprinkling in a few exercises. We suggest *flipping the lecture/*

activity ratio around. Build sales training focusing on experiences using slides to introduce bits of content along the way. This model lets the Millennials spend most of the training program actually *doing*—working in groups and receiving feedback to improve performance.

Sales simulations—where content is presented *before the simulation* in a classroom setting (where exercises are the focal point) or in pre-work—*engage* Millennials. *Simulations* are *interactive, face-paced* training programs, where sales reps *collaborate* to meet challenges. **SSE**

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ACTION: Engage people in sales training.

Break the Innovation Chokehold

Start ruling like a benevolent dictator, not like a tyrant.



by Michael Feuer

LEADING IN BUSINESS IS NEVER *Leasy, but if you choose to do it with your head down, blocking out input from employees, you're making a huge mistake. When you miss out on employee input, you miss out on innovation.*

Do you lead your team like you're the great and powerful head of your own nation? Hidden in your office, shielded from others, do you deliver orders that must be followed, never considering what your employees think? Do you parade around, holding audience with only the small entourage of upper management trailing after you?

If so, you're blocking the flow of the organization's life's blood—*innovation*.

The boss must act as the *external force* for continuous, systematic change and innovation. He or she must be poised to seize the moment and capitalize on unique opportunities. You can stir the pot by *constantly listening to employees and challenging them to think about 'What if?'* in order to improve your products, processes, or procedures.

To achieve true innovation, you can't lead like an iron-fisted dictator. You should lead instead as a *benevolent dictator*—who always puts *the company, the employees, and the customers* first. Before making a final decision, ask for input. That is how innovation flourishes.

Here are five ways to cull valuable ideas from your employees:

1. When you have a problem, ask the people in the trenches first. Your employees know the ins and outs of certain aspects of the business better than you do. After all, they spend all day, every day listening to customer concerns and complaints. They know which internal processes slow progress and which ones make it happen more quickly. The best way to turn negatives into positives is to first understand the problems and then discover alternatives to prevent them in the future—and that means establishing a give and take with the people in the trenches. *Challenge employees* by asking them if there's a better way. This might mean eliminating unproductive measures, or simplifying complicated ones—while finding new hot buttons that better serve customers. Ask your employees to make two lists: one including the tasks they currently

complete and a second that lists new initiatives that could boost revenue and produce a return. And have a means of measuring these ideas. Create a formal process to vet each worthy recommendation. When you openly challenge your employees, rather than ignore them, they become more motivated, and you benefit from their innovation.

2. Start going on business walkabouts. To interact with your employees, you have to go to where they are. You have to get out of your office and be more accessible. When they see you often, they become more comfortable with you. They see you as a human being—not as the big boss who shouldn't be bothered. *When they're more comfortable, they'll speak more freely.* A walkabout is a great way of taking a quick break while assessing the organization by engaging in short conversations



with staff members. It also lets employees know that you pay attention, are accessible, and care. When their *sound-ing board* is a top executive, they feel their voice is really being heard, and that they are truly a valued member.

3. Ask relevant questions. Before your daily walkabout, think about what the problems of the day might be. Consider who the best employee or teams will be to ask about these issues. Then, *ask the questions that will lead to solutions.* For example, if there is a bottleneck in the shipping and receiving area, go to the area and discuss the problems with the employees. You might ask, *How can we improve our intake process? Or, Where does the process start to back up?* Their answers will lead to solutions—ones that they can easily implement. Asking relevant questions engages employees and encourages give-and-take.

4. Remember, every idea deserves a fair shake. You may have little time (or patience) to entertain every input that

comes your way. But being too quick to dismiss ideas will discourage innovation. Meet employees with negativity or put them on the back burner to be forgotten, and they'll start to think, *What's the point?* Then, when you need their feedback, they won't give it to you. Not every idea you hear from an employee, or that you come up with on your own, will be a gem, but most of them deserve to be vetted. Encourage employees to think carefully about their ideas before presenting them to you. Teach them how to weigh the pros and cons. Before dismissing an idea, ask, *Why?* Your employee's explanation might spark a thought that puts their original idea in a new perspective. Employees understand that every idea won't work, and they don't expect every suggestion to be implemented. But giving them the respect of your consideration will motivate them to keep on thinking about ways to improve the company—eventually they'll bring a *real moneymaker*.

5. Find creative ways to override innovation inertia. One fun aspect of being a boss is that, at times, you get to make up certain *rules of exploration and engagement*. You set the goals, create expectations, and determine measurements. You think up better ways to do what's already working, and anticipate needs that customers have yet to recognize themselves. Yet one big threat facing companies is *inertia*. One effective method for avoiding innovation inertia and creating a culture where employees feel involved and motivated is to *divide employees into innovation teams*. When Team A is working on a product, process, or project, the next new-and-improved version becomes Team B's job. While Team B picks up the gauntlet, the original team starts on something different. Members of Team A feel satisfied by their accomplishments and can savor the moment while gaining enthusiasm for their next undertaking. Meanwhile, Team B is motivated to top its predecessor with improvements. This helps you create a *culture of innovation*.

Respect doesn't have to be won by *giving orders and demanding adherence*. You *earn* respect by caring about your employees and valuing their work and ideas. Being a *good manager* means achieving goals through others. Being a *great leader* means keeping the team *focused*, the lines of communication *open*, and the innovative ideas *flowing*. **SSE**

Michael Feuer was founder/CEO of OfficeMax and is now CEO of Max-Ventures and Max-Wellness and author of The Benevolent Dictator (Wiley). Visit www.benevolentdictator.biz.

ACTION: Create a culture of innovation.

Hiring Right

Attract the best people.



by Patrick Valtin

YOUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE or most valuable asset is not buildings, fleets, patents, or people—it is the *Right People!* Do you want your company to expand and make more money? Do you want your people to focus on those activities that provide the best return for your business? Then, *your most important job is to hire people who will help your company expand and prosper, while leaving you entrusted to what you love to do and should do!* Your business will then grow with *less pain, stress, or frustration!*

Expanding your business always starts with not attracting the wrong people! If you hire the *right people*, you don't have to manage them. Most of your wasted energy, trouble, and frustrations come from a few people who should not have been hired in the first place. *Great entrepreneurs* like Howard Schultz (*Starbucks*), Steve Jobs (*Apple*), Kevin P. Ryan (*DoubleClick*) or Tony Hsieh (*Zappos.com*) spend 60 to 80 percent of their time finding top players and avoiding trouble makers! "We employ 200,000 people. So I can make the case that *the most important discipline at Starbucks is HR,*" says Schultz. "I used to think business was *50 percent* having the right people. Now I think it's *80 percent.* The best way to be productive is to have a great team. So I spend more time on HR," says Ryan.

Be smarter in your hiring process—and you won't need to work so hard later! Having worked with 75,000 business owners worldwide, I conclude that over 55 percent of failures and 84 percent of serious crises are not due to unfavorable economic environments, lack of resources or lack of marketing power—they are due to bad or wrong hiring decisions!

Hiring right provides powerful leverage for your business. In fact, I call it the *1,000 percent leverage factor, or the factor of 10*—for these reasons:

- Hiring is a dangerous bet that can directly impact profitability. New employees who are fired within three months can cost up to 10 times what you invested to get them on the job.
- If you fire a bad hire or lose a good one after one year, the financial, organizational and emotional losses can

add up to 10 times the yearly salary and other compensations.

- Hire the right person for any job and you'll find out that his or her real value in the company can be multiplied *by a factor of 10* compared to his or her cost of employment. Besides doing the job, the employee prevents headaches, worries, and mistakes.

Investing in the right people provides the best ROI, and reduces stress, worries, and uncertainties about the future.

Many businesses fail due to *hiring mistakes*—such as hiring friends, relatives or people without checking if they have the needed skills. Some owners think that hiring is too painful to try to become great at it. So, they delegate the job. Don't make that mistake. Be well prepared for your next hiring mission by observing these *five tips*: 1) recognize that expanding your

business at optimal speed and minimal cost depends directly on hiring right—it is a strategic move that affects your business more than any other decision; 2) get personally educated on hiring and become a great headhunter; 3) educate your partners, executives, and key employees on the hiring process; 4) don't just *dump* the hiring responsibility on a professional recruitment firm—ask to coordinate and be briefed on their working methods to understand and control the full hiring cycle; and 5) develop a standard hiring procedure to maintain optimal control and avoid legal trouble. Don't neglect the potential liabilities related to recruitment and discrimination laws. **SSE**

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ACTION: Attract and keep the right people.

SALES/PERFORMANCE

Top-Performing

Get and keep the best salespeople.



by Bill Brooks

TOP SALES ORGANIZATIONS come to me for help because they face costly turnover (voluntary and involuntary). No matter the market conditions, it's all too common to lose your best performers to the competition, or to hire someone who's been a superstar salesperson for a competitor but can't seem to get results for *your* company.

One leading firm facing these challenges worked with us to develop a competency model for evaluating potential new sales professionals. By comparing job candidates to the model, the firm reduced turnover *from 50 to 5 percent.*

We all know that the right people in the right places doing the right things can achieve truly amazing results, but how do you find and keep the sales superstars and guide them toward success at your company?

Most important: hire smarter. One of the best ways to achieve much-needed consistency and strong sales results is evaluating salespeople's drivers and motivators as part of the interview process. More than 80 percent of firms that assess candidates before hiring say it improves their hiring success rates, as relates to performance and retention.



Once you've hired a top-performer, how do you keep him or her committed to achieving great results for your firm? After evaluating sales reps and managers, we've learned what motivates top-performing sales professionals—and, surprise, money doesn't always top the list. In most cases, top salespeople are well-compensated for their performance; however, they want more than just a good paycheck!

Here are *six non-monetary motivators*: 1) they want a clearly defined career path with a specific timeline and measurable accountabilities along the way; 2) they are driven by success and achievement and want opportunities to perform at the top of their game; 3) they *demand* ongoing coaching and continually seek ways to learn and grow their skills; 4) they crave recognition as top performers; 5) they keep their finger on the pulse of the industry, taking the temperature of the market, and assessing the competitor's offerings; and 6) they seek out and respect sales managers who are attentive, understanding, knowledgeable, and willing to coach.

Top performers *know* they're top performers—and want to stay that way. They want opportunities to achieve, develop their sales skills, and get recognition for their record of results. And they're smart enough to demand strong coaching, smart mentoring, and excellent guidance along the way. **SSE**

Bill Brooks is author of *How To Sell At Margins Higher Than Your Competitors*. Visit www.brooksgroup.com.

ACTION: Keep your best salespeople.

Leading Teams

Create a healthy culture.



by Sandra
Stroope and
Wendy
Warner

PEOPLE DON'T LEAVE COMPANIES—THEY leave bad managers. Healthy cultures help you retain key performers and contribute more to the bottom line. Healthy cultures impact employees' physical and mental health, and the relationship to performance and profit.

Here are **four behaviors** that can make a positive, healthy difference:

1. Create an annual strategic plan—and live it. Provide a *vision or purpose* and a *plan* for achieving it. Identify top *priorities*, team members responsible, and set the bar for challenging annual goals. People want to know that the work they do daily is *meaningful* and aligns to a *higher purpose*. Track *milestones* and *progress toward goals* regularly. Without a plan, it's easy to get *reactive* and work hard long hours, yet lose focus on the priorities that are key to *long-term success*. Ultimately changes to a plan are easier to manage and communicate than frequent last-minute requests for team members. Inundating team members with frantic requests to *drop everything and do this today* creates a stress that limits team effectiveness. Emotional stress can *harm our hearts* and *shorten our lives*.

When people are *fearful* or *frantic*, they become *immobilized* from achieving their greatest potential. Rather than take initiative and acting proactively to drive new ideas and initiatives forward—team members become stagnant and reactive, allowing time on their calendars to “fire fight” the urgent, but perhaps not critical emergencies.

Measure and recognize results and accomplishments—not hours worked. Performance that makes a difference to the bottom line consists of work that gets done, and satisfied customers. Monitor and measure results against the strategic plan and *those that make a meaningful impact on the business* instead of reactive activity or hours worked.

2. Build a team—a culture where every individual makes a difference and contributes. Share the responsibility for leadership. People want the opportunity to do challenging and meaningful work. Simple actions like rotating the

responsibility for leading meetings or allowing time for each team member to talk about projects can help create a team culture. Lisa Nichols, motivational speaker, runs her business with a team approach. She calls her employees “*team*” instead of “*staff*” and states that her team works *with* her not *for* her. It is a *co-creative process* and results-oriented team. She gives them the vision and inspires them to own the dream. People support what they help create.

Taking the time to have fun in a social setting, such as lunch, can create a more *collaborative* rather than a *competitive* environment. Communicating effectively with team members requires understanding styles and recognizing strengths. Some of the most effective coaching can occur between peers; if team members understand the unique skills and perspectives each person



brings and offer feedback in an open and supportive manner.

3. Get to know your talent—their skills, strengths, capabilities, leverage and grow them. Given the economy, there are many companies that have scaled back on development and benefits. Leaders need to be skillful at handling development conversations, especially when denying requests, clear about the explanation, and quick to offer suggestions for ways to develop on the job or through mentoring versus sending the message that the leader isn't supportive or interested. Talented employees take ownership for their own development and seek opportunities for growth and career development on their own time and at their expense.

Skillful development conversations call for leaders to build trust, maintain a positive tone, provide effective feedback, and truly coach instead of criticizing performance. In *My Fair Lady*, we see a declaration that in six months

a flower girl can be turned into a lady. The story demonstrates the (*Pygmalion*) effect our expectations have on people. *People perform as expected*. The greater the expectation leaders place upon employees, the better they will perform.

Negative expectations by leaders can lead to poor performance, damage motivation and self esteem. Comments like “*you're just a support person*” minimize contribution. About half of all workers experience at least one negative act weekly. In fact, *persistent negativity* is ingrained in the culture, and hierarchical structures often reward this behavior. When people are treated with disrespect, dialogue, teamwork and performance breaks down. Some organizations are implementing open-space offices to improve collaboration. Simply getting to know your talent and talking about *the strengths they bring to the team* can lead to improved performance.

4. Clarify roles and accountabilities—to prevent and minimize conflict. It isn't enough to say “*we're all one team, cooperate*”. It's like the race car driver and pit crew—everyone on the team plays a critical role and clearly the driver can't do it alone. If the person responsible for changing the left rear tire keeps trying to drive—it just doesn't work, the crew may veer out of control and crash. Leaders can minimize power struggles and conflicts, by clarifying the project leadership role from team member roles on initiatives.

Talk with team members about authority and clarify decisions that require approval from those within the scope of team member. People need to make decisions, move forward, and sometimes make mistakes to learn from them without fear of retribution or blame. Help team members use judgment about which decisions should be approached cautiously and protected at all costs versus others that won't cause long-term harm. Hire qualified people, clarify the role, and expect them to use judgment and sometimes make mistakes (rather than sit around and wait for permission) to foster engagement.

How does your team feel about going to work today? Excited, indifferent, or wishing they could go anywhere else? Leaders who create a vision to live by, build effective teams, foster growth and development, and empower teams to move forward make a *healthy impact* on individuals and bottom line. **SSE**

Sandra Stroope is Talent Management and OD Manager at ATK and Wendy Warner is Academic Coordinator at the University of Utah.

ACTION: Create a healthy team culture.

Customer Engagement

Use quick response codes to drive it.



by Mark Johnson

FIRST THERE WAS THE SMART Phone, then mobile messaging, mobile coupons, and mobile loyalty program apps. What's next? Quick Response (QR) codes.

A QR code links online content to a mobile device. The barcode type graphic can hold up to 7,000 characters in a compact space. The consumer scans the code (using a QR Reader app on a smartphone) and is redirected to content developed by the code-creator.

QR codes are increasingly popular: in 2010 QR code scanning grew 1,200 percent; 89 percent of QR codes link to more information about a product, promotion, or event; 6 percent of QR codes are for mobile payment; 32 percent of U.S. smartphone users have scanned a QR code, and of those, 53 percent said they used the code to get a coupon or discount, and 72 percent said they're more likely to remember an ad with a QR code. Since consumers are flooded with 5,000 marketing messages daily, being able to transform a three-second interaction with an ad, text, or other message into a rich, proactive, permission-based interaction with the brand is powerful—especially since engagement is the first step in driving long-term customer loyalty.

Many marketers are experimenting with QR codes and making them part of creative strategies. In magazines, we see ads that include QR codes, and several pioneering brands are now determining how best to use QR codes to engage with mobile customers.

- **Post Foods** partnered with **Jesta Digital** to create and deliver the first original mobile content series, available on Bitpop, the commercial free, on-demand mobile TV service. In April, more than 12 million *Honey Bunches of Oats* cereal boxes offered free trials of the Bitpop service, by simply scanning the QR code on the back of the box with their mobile device. Consumers can view the *Honey and Joy* series, set in a *Honey Bunches of Oats* factory, online at www.Bitpop.com and via the mobile application m.bitpop.com.

- **Home Depot** also launched a new QR code initiative in 2,200 of its U.S. stores. The campaign uses QR codes to give consumers mobile access to product ratings, reviews, *How-To* guides,

product-specific videos, and the online store. Home Depot will include the codes in print advertising, direct mail, on-store shelves, in-store signage, and other marketing pieces—and track which media is providing the most traffic or sales, and adjust messaging or content as needed.

- **Insight Express** reports that 82 percent of consumers are already using mobile phones during their shopping trips. So, incorporate QR codes into the in-store shopping experience.

- **Best Buy** added QR codes to fact tags in all U.S. retail stores, embracing their shopper's desire to use mobile devices. The customer can use the QR Reader on their smartphone to get detailed information about the product. They can read consumer reviews, compare features with similar products, and e-mail details to friends.

- **Macy's** also uses QR codes to engage the customer. The retailer's *Backstage Pass* campaign encourages shoppers to scan QR codes included on product displays to access exclusive and engaging video content via mobile phones. The video offers a look at collections, tips, fashion inspirations, and trend information from the retailer's celebrity designers and fashion authorities.

QR codes facilitate a new form of interaction and dialogue between the consumer and the brand. Armed with their smartphones, customers are eager to make this at-your-fingertips technology work for them. QR codes offer an effective way to help them achieve this goal—and engage them in your brand. **SSE**

Mark Johnson is CEO of Loyalty 360, The Loyalty Marketer's Association. Visit www.loyalty360.org.

ACTION: Engage your customers and employees.

SALES/TOOLS

Sales Tools

Gain a clear edge.



by Michael J. Nick

SALES TOOLS ARE BECOMING essential, as most buyers now rely on vendors to help them quantify the value proposition of solutions. Here are some key concepts:

- **Preemptive strike.** Know the prospect before making the first call.

Beyond looking at the website, do a Google search for articles or management changes, or use Jigsaw, Inside View, Google Alerts, or Hoovers. The more you know, the better off you are.

- **Value hypothesis.** Anticipate a prospect's issues, pains, or goals by selecting current customers that are similar, completing a value hypothesis before your first call, and using this document to discuss potential value and impact on the prospect's financial statements.

- **The right questions for the right decision-maker.** Respect decision-makers' time by having a logical, relevant set of questions that will enhance the conversation, not delay the opportunity—and then create a value inventory.

- **The longer a sale takes, the less chance you have of closing it.** Using economic impact analysis tools, you can capture cost and calculate decision delay or cost of no decision.

- **Quality of ROI model separates winners from losers.** By utilizing a

value justification during the sale and an economic impact assessment after the sale, you set the tone for a paradigm shift from vendor to partner.

- **Documented decision making.** Some products, especially intangibles like software, are subject to scope-creep after the sale. Having a consistent selling method, well-documented proposal, an economic impact study before the sale, and value assessment after the sale keeps the project focused and delivers the benefits, resulting in happier customers.

- **Change the paradigm.** By using sales tools, you become a subject matter expert and can articulate to your customers that you have their best interests at heart and turn the vendor-customer relationship into a partnership relationship.

- **ROI doesn't eliminate risk.** Economic impact mitigates the risk by offering credible metrics for financial comparison.

- **Educate the buyer.** Using a detailed questioning process, you are telling a story that explains outcomes customers can expect as a result of using your products. Ask questions that elicit the information you need and educate the buyer.

- **Value justification vs. cost justification.** When selling value, you take a positive and proactive approach. When cost-justifying, you take a reactive approach. Help decision-makers focus on the value received from their investment.

Also, be prepared to assess the value you delivered after the sale. Sales tools are now a differentiator in decision-making. **SSE**

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ACTION: Learn to value-justify the sale.



Low Hanging Fruit?

Principles of cross-selling/up-selling.



by Bryan Flanagan

EARLIER THIS YEAR, ONE OF my clients conducted a *customer satisfaction survey*.

The top response was, "I want a *knowledgeable salesperson* helping me." I asked my client how she was interpreting that response. She said that she thought it meant that more training was needed in *product knowledge*.

I suggested that she study the surveys more. Most salespeople can learn product knowledge on their own by studying and using the products. They can read a user's manual. They can observe other salespeople selling the product or service. They can learn product knowledge by themselves.

Most salespeople don't need more product knowledge. What they need is *more knowledge about the prospect and his or her needs, issues, and challenges*. If salespeople took the time to uncover the true concerns of the prospect, they would know what features of the product to demonstrate and could then communicate the value, advantages, and benefits that would most serve the prospect's needs and solve his or her problems.

Salespeople who live off the *low hanging fruit* never develop the skills necessary to uncover the true concerns of the prospect. These individuals aren't skilled in identifying the specific needs of the prospect. They just take the easy sales (the low hanging fruit) and move on to the next tree. You can make a sale that way, but you can't build a profession that way. You must learn to *probe for needs* so that you can truly serve your prospects. You must learn to *climb the tree* so that you can satisfy more of the prospect's needs. Once you acquire those skills, you can better sell more of your products and services to meet more prospects' needs.

This is referred to as *cross-selling, up-selling, or selling deep* into the prospect's *true needs and wants*. Yes, you have to meet their *recognized needs*, but you should also determine the *deeper needs* that the prospect may have. Often, the prospect has a need but has not yet realized that it is a true need.

For example, suppose that a patient has an appointment with his physician

for an annual check-up. All the patient wants is a physical exam so he can get on with his day. The doctor asks a few *probing questions* and determines that there may be some concerns. The doctor then *goes deep* into the family history, recent illnesses, etc. Instead of just a visit, the doctor suggests a full workup including stress test, blood work, and EKG. By going *deep*, the doctor better serves the patient's needs.

You can use this in any industry. Retail salespeople understand this concept. A man walks into a clothing store searching for a tie. Some salespeople would just sell the tie or attempt to sell additional ties. However, the experienced sales professional will sell deep by asking and listening, linking benefits to needs, and seeing the buyer's side of things. The customer leaves with a new suit. Why? Because the sales professional asked enough questions to determine the true needs, issues, and challenges to "up-sell" the customer. Another example: a husband and wife need financial protection because they have just delivered their first child. A true sales professional will ask about all the financial needs of the couple. Insurance, disability, and college funds may be discussed because the salesperson probed for present-day needs as well as future financial needs.

Here are *three principles* on cross-selling and up-selling. Remember, these principles only work if you do!

1. Ask and listen. In its simplest form, selling is nothing more than asking and listening. Yes, it is not any more complicated than that. Keep it simple. Learn to take the attention off yourself and focus it where it belongs—on the prospect. In order to determine additional needs, you must learn to be a skilled questioner. These questions should be high-gain and high-impact questions. That is, they should solicit the real needs of the prospect. You could ask, "If you could receive more productivity at a lower cost, would you buy from me?"

However, a more powerful question

is, "If you could receive more productivity at a lower cost, what is the benefit to you?" This second question will allow you to drill down deeper into the needs of the prospect. Perhaps there are additional needs that the prospect has not voiced to you yet. This question may identify the real benefits that the prospect is seeking.

2. Link your products and services to the prospect's challenges. This takes work. It also requires discipline. It is easy to move into your own "comfort zone" without any regard for the prospect's "buying zone." In order to move out of your comfort zone you must really focus on the needs of the prospect. You achieve this by asking the right questions to determine the deeper needs. You then communicate your solutions to his or her personal benefits. By making your prospect's life easier, increasing his or her personal effectiveness, and/or providing a



path for individual recognition, you are linking to personal benefits. By doing so, you have a better chance of "up-selling" this prospect. Remember, your prospects desire what your products and services will do for them. They aren't concerned about what your products do unless you can link what your products

accomplish for them.

3. Use the P-P-O-V Formula. This stands for *Prospect's Point Of View*. To succeed in selling deep, you must focus on the needs of the other person. By asking the right questions and by linking your solutions to his or her benefits, you have a better chance of understanding the PPOV. Don't hesitate to ask "hard questions." These may include questions such as: "Once that need is met, what needs will you have in the future?" "In addition to that concern, what other challenges are you facing?" "What steps are in place for you to reach your future goals?" It may be uncomfortable for you to ask those questions. However, the information you receive from those questions will allow you to better "cross-sell" or "up-sell" to the prospect's needs.

These three principles will assist you in selling deeper into prospects' needs. But *these principles only work if you do*. So, go sell somebody something now! **SSE**

This article is an excerpt from the new So, You're New to Sales book by Bryan Flanagan. Bryan is the Sales Ambassador and the Premiere Sales Trainer at Ziglar, Inc.

ACTION: Apply these three principles.

Messaging Makeover

You may need an extreme one.



by David M. Mastovich

EVER DRIVE PAST A BILLBOARD that would cause an accident if anyone read the whole thing? Or wish that a salesperson would stop blabbering about their product or service? Or sit through a presentation that features PowerPoint slides being read to you by the speaker?

The advertiser, salesperson, and speaker miss the chance to reach and influence their audiences. Time and money are wasted. Productivity suffers. It's time for an *Extreme Messaging Makeover*. Here are five ways to achieve it:

1. Focus on one big idea. We're bombarded with messages, and we can't afford to spend more time processing information unless we need it. We remember and relate to creative messages that are memorable and make an emotional impact. They are focused on one main idea: *Can You Hear Me Now?* *When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best.* *Got Milk?* The next time you create an ad, make a sales pitch, prepare a presentation, or write a memo, ask yourself: *What's the Big Idea?*

2. Tell your story by telling stories. Stories resonate. Stories help us relate. We remember stories. Memorable stories stir emotions. *The most successful ad campaigns use story-telling to make a lasting impact.* The best media coverage is created by *compelling stories*. So, take your messaging to another level with *meaningful and memorable stories*. Build your brand by telling multiple stories that become your *key message points*, convey your *real story*, and create the *image* you deserve. Instead of sending boring press releases, tell interesting, real-life stories that people will read.

3. Use startling stats, numbered lists, and acronyms. People tend to remember memorable facts or numbers, rather than theories or abstract ideas. Consider giving them a relevant, easy-to-remember stat or fact or statistic to get their attention. Trident famously used the phrase *"four out of five dentists surveyed would recommend sugarless gum to their patients who chew gum"* in its ads—it's a startling statistic that makes a memorable impact. We also remember *numbered lists* better. If you *number points in accordance to importance or relevance*, your audience will at least remember the top points. *Acronyms*

and *abbreviations* also help people remember things (just limit use of them).

4. Get them to feel something. Your messaging has to make an *emotional impact* with your target audience. They have to *feel* something. Do you touch on emotions like *happiness, fear, excitement, sadness*? If not, your message likely won't resonate or be remembered. Touch emotions to capture attention. Focus on what the audience stands to lose as well as what they stand to gain.

5. Tell the truth. The phrase *Truth in Advertising* is now spoofed on YouTube. The term *Spin Doctor* covers the perception of *Truth in PR*. Telling the truth is *essential* in PR. Media will find and report contradictions. If you hide behind a *no comment* or offer a less-than-truthful response, you'll be perceived nega-

tively when the story breaks. With regard to *Truth in Sales*, salespeople need to listen, ask probing questions, and match needs based on the strengths of their product or service. Admit weaknesses early (prospects will learn that your product isn't perfect). Focus on *true strengths*—leave hyperbole to your competitors.

Truth in Advertising and *Truth in PR* must exist, or you will lose credibility. *Truth in Sales* will help you stand out and lead to more business. Follow these strategies to create your *Extreme Messaging Makeover*. It will make a difference for you and your organization. **SSE**

David M. Mastovich is President of MASSolutions, an integrated marketing company focused on improving the bottom line for clients, and author of Get Where You Want To Go. Visit massolutions.biz.

ACTION: Conduct an extreme message makeover.

SERVICE/CARE

Caring Service

One-on-one relationships are back!



by Phil Johnson

FOR THE PAST CENTURY, COMPANIES have not cared much about their customers.

Caring about customers and one-on-one relationships took a back seat to profitability and shareholder value. Leaders lost site of the fact that without customers, they do not have a business. Today, 60 percent of employees are *indifferent* toward customers, and another 20 percent are even *anti-customer*.

The 20 percent that are *pro-customer* have a passion about their work and understand the need to connect with their customers. *Their actions inspire customers to want to come back and buy again.* These customers become *raving fan advocates* who tell their friends about their experience with you and your company. This leads to positive referrals and new business.

Indifference is the reason 68 percent of current customers will not come back or refer their friends to your company.

The 20 percent of employees who are *anti-customer* are not engaged in their work, seeing it as just a job. They fail to connect their *compensation and company revenue to engaged customer relationships*. They fail to demonstrate enthusiasm, passion and energy in the service they provide. They refuse to provide a *compelling reason* for customers to buy from them or their company again. In fact, their actions generate *negative referrals*.



Why You Should Care

Gallup shows a direct connection between *employee engagement* and *customer engagement*, and for every 1 percent increase in customer service, there is a 2 percent increase in revenue.

Thanks to social media, caring for customers and one-on-one relationships are back. Social networking is making *authentic leadership a reality* and a *necessity for 21st century leaders*, says Bill George. By allowing dialogues to occur and relationships to grow daily, social media represents a *gigantic power shift* back to the consumer. *More contact means more sharing of information—social media gives customers a credible global megaphone.*

Today your customers, employees, partners and suppliers) can Tweet and Facebook millions with *missionary zeal*.

The New Normal

Customer recommendations and contextual social search are the future. When faced

with *bad service* or *indifferent employees*, consumers can retaliate. Word of mouth power has exploded. *Social media requires every employee have the same dedication and engagement in their work—and allow their emotional intelligence to show.* Caring about your customers is your *competitive advantage*. So, embark on a *cultural overhaul* so that every employee is comfortable engaging in customer service and does it authentically. Customers have always wanted this level of engagement, but they lost the power to demand it—now they have it back. **SSE**

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ACTION: Create a caring culture.

Great Encounters

Chose to have them each day.



by Kevin T. McCarney

DAILY WE HAVE ENCOUNTERS. Each contains a *series of moments* that ultimately leave an *impression*, a *legacy*. A moment itself is a powerful tool that can make a great impact in our relationships.

A *moment*, though, *actually lasts longer* than the moment itself. After it is completed, everyone involved plays back the exchange and *analyzes the encounter* for every nuance of meaning. Once you leave the encounter, the people you met with will process the conversation and define what the moment was all about.

Everyday Moments

We all have numerous encounters throughout our day. Visiting your local coffeehouse in the morning, you will have an encounter with the barista. Entering a meeting at work, you will have an encounter with each colleague present. Walking in the door in the evening to greet your spouse, partner, or children, you will have an encounter with your family members. Chance encounters will also catch you by surprise.

No matter what kind of encounter you have, the choices you make will determine whether you have a meaningful encounter or not. The following five tips will help you create meaningful encounters and interactions.

1. Choose to be in the moment. Each encounter creates moments in time, and those moments can be more significant than we think. We have heard the expression “being in the moment.” Being in the moment means pushing aside the influences of the day to pay attention to whom you are with and why you are meeting with that person.

Example: You run into a parent from the school your child attends. She asks you, “So can we expect you on the school fundraising committee this year?” To be polite and make the moment pleasant, you might be compelled to say yes. But realizing that you may not have the time, you say, “I have to check everyone’s schedule at home before I can say yes to anything. If you could send me an email reminder, I will get back to you.” Your ability to take the time you need to properly respond can save you from committing to events

you can’t follow through on.

2. Choose to listen. When someone is talking, he appreciates nothing more than being listened to. Be fascinated by the person you are listening to, even if you are not interested in everything he says. If you’re going to invest the time to listen, make the moment better by trying to understand what he wants you to hear. It may change the way you think about the person. It will certainly change the way he thinks about you.

Example: You find yourself in a group of people where the conversation is not that interesting. You have a choice to stay and listen, or you can make an excuse and leave. You decide to stay and be engaged in what the other people are saying. They appreciate your attention, and your legacy is being known as a good listener.

3. Choose your tone. Think about



the tone of voice you are using in the moment. Choose the tone you want to be remembered after the conversation is over. Be careful that you are not reacting to the tones of others. If someone else in an encounter is escalating her tone to get more attention, don’t imitate her. It will just lead to a battle of tones instead of a conversation.

Example: At a two-hour meeting you notice that everyone is getting a little testy. It is just before lunch, and everyone is hungry. Jonathan is frustrated with Gina, and begins to raise his voice. “Look, we have been over and over this, and we still don’t have a solution!” Gina raises her voice to exceed Jonathan’s. “Well, some people are not listening!” Recognizing that the tones have gotten too hot to be productive, you say softly, “We have been here awhile, and we all deserve credit for sticking with this, but perhaps this is a good time to take a break. Let’s meet up after lunch.” Breaking up the

escalating tones allows everyone to reset themselves and be more productive, and your legacy is being known as someone who is calm and collected.

4. Choose your words. Know that poorly chosen words will be remembered and repeated. Keep in mind that whatever you say is likely to be heard by someone else.

Example: One of your coworkers comes to you with some juicy gossip about another coworker having trouble with a DUI. He asks you what you think. Knowing that this person will tell everyone in the office whatever you say, you reply, “That is her personal life. I’m sure whatever happened, she does not want it spread around.” The gossip ends there, and your legacy is being known as someone who can be trusted.

5. Choose not to reach for your phone. A recent social phenomenon is looking at cell phones during conversations. This action says, “Excuse me, but someone more interesting might be trying to get a hold of me.” Aside from the obvious rudeness of the act, this takes you out of the moment, causing you to miss important words and cues that could help you understand the other person.

Example: Sitting at a company luncheon, you notice that the vice president of the company is at your table. You are expecting an important text. You feel your phone buzz. Just as you think about getting up to go to the bathroom to look at the text, the VP leans over to you and says, “I’m glad you could make this luncheon. I wanted to speak with you about a new project we are doing.” The rest of the lunch is a deep conversation about an exciting new position for you. Your legacy is being known as someone who is fully present. When you do look at the text later, it was a buddy trying to arrange a night out. Most texts can wait. Don’t let them interrupt your moments.

Defining the Legacy

In business, we need to take a look at the moments within our encounters with others and the legacies that we leave behind. In each encounter with another person, we need to make the best choice. Some of these moments may pass with little significance, while others may change our lives forever, but each will leave behind a legacy. What do you want people to remember about your next encounter? **SSE**

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ACTION: Make every moment count.

Recognition & Rewards

Do they really produce big results?



by Roy Saunderson

MOST LEADERS QUESTION the value and impact of recognition and rewards in producing desired performance results. This skeptical view of recognition often arises from *poorly designed use of recognition and rewards*. Also, *semantic barriers* can devalue the effects of recognition and rewards. So, let's first define *recognition* and *rewards*.

Recognition is the *tangible or intangible expression of acknowledgement for an individual's contribution, achievement, or observed behavior*. It is usually an unexpected, after-the-fact occurrence. It can include verbal thanks, an electronic or written acknowledgment, and a token of appreciation. It is more relational, happens frequently (daily/weekly), impacts nearly 80 to 100 percent of employees, and has low to no cost. It is personable in delivery, is mostly intangible, and addresses *intrinsic motivation*.

Rewards are something given or done in return for meeting pre-determined goals, merit, service or achievement and may be monetary. While rewards happen after the behavior or results are achieved, *recipients essentially contract to obtain the reward—they know it is coming if results are achieved*. Most rewards happen frequently (monthly/quarterly), impact 30 to 50 percent of employees, and have a moderate value. Rewards follow a more *transactional approach* (if you do "x" then you will get "y"), are more impersonal in delivery, and tend to be tangible in nature with a focus on *extrinsic motivation*.

Programs vs. Practices

To get the full impact of R&R, you need to separate *programs* and *practices*.

- **Programs.** Recognition *programs* are typically online, web-based tools that notify individuals in sending and receiving automated recognition and awards and which can transact various rewards and incentives. A recognition program often includes rewards as well.

- **Practices.** Recognition *practices* are the individual, personally delivered expressions of appreciation (intangible and/or tangible) and positive feedback by managers, supervisors and peers to employees and don't necessarily require the use of a program.

When leaders rely on *Recognition*

Programs for results without addressing *Recognition Practices* first, they'll be disappointed with the outcomes.

Proof of Power

Here are just *three proof points* of the power of recognition and rewards:

Example 1: In their research with college students, Adam Grant and Francesca Gino discovered that simply adding the words, *Thank you so much!* and *I am really grateful* doubled the response for a request for help. So, when making requests of those you work with, sincerely thank people and express gratitude! *Intangible rewards* have a greater impact on employee engagement than *financial rewards*.

Example 2: Scott Jeffrey from Monmouth University found when you ask people what they want for a reward, they mostly say, *cash*. However, when

you ask them what they'll work hardest for, the response differs—performance improves more using *tangible rewards* over *cash rewards*!

Example 3: Frank Giancola compared one group of employees who receive only *incremental monetary rewards* for achieving certain behaviors versus another group who receive *social reinforcement of positive feedback* as well as *visually displayed charts of performance results*. The results show *social reinforcement exceeds monetary rewards*.

Recognition and rewards *really* can impact performance and results. The key is educating and training leaders and managers to know the power of both and how to use them properly. **SSE**

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ACTION: Harness the power of R&R.

MANAGEMENT/PEOPLE

Show the Love

It beats showing the money.



by Todd Patkin

NO MATTER HOW MUCH you want to reward your employees, you may not have the financial resources to give out deserved raises and bonuses. Fortunately, you can still show your people that you care about them and appreciate their hard work.

Money is not the thing people desire most from their work. Showing appreciation, respect, and *love* are the three best ways to make your people feel great about their work. *And happy, engaged employees are the best way to impact the bottom line*. You can boost employee happiness, loyalty, and motivation in five *show-the-love* ways:

1. **Send "love" notes.** Great work is a gift from your people to you. When you notice that a person has done an excellent job or achieved a goal, send a *handwritten* note conveying your sincere appreciation and admiration. This will make a *lasting impression*, increase the respect your team has for you, improve their opinion of the organization, and encourage them to say *thank you*.

2. **Distribute inspiration.** Work need not be a place of drudgery, obligation, and boredom—it can be a place of inspiration and rejuvenation. Buoy your team's spirits daily. Their productivity will increase. If you read a quote



or story that inspires you, pass it along to others. *Feed people's minds with inspirational and educational material*.

3. **Tell success stories.** *Everybody loves to be recognized and complimented*. When someone does something great, tell her that you notice her outstanding work, and tell the rest of the team. You'll see the glow on the employee's face for weeks, and notice that other team members will work even harder. *Always praise in public as loudly as possible and criticize only in private!*

4. **Identify stars.** *Celebrate your stars regularly*. Rather than single out just

one person, you might recognize a team or multiple individuals every month. You might praise them in your newsletter, lauding achievements and personal qualities.

5. **Make it a family affair.** When possible, engage your employees' families when praising them—*this will be remembered far longer than a bonus!* Plus, when spouses and kids know what Mom or Dad does at work and are "on board" with it, your employee's performance will be buoyed by their support. You might call the home and leave a voicemail: *Your husband and dad is the most incredible, amazing person. He just broke our store's all-time sales record. So, please do me a favor. When he comes home tonight, give him a huge hug and tell him how proud you are of him.*

Showing people *love, appreciation, and respect* trumps giving money. **SSE**

Todd Patkin is author of Finding Happiness (StepWise Press). Visit www.findinghappiness.thebook.com.

ACTION: Show your employees the love.

The Art of Persuasion

Try using business improv activities.



by Val Gee

I LEARNED THE ART OF COLD calling with Pitney Bowes; with territory map in hand, I walked into the first office block, knocked on a door and asked to speak to the office manager. If I was lucky, I walked out with an order; if not, I just knocked on the next door! The job taught me persistence and to not take rejection personally; after all, when you have to make weekly quota to get paid, you just keep going. It paid off; I finally got a bigger territory, larger machines to sell, and made President's Club and a trip to Palm Springs with other top salespeople.

Whatever line of business you are in, *you are selling something—and you can always learn how to do it better.* Here are some of the *golden tips* that I've gleaned along the way in my sales career:

- **Get them to say yes.** Once I attended a presentation and watched another speaker sell product. He kept asking questions that we could only say *Yes* to. For example, he asked, "Does anyone here have children?" Most hands went up, but not all, so he then asked, "Anyone here ever seen a child?" Of course, every hand shot up, amid some laughter. It's a simple sales technique that works; when you get someone saying *yes*, it's easy to get them to continue, up to and including "*Yes, I'll buy it.*"

- **Research prospects, customers, and competitors.** If someone is doing something right, model it.

- **Mirror your audience**—use hand gestures, lean forward or away, or echo head and arm movements (but be subtle).

- **Hit them in the heart**—people don't buy our products they buy us.

- **Survey your customers**, asking *Why have you been doing business with us?* If you are consistently in your prospects face and your competitors aren't, you will do better.

- **You have to have it before you will ever have it.** Mohammed Ali talked of *how great he was and trained his mind and body to act as if he was already the champion.* It's about *having the mindset and skills and taking action to close deals.*

- **Be sincere.** When Susan Boyle first sang "I Dreamed a Dream" on reality TV, her sincerity shone through, and

millions were persuaded to give her their vote and ultimately send her CDs to number one, worldwide.

- **Get inside their heads.** *The more you get inside people's heads, the more you can persuade them.* Ask, *What is it they want? What is it that, if offered to them, they couldn't refuse?* Give them benefit after benefit—and appeal to emotions.

- **Use scarcity.** Advertisers make opportunities seem more appealing because of their *limited availability.*

- **Offer a bonus.** People love getting something from free, "If you buy now, I'll give you 15 minutes free coaching."

- **Get congruence.** In most people's minds, a handshake equates to a closed deal. By offering a handshake before a deal actually closes, you are more likely to close it. For example, if you are out and

about with a friend and you want to see a movie but the friend is undecided, start walking in the direction of the theater; your friend is more likely to agree to go once he or she is walking in the direction you set.

- **Use fluid speech.** "Ummm" or "I mean" have the unintended effect of making you seem less confident and sure of yourself. If you're *confident* in your speech, others will be more easily persuaded by what you have to say.

- **Be likeable.** You are more likely to be persuaded by *someone you like* than by *someone you see as an authority.* One effective way to be more *likeable* is to make yourself be seen as a *leader.* Even if you don't have the official title, be charming and confident, and people will place greater weight on your opinion. If you're dealing with a superior, casually praise a leader who that person admires. By triggering positive thoughts in that person's mind about a person she looks up to, she'll be more likely to *associate those qualities with you.*

Engage in Fun Improv Activity

If you are a sales manager, here is a fun *business improv activity* that will help in the art of persuasion: Have the participants find a partner. The partners with the longest hair will be the A partners. (If they are two bald men, ask for the longest arm hair.) Tell the B

partners they are millionaires and have a voucher for \$1 million. Tell the A partners that they have 5 to 10 minutes to persuade the millionaire Bs to give them the \$1 million voucher. The improvisation ends when either the Bs keep or the As win the voucher. Tell them to begin! Here is an example:

A: "It would be great if I could get that \$1 million voucher."

B: "I bet. Why should I give it to you?"

A: "Good question. I'm going to do something amazing with it."

B: "Like what?"

A: "Buy myself a house, a car, and a boat, and if there's any money left over, I'll go out to dinner at a nice restaurant."

Now switch! This time the As will have the power. Tell the As that they are the parents, and tell the Bs they are the teenagers. Inform them they are arguing over something the teenagers want to do. It can be anything: staying out late, getting a car, start dating, getting a tattoo. The teenager Bs have to try to persuade the parent As to give in to their demand. The improvisation ends when *parents or teenagers win.*

Here's an example:

Teen: "I want to stay out until midnight on Friday."

Parent: "Well, you can't."

Teen: "I know 11 p.m. is my curfew, but this Friday is a special night."

Parent: "How special?"

Teen: "Well, it's Janet's birthday! And she's my best friend. And everyone's going be there. And you'll be a terrible parent if you don't let me go."

After the Improv activity, discuss the following points:

- Were you *clear, convincing, compelling, and credible* in your approach? (*Yes, I used persuasive words, and it worked well.*)

- What techniques helped or hindered you from getting your desired outcome? (*I was sincere, and it helped. When I got too confident, I sounded harsh.*)

- What techniques could you have used to persuade better? (*I could have mirrored their movements, learned more about what they wanted, and then matched their needs.*)

Being persuasive means *selecting words that conjure images* in the minds of your audience. Sincerity comes from being sincere, so a heartfelt, honest and genuine approach is always the best. **SSE**

Val Gee is cofounder of MJLearning and author of The Winner's Attitude and Super Service. Sarah Gee is a leadership consultant and alum of Chicago's The Second City and iO. They are coauthors of Business Improv (McGraw-Hill). info@mjlearning.com; www.mjlearning.com

ACTION: Use improv activities in your training.

Ask for What You Want You likely won't get it otherwise.



by John Baker

MOST SALESPEOPLE NEVER ask for what they really want. So, I developed *The Asking Formula* to help people close more sales, in less time, and with less stress.

Most salespeople are afraid of being direct and telling people in no uncertain terms, "Here's what I want!" Since many people seem to bury their most important wants and desires, marketing trainers use *consultative selling* to draw people out. Social media consultants say, "Selling directly is suicide!" So, salespeople hem and the haw, and never ask you what they want to ask you the most. They feel *vulnerable* about being honest. Yet in business, being frank, open, and clearly asking people to give you what you want is what wins the day. Just be up front and say, *I'm selling windows today—are you buying?*

Most people do not know the best way to get what they want. By observing successful salespeople, I discovered that *they ask for what they want. Then they give the three very best reasons that explain why it makes perfect sense to say yes.*

For example, suppose that you meet with the client, properly identify the needs, and tailor a solution that meets the clients' needs as well as budget. After the meeting, you thank the client and say that you'll follow up in a few days. *You never really ask for the order!* You stumble and bumble your way through talk about hobbies, weather, pets, family, or weekend plans—anything but what you are really after.

Some experts tell you that *it's important to build a relationship*, or you have to draw out the prospect, or listen for buying clues, but the quickest and best way to ask for the order is to go right up to the person and say: *This product will do this for you: You'll see what you want happen; you'll be able to do this, and get that; and I'll have it to you by (date) and within your budget—guaranteed.*

Identify the most important request, and brainstorm the best reasons. Each reason needs to be carefully selected from many options and be backed by three important facts.

Use this method to penetrate difficult accounts, close difficult sales calls, shorten a sales cycle, protect price margins, reduce meeting time, speed up presentations, structure personnel

reviews, and improve sales letters, communications with suppliers, memos, and even emails. Use it in personal interactions with supervisors and staff. It helps if you put your money where your mouth is: "Director, let's implement the plan as follows. We've got this and that, and it addresses the crucial factors like this. It will improve how things operate like this, and we'll ensure that it all happens by closing!"

Your conversations will be clearer, you'll have less misunderstanding, and you'll earn points for being thoughtful by following *three rules*: 1) only offer meaningful information (the rest is trivial); 2) get to the point and ask for what it is you want; and 3) be quick about it.

Building a relationship is great, but over-doing it turns you into a nuisance.

MARKETING/FUTURE

See the Future Of B2B Sales and Marketing.



by Tom Scontras

WE HEAR A LOT OF DEBATE regarding the impact of social and business networks on the future of b2b sales and marketing. The rapid adoption by *Buyer 2.0* of nets like LinkedIn, Quora, and Focus—and the *real-time exchanges* that they spawn—is driving organizations to replace legacy marketing and sales process for a more efficient, effective, and *hip* means to stimulate demand, engagement, and conversation.

These networks alone, however, won't propel the change necessary to impact next generation b2b models.

Three Shifts

Only one of three shifts already in play represents the genesis of the b2b revolution.

Shift 1: Social nets, pushing sellers out of early qualifying conversations. Historically when buyers sought solutions, they depended on vendors to provide expert advice—leading toward courtship, evaluation, and acquisition. Even in the "Google era," search results return content predominantly controlled by sellers. Hence, the millions of man hours and dollars spent by marketers on paid and organic search strategies. Conversely, social networks promote a free-and-open exchange of expert advice that will continue to drastically impact the buyer-seller relationship and engagement models. The rise



The problem with consultative selling is that *it gets in the way of selling. It's technique overload.* It allows for procrastination. It enables you to avoid rejection (if you are busy probing the needs of the prospect you don't have to risk *asking for the sale*).

Can you imagine a vendor at a ballpark *consultatively selling you a hot dog*: "On a 1-to-10 scale, rate your level of discomfort with your hunger?" "Tell me your main objective with the hot dog?" "When you had a hot dog before, how satisfied were you with the mustard-ketchup ratio?"

The vendor is more effective when he just yells: "Hot dogs, hot dogs, come and get your hot dogs!" So will you! **SSE**

John Baker is author of The Asking Formula—Ask For What You Want And Get It (Wonsockon Press). Visit www.theaskingformula.com.

ACTION: Ask for what you want.

of social selling will create *new challenges* for vendors in early qualifying stages where trust, credibility, and competitive separation was once established by the seller. Thus shift 1, the ability for *Buyer 2.0* to push introductory information-gathering conversations beyond the *Vendorsphere* out and into the open social universe—a proven forum to connect and converse in real time with hundreds of trusted peers—a world in which only afterwards, once educated and on their own schedule, do they determine which sellers to engage.

Shift 2: Workplace as a state of mind. As mobile devices and apps continue to penetrate our work and home lives,

being at work is no longer a place—it is a state of mind. Hence, Shift 2: mobility changing home-work boundaries.

Shift 3: Gen Y and Gen Z take over influence and decision-making roles. GenX did not grow up with computers, but Gen Ys, born in 1980-92, grew up watching innovation change the world—and GenZs, born in 1992-2001, are highly connected, with lifelong use of communications and media technologies, earning them the nickname *digital natives*. They are now 10 to 20 years old, placing the first wave in the workforce next year and in five years influencing conversations on both sides of the table, bringing with them their genetic predisposition and cultural desire to be *always on*. When paired with their future Gen Y Management Team, Zs will bring about dramatic change. **SSE**

Tom Scontras is VP of Sales and Marketing, Glance Networks. Visit www.glance.net.

ACTION: See and seize the future.

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Ken Shelton, editor



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