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THE MAGAZINE OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

DECEMBER 2012

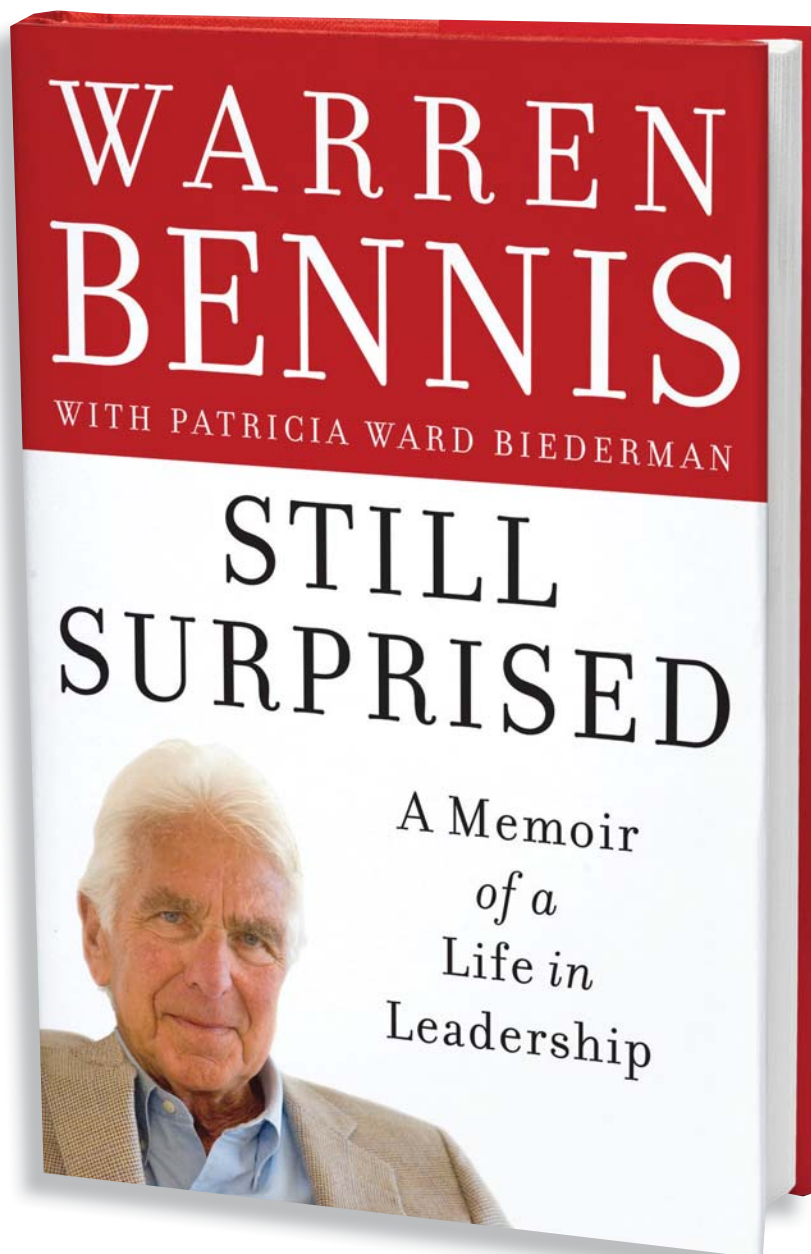
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SERVICE/CLIENTS

No-Firing Zone

Never give up on a client.



by Joseph Callaway

YOU'LL INEVITABLY HAVE clients who make you scream. But instead of firing them, stay the course and put them first. Yes, I know that some clients just can't be satisfied and seem impossible to work with. They expect too much, and every meeting is an ordeal. So, it's natural to think of firing them. But before you say, "This isn't working out," reconsider. In 15 years, my wife and I have never fired a client—even when we secretly wished we could—and this has contributed greatly to our success.

We put the customer first. We've heard it (and said it) so many times it's become a cliché. Yet, while we pay lip service to the idea, few salespeople truly put it into practice. We're so concerned with bottom lines, profit margins, and paying the bills (at work and home) that we instinctively put ourselves first. As counterintuitive as it may seem, that anxious sense of self-preservation may be holding you back. When you really put the customer first, and put your own needs second, many other things naturally fall into place. Tough decisions practically make themselves. Since you're no longer pitting the client's needs against

your own, relationships are based on transparency and honesty. People like and trust you, and referrals flow freely.

Deciding to really put clients first has the power to change your life, transform your business, and bring about financial security. Even when clients make your life more difficult, your job—your professional reason for being—is to serve them. If you can't or won't, it's the client's



job to fire you, not the other way around.

Take these five tips:

1. Make the Clients First commitment. Really putting clients first is a big commitment. And if you're comfortable with your current way of doing business, level of success, and client relationships, that commitment is not for you. However, if you find yourself wanting more—more fulfillment, more professional growth, more experience,

and yes, even more money—you may want to give Clients First a chance. Of course, not firing your customers is only a small part of putting them first. You need to put your own needs second, base all of your interactions on transparency and honesty, and make it your priority to always do what's best for the client. It won't always be easy: Putting your own best interests in second place goes against the grain of human nature! But you will find that many tough decisions—like whether or not to keep working on behalf of someone who makes you want to pull your hair out—will make themselves.

2. Realize that keeping clients is practical. Yes, the economy may be recovering, but business is still far from booming. You probably need all the clients and commissions you can get. And how you conduct business now, when the going is tough, can set you apart from the competition. In this economic climate, you may be dealing with more difficult clients than usual. They may be tired, worried, and impatient. When you stand by all of your frazzled, frustrated clients, you'll eventually reap financial and personal rewards. And you may even become known as the person who can handle the toughest clients—and receive referrals!

CONTENTS

BILL LEE	
<i>End of Marketing</i>	3
DAVID MATTON	
<i>Meet Your Sales Goals</i>	4
SHARON BENNETT	
<i>Office Relationships</i>	4
VICTOR AROCHO	
<i>Elite Sales Force</i>	5
PATRICIA FRIPP	
<i>Be Memorable</i>	6
MARSHA FRIEDMAN	
<i>Marketing Message</i>	6
GERRI KNILANS	
<i>Greatest Mistakes</i>	7

JOE LEPLA AND WOLFGANG GIEHL	
<i>Internal Branding</i>	8
STEVE LAZUKA	
<i>Content Marketing Strategy</i>	8
RON KAUFMAN	
<i>Customer Service Culture</i>	9
CAROL KINSEY GOMAN	
<i>Disengagement</i>	10
CEDRIC LEIGHTON	
<i>See the Big Picture</i>	10
GEORGE F. BROWN, JR.	
<i>Relationship Fund</i>	11
ZIG ZIGLAR	
<i>Work Smart</i>	12

ROBERT PASSIKOFF	
<i>Bring It On</i>	12
ROBERT L. FINDER JR.	
<i>Build Client Relationships</i>	13
RAUL VALDES-PEREZ	
<i>Seek Advice</i>	14
MICHAEL BECK	
<i>Difficult People</i>	14
CURTIS ODOM	
<i>Hire for the Best Fit</i>	15
DMITRI LEONOV	
<i>Sales Emails</i>	16
HAL BECKER	
<i>Sales Motivation</i>	16

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3. Learn to like people. If you're in a sales and service business, you likely already consider yourself to be somewhat of a *people person*. But chances are you still need to learn to like people more. Think about it: Do you hold yourself emotionally aloof from your clients and complain about their foibles to your coworkers and family, even though you were all smiles during your meeting? Or do you always make a genuine effort to put yourself in their shoes and learn more about them as *people*, not just as potential sources of income? To truly put your clients first, your goal should be to invite them within arm's length and make each one less of a stranger. Ask about their kids, their pets, their hobbies, and their jobs. Yes, people can be difficult or have bad attitudes, and be a source of pain, ridicule, and embarrassment. But if you get out there and engage, you'll find that most of them are just like you: filled with worries, hopes, and dreams. And when you know that a client is throwing a fit because he has to relocate for his new job and is desperate to get out from under a big mortgage payment, you'll be much less inclined to fire him. Instead, you'll want to work that much harder on his behalf.

4. Expect out-of-control emotions. People are emotionally attached to their possessions and products. Selling and purchasing are often distressing, upsetting, and anxiety-provoking. In fact, people who approach the sales process dispassionately are *definitely* the exception. Clients may fall apart early or late in the process, but at some point most *will* go a little crazy. If you don't want to handle clients who display emotional extremes, you are in the wrong business. So instead of dreading emotional outbursts and using them as reasons to sever a business relationship, think of alleviating the client's worries, insecurities, and fears as part of your job. Putting the client first also means not reflecting their turmoil back to them. Resist the urge to snipe back or to let yourself be caught up in a feeding frenzy of worry and anxiety. Instead, let animosity and frustration end when they reach you. You *and* the client will be better off.

5. Look for opportunities to help and to grow your business (they're one and the same). Once you recognize that when they hire you, your clients are by definition in the midst of a stressful transition, you can look for chances to help them. However, you'll miss every opportunity if you're second-guessing your decision to work with any particular customer. After all, when your mind is dominated by thoughts like, *If only I had seen the warning signs and realized sooner*

that this person has unreasonable expectations!, you'll suppress the creativity required to figure out possible solutions. Here's the silver lining: When you succeed in helping a client, you will have won a fan for life. Often, the most difficult clients are ones who tell the most people how wonderful you are, and what lengths you went to on their behalf.

6. Consider your karma bank. We believe that there is a karma bank out there somewhere, and when times are particularly difficult or a client is a real pill, we remind ourselves that we're making deposits in our karma bank. And while we've learned not to have firm expectations when it comes to karma, our efforts and goodwill come back to us multiple times over. We don't *cherry-pick* clients. We serve *every* client, regardless of the ROI of time, energy, emotions, and money. You may serve a client who demands a ton of your time and energy. The commission may not even cover expenses. Still, you stay patient and do your best to help her. Later, you get a call from someone she referred who brings you a ton of business. Such karma is real—and can change your life.

7. When all else fails, look for the lesson. Rarely you encounter a client who isn't acting out because he is simply worried or stressed or preoccupied—he's just a downright nasty person. We call these folks "evil people" and say there's usually no way to avoid them or to foresee their hurtful actions (and if you try, you'll lose many clients). Fortunately, if you put clients first, you're already on the doing-the-right-thing. When you have an awful client, keep working hard, telling the truth, and seeking the client's best interest. In the process, look for a lesson that might help you in the future. One thing you can learn from dealing with *evil people* is the art of *letting it go*. Don't stand on principle. Don't anguish. Don't blame yourself. Just let it go. To do otherwise—to continually engage with a toxic person—is to let him or her win at the expense of your peace of mind and sanity.

Everyone Wins

Commit yourself to your clients' best interests. Stay the course and don't fire any clients. Your phones will keep ringing even through the darkest days. Our clients took care of us just as we had taken care of them. Everyone wins when you strive to serve instead of expending your energy on figuring out which clients "work" for you. **SSE**

Joseph and JoAnn Callaway are coauthors of the New York Times bestseller *Clients First: The Two Word Miracle* (Wiley) and founders of *Those Callaways*. Visit www.clientsfirstbook.com.

ACTION: Commit to serve your clients' best interests.



End of Marketing

At least as we now know it.



by Bill Lee

CONSIDER THE ANNOYING, interruptive, obnoxious nature of traditional marketing. Dinnertime phone calls from strangers in noisy call centers. Glossy pictures of the latest fashions worn by models who barely look human. Crowded store shelves with head-spinning arrays of options arranged in no discernable order. Company websites that give us no clue what the business does. Hype. Spin. Pushy salespeople.

It's hard to believe *these are the methods and tools of a profession designed to attract and persuade us to become customers*—especially when *we the buyers* increasingly ignore them. Many signs suggest that traditional marketing is on its way out. In its place are new, more authentic techniques based on peer influence and community building. People now check out product and service information in their way, often through the Internet, social networks, word-of-mouth, or customer reviews.

Because of traditional marketing's inability to engage buyers, most CEOs think that their chief marketing officers lack business credibility, can't generate acceptable growth, and can't explain how their programs will lead to more business or how *brand equity* can be linked to *financial measures* (firm equity).

It's a bitter pill for mainstream marketing executives, but you can't blame CEOs when you consider the *logic* behind traditional marketing. Companies hire people—employees, agencies, consultants—who come from outside the buyer's world and don't share his interests and expect them to persuade buyers to hand over their money. Such an approach isn't conducive to influencing people to take action or change.

Some forward-thinking marketing executives are replacing this dated model with something that customers welcome. To join them, take this advice:

1. Go retro: Cultivate a local buying experience. Social networks and their technologies are not creating new approaches to marketing—they're allowing customers to re-create the experience of shopping and buying in their local communities. Think about it:

How do buyers prefer to purchase a product or service? Do they pick up the phone and call a salesperson, or visit websites? No, they're more likely to talk to neighbors, friends, colleagues, and others in their peer networks and ask what they've used.

• Marc Benioff understood this when he was building *Salesforce.com*. He found that buyers were less interested in hearing from him than they were in talking to his customers—their peers, other software programmers. He found that 80 percent of the prospects who attended such events became customers—an 80 percent close rate!

2. Cultivate customer sales and marketing people. Business spends billions of dollars training salespeople to build relationships with prospects and



customers, but need not spend a dime training a customer to build a trusting relationship with prospects (since they're peers, they already have one).

• *Microsoft* builds on this aspect of human nature when it penetrates new markets, often in countries where *they don't speak the language or understand the culture*. The firm will engage with local software users—whom they call MVPs (*Most Valuable Professionals*)—who have built followings through blogging and social networks. MVPs help Microsoft grow markets more cost affordably than the corporation could do using traditional marketing approaches staffed by hired outsiders.

3. Build strong customer communities. Consider *Harley-Davidson's* success in creating a community. Three decades ago, people associated *Harleys* with gangs/outlaws. Harley-Davidson worked to change the image, first by getting police departments to use them, and then by working assiduously to build a customer community of middle-

class (law-abiding) customers that morphed into today's million-person HOGs (*Harley Owners Group*). Today, HOGs, position themselves as *family*: the brothers (and sisters) you never had.

• One of the most successful customer communities is *Procter & Gamble's* *Beig Girl* community of teenage girls, formed around feminine care products. The key to forming customer communities is not to try to build them around your brand—a common and obvious mistake marketing departments make. Rather, ask, *What does our product or service mean to our customers? Or, What could they mean?* P&G realized that its feminine care products could symbolize the difficult, scary, exciting transition its teenage customers are making into becoming young women.

4. Involve customers in the solution. When toy maker *LEGO* launched its robotics building-block kits, *Mindstorms*, hackers started altering the code to allow the robots to do more. Most firms would call their legal departments and start issuing cease and desist demands. But LEGO executives did the math: *1,000 or so hackers were coming up with robots that could do amazing things*. As they—and their customers—realized the value the hackers were creating, LEGO further embraced them. Now its *customer community* numbers in the *tens of thousands* and continues to develop amazing robotic toys—beyond what the company might have developed.

• *3M* is *systematizing* customer-led innovation. Rather than wait passively for customers to alter or hack their products, they *proactively pursue* customers (*users*) who might come up with breakthrough innovations. The result was an *eightfold improvement in revenues* from innovations developed with the help of such customers.

5. Help customers build social capital. Why do customers engage enthusiastically in helping companies develop, market, and sell their products? All it takes is a business that *changes customers' lives for the better*. These companies help customers build their *social capital* by helping them affiliate with their peers in *customer communities*, build their status and reputation, and learn and grow in the process. Often, they include *service to a larger purpose*.

When you depend on *authentic customer advocacy* to grow your business, you improve marketing results. SSE

Bill Lee is author of The Hidden Wealth of Customers (Harvard Business Review Press) and an expert on customer advocacy and engagement. Visit www.customerreferenceforum.com.

ACTION: Apply these five marketing points.

Meet Your Sales Goals

Use five sales survival tactics.



by David Mattson

CLOSING DEALS, INCREASING sales, and hitting goals can be challenging—especially in a recession. It becomes a vicious cycle: when sales are down, companies cut their budgets, resulting in lower sales. So, how can sales teams increase sales so their companies can thrive? I offer five sales survival tactics.

1. Focus on what can be controlled.

Looking at the big picture can be overwhelming. Break down big goals into manageable chunks. Decide to accomplish specific things: each day make five phone calls, find two new business prospects and make one new appointment. Create a prospecting plan, outlining how you'll generate new leads. Break it down into *realistic daily goals*—over time, you'll reach your bigger goal. In sales, *behavior controls attitude* (and you can control your behavior). Small, manageable tasks add up, enabling you to reach the bigger goal.

2. Create a reverse sales funnel.

Many successful sales pros *work backwards* to reach their goals. The goal to generate certain revenue might mean you need to close 10 deals. To accomplish that, you may need to make 15 presentations. To get in front of 15 prospects, you might need to make 60 follow-up calls, which would depend on first making 90 initial calls. Don't focus on the *revenue* you need to win. Focus on the *daily steps* that will get you to the goal. Instead of panicking about the 10 sales you need to make, think about how you'll make those 90 phone calls to jump-start the process. When you aren't meeting your goals, you might not know what to do daily to meet managers' expectations. With a reverse sales funnel, you'll develop a realistic, *action-oriented plan*, determine how to manage your sales pipeline, and work toward your big-picture goals.

3. Make it a We approach vs. a You approach. If the sales manager makes it clear that the team is in this together, it makes a huge difference in the sales team's *morale, motivation and attitude*. When sales reps believe that success and failure lie with them alone, it adds *unnecessary pressure*. Managers should emphasize that they're there to help sales reps succeed. Sales reps are often more emotionally invested in each sale,

since they're so close to prospects and become immersed in closing the deal. Sales managers are often less emotionally invested, more objective, offering a fresh perspective. They can pull in extra resources to help move the deal, such as having the CEO make a call.

4. Hold a contest. Sales teams are competitive. Holding a contest can be an effective way to drive healthy competition and, ultimately, increase sales. It's been proven that people are motivated by both money and recognition, so create cash incentives or develop a strategy to publicly applaud top sellers. This is a great way to motivate people who aren't hitting their numbers and inspire top sellers, encouraging them to close even more deals. Team leaders should be managing the process, asking reps about the status of each account, asking what the team

needs to do to close the deal, psyching them up so they want to win the prize, motivating them to ramp up their sales.

5. Have an action plan. If your sales team is a million dollars behind goal, don't belabor the point. They realize they're not meeting the numbers. When your sales team is struggling, telling them to *work harder* to reach their goal, pushing them to *reach their numbers* puts increased pressure on them, when they are likely trying their best. They may not know how to improve the situation. So, instead of pressuring them, demonstrate how they can increase their sales. Create an *action plan*, outlining what each member of the team needs to do every day to achieve success. **SSE**

David Mattson is CEO of Sandler Training, one of the largest sales training firms. Visit www.sandler.com.

ACTION: Use these sales survival tactics.

MANAGEMENT/ROLES

Team Relationships

You have to fill different shoes.



by Sharon Bennett

YOU ARE CONSTANTLY *bombarded* with demands on your time, energy and mind. Balancing all facets that affect your life is complex, but necessary, since it can mean the difference between a positive or negative outcome. Everyone has different *roles* to fill: *boss, colleague or subordinate*. How you handle these relationships is like slipping into *different shoes*. Sometimes you must try *many different shoes* before you find a pair that fits your personality, business style, and budget.

• Boss: The way a boss *should relate* to their colleagues and subordinates is to treat them with respect and as partners. Employees perform better when they have a vested interest in the company, are respected, and feel as if *they make a difference*. An authoritarian style won't earn you the loyalty and respect of your people, only fear-based compliance!

Motivate your staff to get involved via a model of mutual respect and collaboration, not a *My shoes are bigger than your shoes* attitude. Ego accomplishes nothing permanent. Learn to speak to others in a non-condescending manner. Be attentive and ask questions. Thank your colleagues regularly, and encourage them to research and explore their own ideas. Engage your employees

and reward their successes. You never know when someone will be promoted. Be the boss you would want to have.

• Colleague: Respect your coworkers—strive to get along, but don't blur too much the line between *coworkers* and *friends*. Respect is the key! Have *respect* for your boss, coworkers, and yourself. Champion your work, but don't be afraid or angered by constructive criticism; use it to make positive changes. Don't gossip about your boss, or coworkers. No one likes a gossip. Those words will come back to haunt you.

• Subordinate: Knowing the different personalities and how they function can help you to succeed; recognize everyone's personality traits and place them in positions where they will thrive. Look for qualities in others that you admire and emulate them.

Companies lose millions of dollars a year in sub-par work because *many employees feel no allegiance to the team*, or feel that they matter. Brainstorm ways that you can get more participation via inspiration, and move others to work as an integral unit by *moving toward wellness* (decreasing stress and anxiety).

You may need to try *many different shoes* before you find one pair that fits your style, personality and budget. Step into your *perfect pair of shoes* by stepping into a *better life*—one that you take control and responsibility for. **SSE**

Sharon Bennett is a motivational health and wellness consultant, author of the Shoe Fetish Series. Visit ShoeFetishMovement.com, call 888-321-9604, or email ShoeFetishMovement@yahoo.com.

ACTION: Find and step into your perfect shoes.

Elite Sales Force

Make your sales team one.



by Victor Arocho

IN EVERY SALES TEAM, THERE are usually a handful of *top performers* . . . and then there's everyone else. Imagine *how much better* your team could be if *every salesperson* was an elite top performer. If you think that's impossible, think again.

In other areas, we see groups of elite people who *band together* for a common goal or purpose: Super Bowl teams, Navy SEALs, top-rated college marching bands. In such groups, you don't see *one or two people* doing all the work, outperforming their peers, or being the lone superstars. Rather, *everyone on the team is an elite member*. The group *shines* because *each member contributes* greatly, plays an integral part, and gives 110 percent at all times. If it's possible with these groups of people, then it's possible for your sales department as well.

Creating an elite group of salespeople involves more than placing a help wanted ad on a job board. It requires a *specific hiring process* that attracts only the best of the best. Here are the steps.

1. Make joining your sales team difficult. You can't create an elite team if becoming a member is easy. No team can be *spectacular* or *elite* if they let anyone join. There must be a stringent process/standard. So while you should advertise open sales positions, realize that conducting one interview prior to bringing someone on board is not enough. Rather, you'll want to conduct multiple interviews, with the candidate speaking to the sales manager and other executives. Look for people who believe in a team spirit, have a *positive attitude*, and display *keen sales demeanor*. Don't make your HR department be responsible for hiring salespeople. HR's only role in hiring salespeople should be to process the paperwork. Make sure anyone you decide to bring on board realizes that getting past the initial hiring process is the easy part. Now they must prove that they have what it takes to be an elite player.

2. Create a six-week intense new hire training program where no more than 60 percent pass. For every three people who make it past your initial hiring process, only one of those

should become a salesperson for your organization. While this may initially sound like a waste of time and money, it's really an investment in making your sales team the best it can be.

You waste time and money when you allow *low producing salespeople* (typically people who don't fit sales, people who don't like your company, or people who have the wrong attitude) to be a part of your organization. To avoid that scenario, make sure the people who are in the sales role have been thoroughly trained and are the people who really want to be there.

Having an intense training period is the same approach used by colleges and the military. For example, for every 100 men who start Navy SEAL training, only 20 succeed. That's a success rate of only 20 percent! But think about it . . . who do you want carrying out the country's most dangerous and most critical military missions? Only the best of the best, right? Well, who do you want being the face of your company, representing your products or services, and interacting daily with your clients? Again, *only the best of the best will do*.

Your intense training program should cover five key things:

- **Product knowledge**—Go over your products or services thoroughly to ensure the prospective salesperson comprehends them inside and out.
- **Role-playing**—Go over typical sales scenarios as well as the most challenging sales situations you can think of. See how the person responds when things go wrong.
- **Sales skills**—Even if the person has prior sales experience, give them all the skills and training they need to be successful, and then make sure they know how to implement the skills.
- **Company structure**—Teach them all the parts of the business. Train them on every department so they know the intricacies of the business and understand what happens both before and after the sale is made.
- **Research**—Put them through the tedious information gathering work. Make them research the market,

demographics, competition, etc. If they're not willing to do the details, then they're not a fit for your company.

This process will weed out the people who don't have what it takes to be part of an elite team. In fact, about 20 percent of the people will drop out by week four. For the ones remaining at the four-week mark, offer them a choice to stay or go, as in: "I'll give you \$1,000 right now for you to leave the training and the company, or you can elect not to take the money and stay." Those who take the money aren't the type of people you want on your elite team. It's better to pay a small price now to find that out than waste a lot of money down the road with a bad hire.

By the six-week mark, only 60 percent of those who started should still be standing with you. These are your elite sales team members. (And if you have more than 60 percent of the people making it through the training, then

your training is too easy—and perceived to have no value.)

3. Have consistent, ongoing (monthly) training.

While intense training is a one-time thing, all salespeople should attend regular monthly training. During these sessions, do role-playing, train on specific skills, and identify the challenges

your team is facing.

Use these ongoing training sessions to create *bonding experiences* for the sales team. Have them help each other solve problems, offer suggestions, and share best practices. Why? Because the goal is to continually develop a *team*, not an individual. As Tecumseh, the Shawnee Indian Chief, said, "*A single twig breaks easily, but a bundle of twigs is strong.*" By bringing your salespeople together monthly, you're creating a strong and elite sales force that can't be broken.

4. Recruit the best to be the best. Sales isn't an easy profession. So joining an elite sales team shouldn't be easy either. That's why you need to shift your focus from *filling a sales position* to *building an elite sales force*. After all, your sales team is *the face of the company*. Shouldn't only the best of the best be representing your brand? The sooner you take this approach to building your sales team, the sooner *your sales* (and *profits*) will grow. SSE

Victor Arocho is a sales development expert, sales trainer and managing partner with Potential Sales & Consulting group. Visit www.victoraroch.com.

ACTION: Create an elite sales team.

Be Memorable

at all networking events.



by Patricia Fripp

THERE IS NO POINT GOING *anywhere* if people don't remember you were there!

Networking is key in building business and developing social contacts; however, if you go to events and no one remembers you afterward, what's the point in attending? Such contacts only work if you *make yourself memorable*. Happily, this doesn't mean you have to be bizarrely dressed or loud and boisterous.

Many talented people attend networking events, yet overlook their big chance to *be memorable* by developing a mini-presentation. All *speaking* is *public speaking*—no matter the audience size.

Here are strategies that let you walk into a room with quiet self-assurance, confident that people will enjoy meeting you and will recall you afterwards:

1. Arrive looking your best. If you have a hectic day before a meeting, keep a change of clothes in your office or car so you can arrive unwrinkled.

2. Wear your name tag. We're more likely to retain information that we see and hear at the same time, so *wear your name tag* on your right shoulder. That way, people can read it as they hear you say your name. Some women put their name tags on their handbags or in the most inappropriate places. Put it where people are not afraid to look!

3. Develop a memorable signature. Men can wear ties that people will comment on (one investment banker wears a money tie). At certain meetings, I stand out because I wear distinctive hats. When people are asked, "Do you know Patricia Fripp?" the usual reply is, "Yes, she's the one who always wears the amazing hats."

4. Develop an unforgettable greeting. When you introduce yourself, don't just say your name and title: *Describe the benefits of what you do for clients*. A financial planner says, "I help rich people sleep at night." I might say, "I make meetings more exciting." My new friend has to ask, "How?" *Immediately*, I get to market myself. People remember the *vivid pictures* you create in their minds more than the words you say.

5. Greet everyone. Don't ignore people you recognize if you've forgotten their name. Smile and ask a provocative question like, *What is the most excit-*

ing thing that has happened to you since we last met? or *What's your greatest success?* or *What are you looking forward to?* And don't be afraid to say, "The last time we met, we had a great conversation. Will you remind me of your name?"

6. Overcome shyness. Much of the value of networking events can be lost if you focus on being unassuming or shy. For many people, mingling with strangers can be *unpleasant* or *scary*. Focus on the benefits of meeting new contacts and learning new information instead of butterflies in your stomach. Until you gain confidence, volunteer to be a greeter. Soon you'll start feeling like the host. You'll meet many new people, making it easy to talk later. When you focus on *helping others feel comfortable*, you forget being shy!

7. Travel with your own PR agent. When you arrive at an event, talk-up

each other's strengths and expertise. Say about each other exactly what you want your prospects to know, but modesty prevents you from telling them. Also, by saying something interesting, memorable, or funny, you become interesting to your listeners. And when you make someone feel good about themselves, they remember you!

8. Always send a note or brochure the next day to the people you have met. Keep business cards, and make notes of what you said for when you meet them at another event.

Try these positive, pleasant, and easy ways to be memorable to get more out of your networking time and energy by making yourself *worth remembering!* **SSE**

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ACTION: Be memorable at networking events.

MARKETING/MESSAGES

Marketing Message

Has it changed with the times?



by Marsha Friedman

PEOPLE'S VALUES HAVE CHANGED in dramatic ways in the past five years, and as people's values change, so do their shopping habits. To market effectively, be aware that *thrift* isn't the only value affecting consumer choices. Other values have arisen from global concerns, such as our reliance on oil, environmental issues, and if goods were made here or abroad. Set yourself apart with *a message that appeals to your audience's values*.

To develop a marketing approach in sync with the times, take four tips:

1. Identify what makes your product appealing to customers' values. If your homemade soaps are produced here in the USA, brag about it! Many people appreciate businesses that create jobs at home. Your *made in America* label is valuable! Does your packaging use recycled materials—or is it recyclable? Now 69 percent of us recycle. Does your manufacturing process use a renewable energy source? Most of us think it's more important to develop alternative sources of energy.

2. Become an expert. You can gain valuable media exposure for your company or product by positioning yourself as an *expert* with useful information to share on timely issues.



3. Assess which channels are best for getting your message out? Where does your audience get its news and entertainment? Are they using *social media*? Reading *newspaper*? Listening to *radio* or watching *TV*? Or a mix of all four? On *social media*, you can share your expertise by offering useful information and links to resources, and engaging in conversations. You can build a following of fans who help spread your message. *Print* is a great medium for providing tips, as is *TV*, which is also perfect if your message has a visual component. *Talk radio* shows look for debate and

information that solves problems. Mentions in (or appearances on) traditional media give you the implied endorsement of journalists.

4. Choose a messenger who's accessible. If you're the person best qualified to be interviewed by journalists, you may be the perfect spokesperson. But if you're so busy you can't respond to interview requests, you'll lose media opportunities. Your messenger should be a person who is well-versed on the chosen area of expertise—and available at the drop of a hat.

If your message hasn't changed with the times, think about your company or product in a new light. If you look at it from the buyers' perspective, you may see something that *appeals to consumers' changing values*. Turn that into a message that resonates with *customers*. **SSE**

Marsha Friedman is CEO of EMSI Public Relations and author of Celebritize Yourself: The 3-Step Method to Increase Your Visibility and Explode Your Business. Visit www.emsincorporated.com.

ACTION: Appeal to your customers' values.

Greatest Mistakes

These occur in sales training.



by Gerri Knilans

SALES TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS involves *learning and applying a sales method* by which salespeople can follow a *step-by-step process* for generating leads, conducting needs' analysis-based interviews, making compelling presentations, following up, and closing the sale. Sadly, many companies not only lack a well-defined sales method, they also lack a process for managing salespeople. They tend to promote top producers into management positions based on their ability to sell. Hence, new sales managers often try to teach others to do *what they do*—a recipe for failure and provides no measurable way to improve sales success.

To avoid these common mistakes, we asked four sales trainers/consultants for advice: 1) Roy Chitwood, president of Max Sacks Intl; 2) Gene McNaughton, president of Consulting, Business Breakthroughs Intl; 3) Randall Murphy, president, Acclivus R3 Solutions; 4) Marty Scirratt, CEO, The Brooks Group.

What's wrong with sales training?

Chitwood: I see an over reliance on automation. Software people have sold us on automating the sales process to achieve sales success. That's wrong. *These products do nothing to contribute to increased sales if you lack a sales process.* Regardless of the dollars invested in sales training, most salespeople don't have a clue about what *selling* really is.

McNaughton: We see a shift to a solution-based, value-added approach, away from the transactional models. Now you must get prospect meetings, challenge decision makers to see their business differently, and educate buyers how to become better buyers. Pitches are dead. You have to teach something of value. That builds more trust, respect and rapport with the buyer.

Murphy: When I talk with sales teams, I find that *the future is better than ever for salespeople who act as trusted advisors.* Asking thought-provoking questions and making thought-provoking suggestions creates value with the customer.

Scirratt: The trainer has to focus on helping people understand what their sales process is and recognize *where they and the customer are in the process* (they're often in different phases). Teaching the

sales process so that you learn how to move the prospective buyer from a lead to a sale is even more important.

• **What mistakes do companies make in sales management?**

McNaughton: The most overlooked area of profitability is the training of sales managers. Companies must see *sales managers as extensions of sales training* and ensure their managers are constantly trained how to coach, train, and manage the metrics. It's a *three-legged stool*. Without all legs, it loses balance.

Murphy: Often *top salespeople* get promoted to *sales manager*, not knowing what they're doing. They may not know what it is like to be responsible for developing salespeople or have the tools to do the task. They tend not to make the transition to developer of people and performance. They need coaching.



Scirratt: Allowing sales managers not to be responsible for production and having that flow to the sales rep is the wrong way to run a sales department.

• **Are those mistakes reflected in the way managers hire salespeople?**

Chitwood: Many companies have *no process for evaluating their candidates for selling positions.* They typically hire in their image. What they don't understand is that many times, sales people are good at selling themselves at getting the job, but they don't perform.

Scirratt: In recruiting, they don't use a *well-rounded assessment* of candidates to ensure the sales manager's personal biases don't interfere with making the decision. Good assessments measure *values*, not just behaviors and attitudes.

• **What about follow-up in measuring the impact of sales training?**

McNaughton: One big weakness in sales training programs today is *lack of tracking of core metrics in the sales process.* You have to identify, step-by-step, every sequence of the sales process,

track and monitor metrics, strengthen each area and optimize each step. Small gains in those areas create massive sales growth. Most companies only measure *what is sold.* Measure everything that happens *before* the sale and *optimize* it.

Murphy: Studies show the connection between *manager or mentor involvement* and the *success of learners.* They need repetition and to see everything through different perspectives. The investment has to be ongoing with *follow-through, reinforcement, and support.*

Chitwood: It's difficult to measure the impact of sales training, but it must be done in a *scientific way* to be valid since there are so many contributing factors (such as territory, management, the economy). It must be a *controlled evaluation.* Few sales managers are trained to perform the managing role.

Scirratt: Companies are less likely to do follow-through if their sales management has not bought into the training program. True follow-up comes through sales management. Some sales training companies don't want to know the results (fearing what they'll show).

• **What's the most important principle to include in a sales training program?**

Murphy: The sales person is part of a team and that team has to be aligned to bring an effective solution to the customer. The team should have shared mission, common language, and an aligned approach. When members prepare and practice together, they feel stronger about their role in the mission.

Scirratt: Repetition is key. You don't learn anything by hearing or role playing it once. The sales process must be simple so that everyone can replicate it. Show your people the whole picture and provide salespeople with context.

McNaughton: Teach both a *sales process* and *sales mindset.* Educate about the product and make sellers *experts in market data.* You also have to teach the *mindset of success* that is required for thinking and acting differently.

Chitwood: When selling becomes a procedure, it ceases to be a problem. Most salespeople sell based on their *personalities and style*, which can't be replicated. Teach *selling as science* (applicable to selling any product, service or idea).

Customers become more receptive when salespeople approach them as partners. Sales should be *consultative.* This means *helping customers see beyond the obvious.* You have to look more like an *expert* and less like a *salesperson.* SSE

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ACTION: Avoid these mistakes in your training.

Internal Branding

A motivational tour de force.



by Joe LePla
and Wolfgang
Giehl

WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER WORK FOR: a company that prides itself for making the lowest-cost heart defibrillators, or one that saves lives every day? How about: A restaurant that serves fast, high-quality Middle Eastern food or one where employees are cultural MCs who serve up an exotic adventure?

If you answered *B*, you sense the motivational power of *internal branding*—where *brand distinctiveness* is integrated into the culture and motivates and guides employee action. People want to work where *what they do* creates a *deep emotional resonance* (they feel excited about going to work, and their need for creativity and meaning is fulfilled).

- **Medtronic**, the company where employees go to save lives every day, has created a *culture around storytelling* so that employees see the impact they have on the people who benefit from their products. Patient stories bring immediacy to the brand, keep company values front and center, reconfirm why employees work there and gives them emotional reinforcement. Part of Medtronic's brand is the idea that *customers come first*. Medtronic encourages employees to talk about *how they put customers first*. For instance: A salesman drives miles at night to deliver equipment needed to treat a patient. The founder, Earl Bakken, goes out of his way to talk to patients who have benefit from this value and then shares those stories with employees. As a result of Medtronic's internal branding, 87 percent of employees indicate that Medtronic's mission is consistent with their personal values, and 92 percent believe *their work supports the mission*.

- **SAJJ**, the Menlo Park, CA restaurant where servers are *cultural MCs*, serves great Middle Eastern entrees on freshly baked *sajj* and *pita* bread, but its *appeal* is much more. It offers patrons an *exotic adventure*, where servers act as MCs to guide customers through the many different choices while enhancing the feeling of being somewhere very different. Because of SAJJ's *brand mission*, SAJJ servers have *the most important job* in the place—engaging with customers in friendly, fun, and creative ways.

This *internal branding* role elevates a humdrum job to one where employees enjoy the center stage and help customers enjoy their dining experiences.

Internal branding pays off in higher employee motivation and customer satisfaction, higher job offer-to-acceptance rate, and employees who will trade a percentage of salary for branded job experiences that they identify with.

Here are *three ways* you can start creating internal branding program:

1. **Define what's actionable and inspirational.** Explore how your brand can create *strong emotional resonance* with employees. Identify cultural values and messaging that defines how employees can live it. Often, the motivational elements are there—you simply have to *connect the dots* to leverage it. In so doing, you turn a generic work experience into *something inspirational*.

2. **Create internal brand governance.** Sometimes *emotional resonance with a mission* just happens, but often you need to create a *culture/brand team* whose job is to promote brand storytelling, measurement and rewards.

3. **Make the CEO your chief advocate.** Without the CEO on board, an internal branding program won't reach its potential. A CEO who is also the chief brand storyteller can turn employees into a highly motivated workforce.

Internal branding aligns employees with the central mission and becomes an integral part of *why* and *how* a company achieves its goals. **SSE**

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ACTION: Engage in internal branding.

MARKETING/CONTENT

Content Marketing

Have a strategy to gain five benefits.



by Steve Lazuka

CONTENT MARKETING IS enjoying rapid adoption and claiming a greater percentage of the marketing budget.

Use content to drive brand awareness and lead generation. Since content marketing makes heavy use of social media and other inexpensive online

marketing tactics, you can keep costs to a minimum while effectively getting the word out about your product or service *to the right audience*.

To be effective, your content needs to be targeted and aligned with your goals. Develop a *content marketing strategy* to gain five benefits:

1. **Determine the best channels up front.** Content is meant to be promoted through various forms of social media, digital forums, and websites. Since many marketers use multiple social media networks, including Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube, you need a strategy to determine what is working and what is not. Before any marketing campaign is launched, you need to know where to place your message. You don't necessarily need to be seen on every channel. Ask yourself and your staff: *Where do our customers hang out online? What channels does our target audience prefer? Where do I tend to find information relevant to my needs?* This



will help you adapt your content to each channel, and keep resources from being wasted on distribution that doesn't work well for your business.

2. **Maintains consistency.** An *inconsistent message* between channels makes it hard for your audience to understand what you're all about. Maintaining consistency is easier when the content is created according to a strategy aligned with your goals. All channels should carry the same branding or promotional message. With a *content strategy*, you can ensure that your branded content presents a united front. When the same message is seen across the board, it

becomes more memorable and more likely to be acted on.

3. **Creates a roadmap.** Think of your *content strategy* as a roadmap. With it, you can identify the best content to convey exactly what you want to say, and to whom.

4. **Improves SEO.** *More content* gives search engines *more ways to find you* and determine your value. Improving content quality and quantity will also lead to high quality links, another push up the rankings for your content and your business.

5. **More accurate data.** A *content strategy* gives you focus. Since your marketing content is targeted and channels are planned and prepared, you can identify the metrics to show how effective your content is.

These five benefits will boost the impact of your *content marketing*. **SSE**

Steve Lazuka is the founder of Interact Media, creators of the Zerys Content Marketplace. Follow Steve @SteveLazuka.

ACTION: Create a content marketing strategy.

Customer Service Culture

Make your culture powerful and uplifting.



by Ron Kaufman

IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY, GREAT service is the price of admission. Companies whose cultures aren't built around the *eagerness* to delight the customer won't survive. I've discovered a way to engineer a *powerful and uplifting service culture*. Here are some of its building blocks:

- **Stay covered with great leadership.** *True service leadership* is not a demand for better performance pointed at the frontline service department. It's not a campaign slogan that gets splashed across the wall. It means creating a culture where every member of the team can take the lead in improving and uplifting—from every position.

- **Create a strong foundation through education.** Many organizations try to train their employees in customer service when they should be *educating* them. *Training* teaches someone what actions to take in a specific situation. *Education* teaches him or her how to think about service in any situation and then choose the best actions. Great service isn't just about following a procedure—it's about applying your attitude and heart with a proven set of service tools and principles.

- **Get everyone to speak with one voice.** A *Common Service Language* enables clear communication and supports the delivery of superior internal and external service. When you are creating an uplifting service culture, a *Common Service Language* is the first building block because *language* is the raw material from which we create new meaning and new experiences.

- **Hire up.** Each new hire either *makes your culture stronger* or *makes it harder to build a great service culture*. The *right people* pull naturally in the *right direction*. Every new hire sends a message to everyone else. Either you are committed to your service culture and hire good people to prove it, or your commitment is shallow lip service only, and your next hire proves it.

- **Unite under one vision.** *Engaging service visions* unify and energize people. They pose a *possibility* each person can understand and aim to achieve in his or her work, role, team, and organization. It doesn't matter whether

you call this building block your service vision, mission, core value, guiding principle, credo, motto, slogan, saying, or tagline. What matters is that your *Engaging Service Vision* is *engaging*.

- **Constantly UP your game.** A *Service Improvement Process* creates synergy by connecting people between levels and functions. Some issues require ownership on the frontline, involvement from the middle, and sponsorship from above. Others are quickly solved by teams working across silos. Cross-functional team members bring new perspectives and fresh energy to problems. This is where customer complaints are welcome, where survey reports are examined for new ideas and insights. You can also tap the creative energy of your customers, vendors, distributors, and even regulators to improve service.

- **Be a service copycat.** *Service Benchmarking* reveals *best practices* and new ways to upgrade service. Develop a team of service providers who constantly ask: How do other leaders create uplifting service experiences for their customers and colleagues? What can we learn, adapt, adopt, and apply to improve the service we deliver?

- **Model behaviors you want to see.** Being a *service role model* is not just for senior managers/leaders. It's what happens every time people can see what you do, read what you write, or hear what you say in a service situation. Leaders, managers, and frontline staff must *walk-the-talk* every day.

Make It Fast and Furious

When you're *transforming a culture* to be *service-focused*, you have to move boldly and quickly. When people step up together to deliver better service, *full engagement* occurs and the culture improves. Here are seven lessons.

- **Don't start only with customer-facing teams.** Begin with *internal service providers*—production and design, hardware and software, warehousing and logistics, facilities, finance, legal, IT, and HR. When these people make things easier, faster, more responsive or flexible for customer-facing employ-

ees, they'll be surprised, delighted, and *better able to serve customers*. Let those on the inside inspire those who serve on the outside with better service first.

- **Launch at all levels.** Start from the top with an uplifting service initiative. When leaders speak up and role model with commitment, it's easier for everyone else to follow—and take the lead at their levels. Don't launch from the bottom without support from the top.

- **Don't forget the middle.** A top-down cascade brings commitment, alignment, and support. A bottom-up program stimulates new ideas and new actions. An activated middle connects, enables, and empowers. It's best to start with all three.

- **Arm your leaders with helpful service hints.** Create *opportunities* for your leaders to walk the walk, talk the talk, and *model uplifting service*. Invite them to participate in customer meetings and focus groups. Ask them to help

you recognize the top service providers. Inform them about the transformation's progress by describing problems solved, noting who worked on the problem, what they did to solve it, and how service improved.

- **Go for easy wins first.** *Build momentum with early wins on easy issues*. Let your team taste the pleasure of

uplifting service success. Celebrate achievements and compliments. Don't work on your toughest problems first—their day to be conquered will come.

- **Stay vigilant—keep your aim on the right bull's-eye.** As the program rolls out, focus on *identified external business targets*—reclaiming market share, rebuilding a reputation, bouncing back in recovery situations—not on earning high internal course evaluations.

- **Watch out for stuck-in-the-mud team members.** What you want early on are good feelings, good results, and good gossip. For deeply cynical, resentful, or unwilling employees, there are two options: 1) they come to see the light and climb on board for an uplifting ride; or 2) they feel so out of place they leave. Welcome either outcome.

When transforming a service culture, get *everyone* involved in new, swift action. What you need is a *service revolution*, not *evolution*, that *gives everyone a role to play*, and counts on *everyone* to create an *uplifting service culture*. **SSE**

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ACTION: Create a customer service culture.



Disengagement

Note the body language.



by Carol Kinsey Goman

BODY LANGUAGE REVEALS attitudes and emotions.

Engagement and disengagement are the key signals to monitor in the other person's body language. *Engagement* behaviors indicate interest, receptivity, or agreement while *disengagement* behaviors signal that a person is bored, angry, or defensive.

Here's how it looks from head to toes:

When someone is *disengaged*, the eye contact decreases (we tend to look away from things that distress us and people we don't like). Similarly, a colleague who is bored or restless may avoid eye contact by gazing past you, defocusing, or glancing around. Eyes that signal disengagement will narrow slightly. In fact, eye squints can be observed as people read contracts or proposals, and when they occur, it is almost always a sign of having seen something troubling or problematic.

Disagreement also shows up in compressed or pursed lips, clenched jaw muscles, a head turned slightly away, sidelong eye contact, shoulders and torso turned away. When people are engaged, they face you directly; the instant they feel uncomfortable, they'll turn away—giving you the *cold shoulder*. And if someone is feeling defensive, you may see an attempt to shield the torso with a purse, briefcase, or laptop.

If people sit with ankles crossed and legs stretched forward, they're likely feeling positive toward you. But when you see feet pulled away from you or wrapped in a tight ankle lock or pointed at the exit or wrapped around the legs of a chair, you should suspect withdrawal and disengagement.

When co-workers exhibit disengagement signals, you can do six things:

1. *Think about the context:* Did you alter your body language? Did you ask a question or touch on a hot issue? Did someone else enter the room or join the conversation?
2. *Check your body position.* Are you exhibiting any closed or disengaged behaviors that your counterpart may be mimicking or reacting to?
3. *Change your body posture* to increase engagement—and see if he/she will follow suit. Lean forward, smile, and put your hands palms up on the table.
4. *Make them move.* For example, if the

person's arms and legs are tightly crossed (signaling disengagement), lean forward and hand them something—a brochure, report, or cup of coffee.

5. *Change your pitch.* Realize that what you are proposing isn't being well received, and now may be the time for *Plan B*.
6. *Bring their disengagement behavior to their attention:* "It looks as if this may be a bad time for us to talk. How about tomorrow?"

Reach Across Aisles or Silos

To break down the *silos mentality* and build collaboration, consider four tips:

1. *Recognize your ingroup-outgroup biases.* Collaboration efforts are more successful when we expand our view of *ingroup* to include former *outgroup* members by looking for commonalities instead of fixating on differences.

2. *Confront your confirmation bias*

MANAGEMENT/VISION

See the Big Picture

And communicate your vision.



by Cedric Leighton

WALK INTO ANY OFFICE, and you'll see people working individually at their computers, focused on specific tasks. We've been conditioned to focus on finite areas of responsibility. To cultivate Big Picture thinking, engage in five practices:

1. *You, the leader, must truly understand the Big Picture.* See what's headed your way and where you need to lead. Get out of the office and connect with employees and customers. And keep your pulse on political, sociological and economic developments that might affect your business. Then sort out the *important* from the *trivial*.

2. *You must communicate a unifying vision succinctly and effectively.* Your communication should *clearly convey* your understanding of the *Big Picture*. If you use outside experts, have them share their assessments with your people. Follow that with your presentation, building upon the experts' findings. That way, your employees can see the *Big Picture* for themselves, how you derived your vision, and where you intend to lead the company, enabling them to *buy in* to your plan for the future.

3. *Cultivate curiosity.* Lead by example. Cultivate your curiosity and

(you notice what confirms your beliefs and positions, and ignore or undervalue the relevance of anything contradictory). Although you're invested in your opinions, realize that *you don't have to be wrong for the other to be right*.

3. *Make crisis work for you.* The stress of *combating a crisis* may increase collaboration. Acute stress may lead to *cooperative, social, and friendly* behavior.

4. *Pay attention to where you pay attention.* Concentrating attention on a thought or an insight or a hope or a fear will keep the relevant circuitry open and dynamic. With focus, new circuits become stable, physical links in the brain's structure. *You can choose to change your mind and behavior.* **SSE**

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ACTION: Read the body language of engagement.

educate yourself on both *core issues* like production quotas and sales forecasts, and *difficult issues* like the geo-political or economic impacts of new technologies in your field. Spread *curiosity*. Solicit the advice of your people at every level. Respect the advice you receive, seriously consider relevant inputs, and implement them when it makes sense to do so. See through the *yes-men* who surround you by rewarding those who see beyond immediate concerns, and those who give you honest, actionable feedback, with good assignments and promotions.

4. *Educate your people* in the *specific skills* they need to do the tasks assigned them and bring in outside experts to stimulate thinking. Enroll employees in courses or seminars that advance their skills and broaden their horizons beyond the cubicle partition.

5. *Broaden your employees' responsibilities* when they are ready to take them on. This might mean putting a sales clerk in charge of a marketing campaign or having an assembly line worker develop and implement a manufacturing process.

Ensure your people are ready to take on bigger tasks. Develop tactics and implement them so objectives can be seized, missions can be achieved. By harnessing technology, you can make the cubicle mindset go away so your people grasp the *Big Picture*. **SSE**

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ACTION: Communicate your vision.

Relationship Fund

Earning a return on yours.



by George F. Brown, Jr.

THESE DAYS, WITH PRICES rising and stocks falling, you can't take your clients for granted—relationships must be valued. By cultivating a *Relationship Fund*, you can ensure the health of your most important customer relationships by making an ongoing investment in the health of those relationships. This is done not out of a belief in equalization of spending across customers, but because such major customer relationships can be among the fastest growing and most profitable ones in your client portfolio—if the right investments are made in value creation to maintain good relationships or turn around faltering customer relationships.

The case study that follows started years ago with a troubling message delivered by a major customer to a key supplier. An executive in the firm summarized the message as follows:

I was summoned in for a meeting with a counterpart in the customer organization, a person whom I've worked with for years. The strength of that relationship prompted him to give me a very difficult message. Basically, he said that our firm has gotten the reputation of taking the customer's business for granted, and that there was a groundswell starting in favor of putting the business out for bid.

We had a frank exchange, and I came away from it knowing that what he was saying was in fact pretty close to the truth. The examples that I heard weren't ones that I was particularly proud of, and they certainly weren't ones that I would trumpet as examples of how we treat our most important customers.

This communication prompted the instruments company executive to open a discussion with our firm about best practice approaches to major customer relationships. In the course of that discussion, I introduced the concept of a *Relationship Fund*—a way that suppliers can ensure the health of their most important customer relationships.

Creating a *Relationship Fund* involves assessing whether a firm's spending on marketing, sales, and customer service appropriately reflects the importance of major customer relationships. If spending is skewed, with

smaller accounts and market segments being subsidized by the firm's major customers, there is cause for concern, since the potential for instability in the major customer relationships is substantial. After all, such relationships are often the primary target of competitors, and executives in the customer organization know whether they are getting value from their major suppliers. When we did the analysis for this firm, we concluded that there was an imbalance, not just with this customer, but across the board with the firm's largest relationships. It was not surprising that this relationship was coming under pressure.

Faced with this information, the company leadership team decided to refocus their attention on their major customers, and commit funding to support ongoing investments in these key relationships. The company that provided the *tough message* was selected as the first target for this program.

We then addressed the question: How should the *Relationship Fund* be spent? The options are plentiful. Often each option has a strong advocate inside the supplier organization. Choices among such options require discipline, and the leadership team has to evaluate each option for its potential to create value for the customer that can be captured by the supplier.

We developed and implemented two initiatives to turn around this faltering customer relationship. The first recognized that *there had been some neglect* in this customer relationship. To recapture some ground, the team assessed the major changes in the relationship over five years. This assessment spanned many dimensions, from *quantitative assessments* of the structure to *qualitative assessments* of the contributions expected by this customer.

Dramatic changes had taken place over five years. Some changes were easily spotted. For example, the volume of business being done in emerging markets had grown by nearly an order of magnitude during that interval. Other changes were more subtle.

For example, the electronic content of one key instrument supplied to this customer had doubled during this period, and now represented the most significant element of the product cost structure and the most critical determinant of key performance metrics.

Once these changes were identified, the instrument supplier implemented a *voice of the customer* program to understand this customer's expectations and the challenges that they anticipated in future years. The focus of this program was forward-looking, designed to identify ways in which this supplier could contribute value and areas where they needed to catch up with the needs of their customer. The *insights* that emerged contrasted with their *expectations*. As one executive stated, *"We acted as if expectations were frozen in stone."* Many action plans emerged, impacting on elements of the supplier's relationship with the customer.



The second initiative involved a collaborative project conducted with this customer. The supplier recognized that they were part of a complex customer chain, one that started with their direct customer and extended to dealers, contractors, and the end customer organizations that used the instruments. The

research project was designed to understand the unmet needs of those later-stage customers—and the opportunities for collaboration between the two firms in developing a solution.

Looking back on this experience, the company executive noted: *"It is never fun to hear from a key customer that we are falling down on the job, but it was better to hear that than to have heard that we've been replaced as a supplier. This experience was a wake-up call. We learned we can't take strategic relationships for granted, and that we have to make a constant effort to listen to our customers and make a constant commitment to invest in the relationship. This relationship has become a solid source of growth—one that we now have confidence can continue into the future. The Relationship Fund is now a permanent part of our business, and we know we are earning a great ROI."*

This lesson is one that you should heed *before* you hear a tough message from one of your key customers. **SSE**

George F. Brown, Jr. is CEO of Blue Canyon Partners, a management consulting firm on growth strategy, and coauthor with Atlee Valentine Pope of CoDestiny (Greenleaf). Visit www.bluecanyonpartners.com.

ACTION: Build your client relationship fund.

Work Smart

So you worry less.



by Zig Ziglar

INCOURAGE SALESPeOPLE TO *set career goals* and achieve them. You need to understand the *power in setting goals* and know how to properly set goals. You need to *prepare and plan for your success*. Then you can daily learn and train to prepare yourself for opportunities.

As salespeople, we encounter people at every emotional level—when they're happy, excited, and enthusiastic; and when they're irritated and down in the dumps. We learn how to deal with extroverts, introverts, procrastinators, optimists, pessimists, the detail-oriented, impetuous, *loudmouths*, big shots, egomaniacs, and others.

We must know how to persuade others if we're going to convince people to buy. Great persuasion skills are required to convince ambitious people that even when they feel their idea is best, once that idea has been rejected and someone else's inserted, they will lay aside personal whims and cooperate for the good of the team.

Successful salespeople are excellent managers of time, territory, and habits. The better they manage their lives, the better they can manage their business.

Don't worry about results. When you set your goals properly and plan the action you need to take, *it's a waste of time, energy, and emotion to worry about the results of what you set in motion*. When you execute an action step, it is like releasing a bowling ball. Once the *results ball* is rolling, there is little you can do to change the impact. Worrying about the *results* won't change what happens. *The results will reflect how well you prepare, plan, and execute the action.*

I recognize that you have legitimate concerns (that's normal), but *imagined worry* is dangerous to your health and success. This worry occurs when you imagine *what might happen*. My late friend Mary Crowley said, "Worry is a misuse of the imagination." Worry is related to negative thinking. And when you think negatively, you can't expect to win. When you imagine all the bad things that might happen, you become *problem-conscious*, not *solution-minded*. Yes, there will be bad days, but choose to focus on what you can still do.

Stop worrying, start expecting. Worry is *imagining what might happen* in the

future, but *anything based on tomorrow is pure speculation*. If you plan and prepare, you can have positive expectations. If you take care of your health through a good diet and exercise, you can expect good health. If you save and invest your financial resources, you can expect to have financial security. If you live by principles of love and service to others, you can expect to have good personal relationships. *Good action today will produce good living tomorrow. Positive expectations for tomorrow are based on positive thinking and prudent action today*. So, instead of imagining *all the bad things that might happen*, imagine things working out. Develop a *positive expectancy*.

I don't worry because I know who I am. I know that the principles I live by are true. I know that I always try to do

the right thing, and *when you do the right things in life, you don't have to worry about results*. If I do the right thing every day, I'm not even responsible for results. I just receive the benefits. When you plan and prepare to win, you don't need to worry about results. *You can expect to win!*

Since your attitude is contagious, should someone catch or avoid yours? You have a choice daily: You can't change your past, or the fact that people act in a certain way, but you can choose your attitude. Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it. Your attitude, not your aptitude, ultimately determines your altitude. **SSE**

Zig Ziglar, aka America's motivator, is author of *Born to Win* and *Ziglar on Selling*. Visit zigziglar.com.

ACTION: Work smarter and worry less.

SERVICE/DELIVERY

Bring It On, Fast

Deliver on expectations.



by Robert Passikoff

IF YOU WERE LOOKING FOR A motto regarding the fact that the consumer has been in control of the marketplace for more than two decades, here's one: *Impatience is the mark of independence*.

It captures what we've seen in every category Brand Keys has tracked for years: Customers impatient with brands unable to meet their ever-growing expectations about, well, everything. To meet those expectations—or at least keep up with competitors that have been better at meeting those expectations—some engagement values have turned categories into poker games. The values have become table stakes—either you have them or you don't get to play.



Customers Expect Fast Delivery

Recently we've seen it happening in retail, with *same-day delivery*. When it comes to delivery expectations, consumers want their stuff *now*. It doesn't matter what category of stuff we're talking about—they want it fast, today, sooner if possible.

Following the truism *as the category and attendant consumer expectations go, so goes the brands*, we see Amazon, E-Bay, and Wal-Mart battle to **deliver on customer expectations**. Amazon launched a *same-day shipping* service about five years ago in major cities. E-bay has

been beta testing a *same-day courier delivery service*, and Wal-Mart announced a new *To Go* delivery service in select markets. The Wal-Mart program allows shoppers to pay online and select a delivery date, all for \$10, regardless of the size of the order. Products are shipped from stores (providing they're in stock and aren't shoes or clothes), not warehouses. Amazon charges \$8.99 per shipment + 99¢ per item and, depending on your city, the order has to be placed before noon to get it same-day. E-bay currently has a \$5 fee for same-day shipping from local stores.

To see how the three contenders currently deliver on *delivery service*, we turned to the 2012 *Brand Keys Customer Loyalty Engagement Index* and calculated how each brand met customer expectations for *fast delivery*. As the brands reside in different categories, scores were calculated against their own category's *Ideal* (100 percent). For interest, we threw in

Zappos, another brand, well-known for delivering on delivery. Ratings look like this: Amazon 98 percent, E-Bay 91 percent, Wal-Mart 88 percent, Zappos 94 percent. So the brands are all well positioned to chase customer expectations for *same-day delivery*. But brands need to keep an eye on all those wily expectations in their categories to deliver on values that create *engagement* and *loyalty*.

As consumer expectations continue to grow, for many customers today, **instant gratification is not soon enough!** **SSE**

Robert Passikoff is president of Brand Keys a consumer marketing researcher; www.BrandKeys.com.

ACTION: Deliver on customer expectations.

Build Client Relationships

Listen and provide effective feedback.



by Robert L. Finder Jr.

IMAGINE THAT YOU'RE A CLIENT. All you want is someone to help you *if only they would stop and listen to your ideas and feelings*, to take you seriously, and to demonstrate that what you tell them matters.

If you're a good listener, you may be the only person they can talk to and confide in. All you have to do is ask and encourage them to "Please tell me more." Those four simple words will do more to reveal important and relevant information about your clients than anything else you can do or say.

Is that all there is to becoming a great listener? "Please, tell me more," is a good start, but you have to master another challenge: restraint.

- **Don't interrupt.** No matter how much you want to, don't. Never, not even to establish common ground with your client. "Oh, I know how you feel. That happened to me and let me tell you," or, "I have a lot of clients who have gone through the same thing." See how easy it is to step right back into the light at the expense of your client? Establishing common ground and common experiences are, of course, useful in building strong client relationships, but they can be more effective later. If you don't exercise restraint, there may not be a later.

- **Don't lose your focus.** Don't start rehearsing what you're going to say when your client finishes. I know you can walk, chew gum, and do an entire juggling routine at the same time, but listening and thinking about what you're going to say next doesn't work. You'll miss something. And turn off those distractions—your cell phone and CNBC—hold your calls and stop thinking ahead to your next meeting or plans for later in the day. Stay focused on the present, and on your client.

- **Don't start checking your mental rolodex of questions.** Again, it requires you to work too hard and you have too much to lose in terms of information that your clients want you to understand. There will be time to ask questions. Now isn't that time. Try "Please tell me more," instead.

- **Don't interject your opinions and don't disagree or challenge your**

clients' thinking. You may be vehemently opposed to their position or reasoning. You may have proof positive that their information is mistaken or erroneous. You may have strong convictions that you feel obligated to express. Now is not the time. This time is about the client.

- **Don't filter what you hear.** Pros often have the mindset of Sergeant Joe Friday, from *Dragnet*, focused on "just the facts ma'am." You have to take it all in like a factual and emotional sponge. You'll have the opportunity later to wring out the relevant information, but until then, soak it all up—facts, feelings, emotions, ideas. Because good cops and good professionals take nothing for granted.

- **Don't go into solution mode as soon as your client has revealed an issue that you can address.** You don't have to pick the lowest hanging fruit. You've neither done your job, nor served your client well if you're satisfied with a token victory. Exercise patience and you'll cultivate and harvest a bushel of opportunities.

Now, Supply Attuned Feedback

You're halfway home to becoming a great listener if you can exercise the requisite restraint, but you have to master another challenge: feedback.

Positive, genuine *attuned feedback*—after your clients have fully expressed themselves—fosters discovery and builds trust. Negative or half-hearted feedback impairs the quality of client relationships, or worse, keeps them from developing. Is your feedback unresponsive, superficial, workmanlike, or *attuned*? How can you tell?

- **Unresponsive feedback** is devoid of any material recall and acknowledgment of anything your client says. It consists of content-free, meaningless, and frequently repeated utterances such as "I see," "Sure," "Really," "Terrific," and "That's great."

- **Superficial feedback** attempts to acknowledge what the client says, without specific reference to what was said, and is delivered in a manner that lacks sincerity and empathy: "That's

interesting." Or consider the effect of "I know what you mean." It's not about knowing what your clients mean; it's about letting them know that you remember what they said.

- **Workmanlike feedback** is a sign of competent listening with specific references to stated facts, feelings, and opinions that your clients have shared. But this feedback lacks the *creativity* associated with *accurately paraphrasing what you heard*. When you paraphrase, you explain what you heard, not just with the client's own words, but in your words that capture the essence of what the client conveyed, only perhaps in a more organized and logical manner.

- **Attuned feedback** is complete, deep, and responsive to what your clients say and how they feel. It is selfless feedback, completely client-centric, with no place for personal interjections and comments. It's empathetic listening of the highest order. It's not judging or evaluating or trying to interpret what is or isn't important—it's about unconditional attunement. It captures client's feelings and not only their words but emotions as well.



Improve Your Feedback

How can you improve your feedback?

- **Take your time.** Clients won't be upset with a few seconds of thought and reflection before receiving your feedback. They'll find it refreshing. Pausing to think is fine when you are actively listening or speaking. When you're ready to offer your *attuned feedback*, leave no doubt that you listened with your mind, eyes, and heart.

- **Eliminate awkward, repetitive, and annoying words.** These include *prefaces to feedback* such as: "So if I heard you correctly," "Let me see if I got this right," "What I think you're saying."

- **Use a simple request to expand on your attuned feedback:** "Please tell me more about your parents. Their beliefs and values clearly left an indelible imprint on your life."

- **Feed it all back to them.** By repeating what they say, you let your clients know beyond a doubt how much what they have to say matters to you.

By providing *attuned feedback*, your clients will realize that you care about them, and make the interaction about *them*—as every client wants it to be. **SSE**

Robert L. Finder Jr. is author of *The Financial Professional's Guide to Communication*.

ACTION: Listen and provide attuned feedback.

Seek Advice

It's the way to win.



by Raul Valdes-Perez

NO MATTER HOW SMART you are about a topic, somebody else is smarter!

My task is not to be the smartest in the room, but to bring the world's knowledge and experience to bear on what I undertake, *by seeking personalized advice*. Even if I know 1,000 things and somebody else knows only 100, I can learn something from them. Two heads are better than one.

My experience has taught me: *People make inferior life and work decisions, needlessly, by not proactively seeking advice from others*. Or they do seek advice, but don't do it well. For example, you might mistakenly think that reading material is enough, ignoring that *good advice* depends on your circumstances and goals.

In 2000 I co-founded Vivisimo, a business software company purchased by IBM in 2012. The three technical co-founders knew little about business, and we chose to grow the company without investor capital, only with federal research grants and state loans. We faced all the challenges that startups face, and many challenges of larger companies, but with no formal help at the board or investor level. As CEO, I learned that *getting outside advice was the only way we could survive*.

We aren't better *advice seekers* because we aren't trained to consider if we have the knowledge and experience to deal with a problem, and if not, who does and can help. Also, certain intellectual, emotional, social, and biological factors get in the way. For example, it *may not occur to us* to seek advice. We don't want to appear weak. We ask only one advisor to avoid dealing with contradictions. We don't want to share the credit for the resulting success, or risk public knowledge of a resulting failure. So, we take action without thinking things through.

Then there's the obsolete emphasis on absolute self reliance (Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Self Reliance* and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*). Emerson wrote "*Insist on yourself; never imitate . . . That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him*." Thoreau wrote "I have lived some 30 years on this planet, and I've yet to hear the

first syllable of *valuable or even earnest advice* from my seniors." This thinking is still with us. Amazon.com's *The Domino Project* included Emerson's essay among their initial book titles. President Obama's Facebook page lists *Self Reliance* as a Favorite Book.

I once received a polite email from *Elizabeth*, a college grad who wanted a career change. She asked about openings with my firm. I told her there were no openings for her background but offered to meet to discuss her goals and career options. She thanked me *but never followed up*.

She failed to realize that *advice has six benefits*: 1) *solutions*, or ways to generate solutions; 2) *pointers* to other sources (people, readings) that have relevant expertise; 3) *new ways to frame the problem*, its key dimensions, criteria for a good solution, what

could go wrong; 4) *validation* that certain approaches make sense, in order to proceed confidently; 5) *legitimation of your chosen approach* to sway doubting stakeholders; and 6) *engagement with others* that builds social capital for possible mutual aid in the future.

You can *turn the art of advice seeking—of leveraging your relationships—into a practiced skill*. When challenged by a problem, *think of seeking advice*; decide who are good advisors; do background research; approach advisors productively; engage with them in human terms; evaluate their counsel; and choose and take the best courses of action with more confidence. **SSE**

Raul Valdes-Perez co-founded the business software company Vivisimo and is the author of *Advice for Winners: How To Get Advice For Better Decisions In Life And Work*. Visit www.adviceisforwinners.com.

ACTION: Seek advice when you face a dilemma.

MANAGEMENT/PEOPLE

Difficult People

How best to deal with them.



by Michael Beck

THERE'S NO AVOIDING IT. You're bound to come across *someone who's difficult to deal with*. It's inevitable. They may be someone you report to or someone who reports to you. Or they may be a peer, vendor, or client. It's going to happen and generally can't be avoided. If you are to be *effective* as a leader, you must become good at dealing with those difficult people.

Whoever they are, they cause anxiety, frustration, concern, or anger in us. The irony is that when *we* become anxious, frustrated, concerned or angry, *we* become difficult to deal with. So, it's imperative that *we* become adept at dealing with *them*.

One course of action is simply to *tolerate* the other person. This action (or *inaction*) is one that avoids confrontation. Productivity remains consistent, and there's no risk of workplace drama. Unfortunately, by not dealing with the situation, you perpetuate several counterproductive dynamics. You expend valuable energy by tolerating an unsatisfactory situation. It affects your attitude, thoughts, and productivity. And, in your attempt to shield or isolate yourself from these people, they end up feeling neglected and unappreciated. When that happens,

they tend to *check out*, becoming complacent and apathetic—simply going through the motions. It's not fruitful.

Simply tolerating difficult people also affects your team—and reflects on your leadership and your values. This, in turn, negatively impacts your ability to lead effectively.

You might reflect on your behaviors and attitudes, and decide to change. This may or may not be appropriate. A good test is to observe whether there are many *difficult people* on your team.

Your initial reaction to this course of action might be, *Why should I change?*

It's clear the other person is the one with the problem. That valid observation sheds some light on how to handle the situation. If your thought is to ask the other person to change, their reaction would likely be: *Why should I be the one to change?* This, of course, poses a problem since that person generally *is* the problem.

The answer to this dilemma is to have an honest and transparent conversation with the person. As leaders, we *develop* people (*help them grow*). We need to be compassionate, yet strong. We need to be empathetic, yet change their perspective. We achieve this by acknowledging the situation and by asking good questions to understand their perspectives and motivations so we can then positively impact their enjoyment of and satisfaction with their work, and *be more productive*. **SSE**

Michael Beck is an Executive Strategist who specializes in leadership effectiveness; www.michaeljbeck.com.

ACTION: Learn to deal with difficult people.

Hire for the Best Fit

Not necessarily the best resume.



by Curtis Odom

RESUMES ARE A KEY TO THE new employee selection process, however, it's not at the top of the list in importance. What's most important for a new hire is how they will best fit in. Do they look and feel to others like they belong?

I address this factor in hiring a new team member and examine how recruiters and hiring managers can work together to find these best fits.

Recruiters are out there on the front lines of the workforce, trying to bring talent into organizations; there are a lot of qualified people out there *from a credential standpoint*. Fit is where the true challenge lies. Will this person fit our organization? There are many meanings to that. Does the person look and feel to others like they belong here?

The answers play a huge role in the talent acquisition success. Sadly, leaders often see recruiting and staffing as an easy thing, as a lower level skill. On the contrary, it's one of the hardest things under the umbrella of talent management to find the right match of talent to the organization and the hiring manager that needs that talent.

Organizations sometimes shy away from being definitive about the type of person they want, commonly because they don't want to be viewed as being biased in some way. Personally, I think this is erring too far on the side of political correctness. As a culture and a society, we've carried it way too far.

Hiring managers are frustrated when recruiters take too long to get the talent the company needs. In reality, the business doesn't understand what recruiters are doing when the hiring manager says, "I need a human factors engineer. I want them to have 10 years experience. I want them to have worked for one of the big five consulting firms. I want this person to be in the local area, because I'm not paying for relocation."

All of these unique factors shrink the candidate pool and restrict options of what the recruiter has to work with, but also increases time to hire.

Recruiters face this daily. Once the hiring manager says, "Do you have everything you need? You're going to get me this person. Great. Thanks.

Bye," the clock starts for the business leader right then and there.

In reality, the recruiter takes this information and has to create the job requirement if it doesn't exist. That might take two or three days to write it, review it, post it, and start to field resume submissions from applicants. It might be three weeks or a month before the recruiter even starts to get candidates in for interviews from when the posting went up based on conversations with the hiring leader.

The hiring leader is ticked off. "It's been two months. Where is this person I need?" Without constant contact from the recruiter back to the hiring leader, the hiring manager doesn't know the particulars of the situation, or what goes on behind the curtain. They think, "Next time I'll hire an outside agency so I can get this done in less time!"

Unfortunately, that's what happens to internal recruiters. They're out there with a flashlight in the middle of day trying to find someone's shadow. They are given this exacting description of what skills they need to find, but they have little time to find that person, and get little respect or thanks when they do find the needles in the haystack.

We'll reach a point where things will stabilize, because nothing lasts forever—even downturns. Then many organizations will start to think differently. They won't want to return to talent firefighting, and they'll say, "We never want to go through that again. We want to mitigate our exposure to the whims and vagaries of the markets and economics." The only way to do that is to have a lean and flexible organization. To do more with less, you have to have top talent and processes to enable that talent to do their jobs while pioneering a new paradigm.

You can't do *more with less* if your people lack the capability to pull it off. The best way to find those people is to *grow them*. You can't hire them; because if you hire them that means that you had to go out and poach them, which costs money and is not a long-term

solution to a recurring problem.

Many managers have resigned themselves, to hire and replace, hire and replace. If you don't give Gen Xers comfort about their career with your organization, they will go elsewhere, and you will consistently hire and replace, hire and replace. A properly structured talent management strategy, such as *talent farming*, can dramatically cut the cost of that impact and guarantee you a seven-figure savings in recruiting and staffing agency costs.

Managers must ask themselves some serious questions: *Do we want to continue to muddle along with this talent management thing and have things remain the*

same? Do we want the Board to continue to kick us to get a plan in place? Do we want to put the company into the position where the next time that there's an economic downturn, which there will be, or the competition has a decided advantage and we're losing market share we can compete? Do we want to invest in 'talent farming' now so that we can have the best talent in house to deal with whatever organizational challenges come next?

Address the hard questions. Be willing to step into the unknown and do things differently. This requires people who are self-driven, who have self-confidence, who will get out there and lead.

Don't keep trying to figure out what accommodates your need to feel comfortable, but is opposed to the desire to get a result. Sometimes, *you have to get uncomfortable to get the result you want*. You have to go through a period where it's downright ugly as you shake things up, break things down and build them back up stronger. A sustainable, proactive approach to talent management is the organization's displayed willingness to make lasting cultural change.

Talent management is about sourcing candidates for knowledge, skills, and abilities to accomplish the organization's goals. It stresses the importance of hiring based on the right fit for the individual and the organization.

You may be stuck between having employees who can do the job, and having people who excel. However, you can learn to recognize the warning signs, and get it right when *hiring for best fit*. SSE

Curtis L. Odom, Ed.D., is Managing Partner of Prescient Training Strategists and author of Stuck in the Middle. Visit www.stuckinthemiddle.me.

ACTION: Hire for best fit.



Sales Emails

Practice these five tips.



by Dmitri Leonov

IF YOU ARE SLAMMED WITH Email, you're not alone. Whether it's working with colleagues, setting up meetings, or closing a deal, *email is the main means of work-related communication for everyone*. An average salesperson receives over 100 emails per day and spends 28 percent of his work time reading and responding to them. In sales, email plays a critical role—your commission (and career) can depend on your effectiveness in email communications.

Much is written on *sending effective sales emails*. There are strategies for optimizing the subject line, day of week, time of day, font and every detail. But little attention is paid to better *receiving and processing of email*.

Practice *five tips* to process email more efficiently, free up hours of wasted time, reduce your stress, and turn you into a mean, green, sales machine!

1. Don't let email control you. The *instant gratification* of clearing your inbox provides a feeling of accomplishment, but it's not productive. Determine how much time you want to spend in your inbox and don't exceed it. When you first open your inbox, star/flag emails that must be dealt with today, but focus on your top leads and work priorities first before diving into your Inbox. Dedicate 30 minute blocks every two hours to staying on top of email. If you need more time, make it 45 minute blocks, but *don't let your Inbox control you*.

2. Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize. Not all emails are created equal. Most email clients give each email the same real estate on the screen. Flags, stars and other prioritization signals help, but it's hard for your brain to discriminate. In reality some emails need to be *read and responded to right away* (your top leads and opportunities). Some can *wait* until you're done with priorities (smaller or low probability deals). Others should be *archived* or *deleted* in bulk. Some emails will never be responded to, and that's okay. Start with your *top opportunities*, and dedicate enough time to them. If you never get to the small stuff, you'll feel great for giving *top leads* your best.

3. Create a system. Folders are vital

to the success of any email processor, but must be used correctly. Make sure *each folder has a distinct purpose and relevant title*. If not using a folder delete it.

Filters are just as critical. You can create manual filters in Gmail or Outlook, or use automatic intelligent tools like SaneBox.com, which automatically filter out unimportant emails and integrates with Salesforce.com to ensure your Salesforce leads and contacts are treated as *top priority* in your Inbox.

4. Be Decisive. When checking your email *decide what to do with each email immediately*: Respond if it's absolutely necessary or takes less than two minutes, *Delete* it, *Archive* it, *Defer* it and respond later, *Develop* a plan of action from the email. This email management method (called *Inbox Zero*) pre-

vents looking at the same email twice.

5. Use email tools. There are many excellent email tools. My favorites are: 1) *Rapportive*: shows you everything about your contact right inside your Inbox; 2) *Awayfind*: sends you SMS notifications when you get an email from important senders, so you don't have to keep checking your Inbox; 3) *ToutApp*: offers templates and helps you track *open rates* on emails you send; 4) *SaneBox*: filters out and summarizes unimportant emails. It has *reminders* when a sales email you sent was not replied to by a certain time (perfect for following up).

Apply these tips to *close more sales!* **SSE**

Dmitri Leonov is VP of Growth at Sanebox. Visit www.sanebox.com.

ACTION: Practice these five email tips.

SALES/MOTIVATION

Sales Motivation

Why it's much like deodorant!



by Hal Becker

WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT your last seminar? What did you apply to your job?

Did this new concept really change you or make you do things differently?

Seminars don't work for most people! You come away thinking, "Wow this is great, I'll change this and do that!" NOT! You go to the seminar and then put the material on the shelf and *never look at it again*.

When you put on deodorant, you smell great for a day, but when it wears off, you smell lousy again! Motivation does the same thing: It lasts about 24 hours.

When a coach gives a great pre-game or halftime speech in the locker room ("I know you guys can do it, you're the best, I believe in you"), the team heads out to the field and is feeling good, but they then go on to lose the game. Why? Simple. The coach gave a great speech, but where was the practice to make people better at their position by *mastering the basics*?

How do you train a dog? You praise them and then give a little treat when they do something right. By *constant repetition* and *positive motivation*, the dog now knows what to do. Children (and adults) learn the same way!

When you go to the next seminar, you must follow *five rules* if you hope to gain from the information you hear.

1. A goal without a plan is a wish.

What is your plan on implementation after the seminar? What will you do and in what time frame? Write it out. Imagine going into the bank and asking for a loan without a business plan. You will not get too far.

2. Define your goals. Goals must fall into four vital areas: 1) it must have a specific *time frame* (days, weeks, or months); 2) it must be *measurable* (so you know when you've achieved it); 3) the goal has to be *realistic*, so you do not get frustrated and give up; and 4) your goal must be *challenging*, so you will have a sense of accomplishment.

3. Take small steps. Don't do it all at once. Do a little each day toward your final goal. No one ever had a great body by working out once or dieting for one day.

4. Celebrate small successes. Don't just celebrate after you finish the big goal: celebrate progress! If you want to lose 50 pounds, be thrilled when you lose the first 10!

5. Practice, practice, practice. After you change your old habit, you must practice the new one, right.

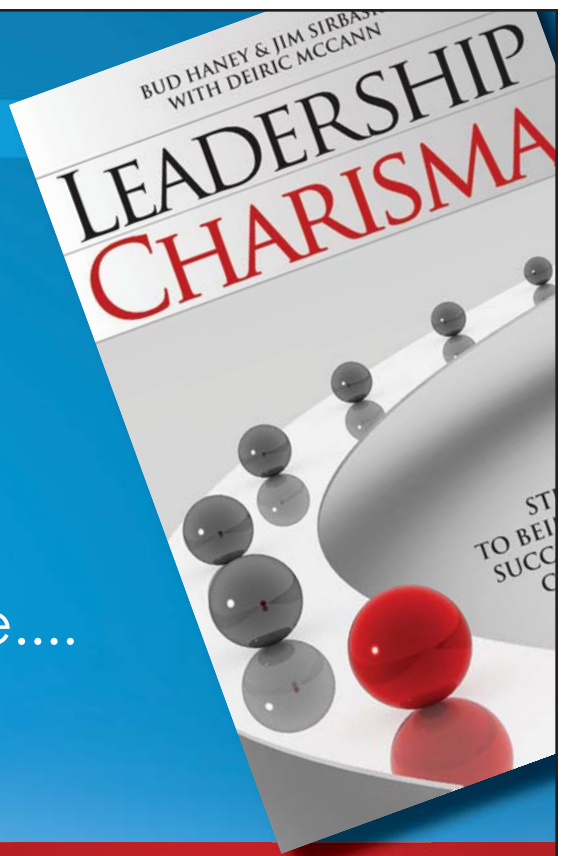
In *Swim With The Sharks*, Harvey McKay said: "If you are practicing all the time and doing it wrong you are now perfecting an error."

So, when you next hear a speaker, don't just go home and say "This will work, I can do it!" Have a plan, follow your plan and turn your goal into reality by following a few basic steps. The idea is 10 percent, the implementation is 90 percent, but *you can't teach pigs to fly no matter how long the runway is!* **SSE**

Hal Becker is an expert and speaker on leadership, sales, service and negotiating, and author of Hal Becker's Ultimate Sales Book. Visit www.halbecker.com.

ACTION: Go beyond motivation.

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We can get you here....



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