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Dedicated to my wife, whose incredible talents and love inspire me. And to my children, who give more to me than they will ever know.

Thank you.
- Dad

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Creative ideas at jbhomework.com.
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First Things First

Thank you for getting a copy the Sales Getters Sales Training Course. Investing in this course shows a real commitment on your part to improve your sales results and earn more money. If you follow the advice in this system, practice the lessons and put them to use, I guarantee you will get results.

Why 262 training days?

There are 262 business days in a calendar year. Some years have 260 or 261 days, so you will never have a business day without a training lesson (important concept). The Sales Getters Sales Training System has 262 sales training tips, suggestions and homework assignments for both the salesperson and the sales manager. Consistency is the cornerstone to improvement. Sales training every day keeps you in the sales mindset. And it can be fun.

My suggested method of going through this course is to run sales training Monday through Thursday and keep Friday for the sales manager. Friday’s training time for the sales reps should be used for product training. There are 52 lessons designed exclusively for the sales manager. (They need training too!) The Sales Getters Sales Training System is, however, designed in a modular format. You can go through the course any way you feel is most beneficial for you. You can even scan to the Table of Contents for a particular topic or situation with which you need help.

Why 33 minutes a day?

Sales training is a means to an end. It is the practice that prepares you for the big game. By putting a hard time limit on structured, daily training, it keeps your sessions on track and prevents them from taking over the selling day. These lessons are short and should not take up more than 33 minutes per day. Some of the homework assignments may take you over the 33-minute time limit. That’s why they’re called homework. For your lessons to be the most effective, please do the homework assignments. Your training time needs to be realistic and must have flexibility. If everyone is deeply engaged in a lesson or you’re reviewing a deal as part of the training session, a few extra minutes will not make a big difference.

A Professional Salesperson

This course contains several tips, approaches, techniques and strategies. There is no trickery, deceitfulness or unethical behavior included herein or recommended. A Professional Salesperson does none of those things. A Professional Salesperson delivers truthful, valuable information in a timely, ETHICAL, structured and prepared
manner which allows someone who has a need for that salesperson’s product, to make an informed and committed decision.

**How to use the Sales Getters™ Sales Training System®.**

The Sales Getters Sales Training System is designed to help you become a master of your craft and increase your income, *every business day*. Next to the content, it’s consistency that’s at the heart of this system. You probably know that it’s better for you to exercise or practice a musical instrument 30 minutes a day, rather than exercise or practice one day a week for three hours; or one day a month for 10 hours. You lose your focus. You lose it because you don’t use it. With consistent practice, a ritual if you will, learning becomes a habit. When you make sales training a habit you’re always thinking like a sales person. And when that happens, your income accelerates.

**While the lessons only take a few minutes to read, the rest of your 33-minute training session should be used to apply each lesson to your product and/or any sale on which you are currently working. This typically works best with the sales manager leading the discussion and getting input from all the sales reps.**

There are just a few lessons that need to be followed in sequence. Mostly, you can jump in anywhere or start at the beginning of the course at any time during the year.

Sales education should be taking place throughout your day; CD’s or podcasts in the car are a very good use of your sales training day; especially at the start of the day. It puts you in the right sales frame of mind. Structured sales training should be viewed like your daily exercise routine (which will also help your sales attitude). A good time for structured sales training is around noon, which is when most customers (East coast – adjust accordingly) are at lunch. While they eat, you learn. Lunch should be allowed into the training sessions. What a great use of lunchtime! You need to choose which time of the day works best for your organization.

The lessons use the word “product”, but every one of these lessons works just as well for services. “Product” is simply used for convenience. It’s the same idea when I refer to he versus she, or him versus her in the examples.

There is one area not covered in this system – product training. Every company offers a different product or service that requires its own training. I’ll leave that training up to you.

“When consistent practice brings mastery.” – George Leonard
Who am I to tell you how to sell?

I am not a sales trainer. I am a salesman.

I have been successfully selling products and services for many years. My first job was at the age of 10, working at a hot dog stand in Skokie, Illinois. It’s where I first learned the value of, “you want fries with that?” which you will read about later in the course. I have won sales awards with every company I have worked for or have run. In 2002, my company, MindIQ, (MindIQ.com) was included in the INC. 500 list for one of the fastest growing private companies in America, over a five-year period. I have encountered probably every type of sales situation you will ever run into. What you will learn in this course is not theory. I have lived, and continue to live 262 business days a year, every one of these sales lessons.

The Sales Getters Sales Training System is a result of all my experiences plus books on selling, seminars I’ve attended, tapes, CD’s, podcasts, DVD’s and blogs I’ve listened to or read. Every thought and idea in this course may not be a Louie Bernstein original. Some of the selling ideas and concepts go back a millennium to some of the world’s greatest thinkers. For the ideas I did not think up, I tried to put my personal spin on them and present them through my own viewpoint and professional opinion. I suggest you do the same and apply these concepts, ideas, techniques and lessons to fit your personal situation.

I have an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and in particular, sales knowledge. Based on my sales results over the years and my continued desire to be the best at what I do, I consider myself to be an expert in, and an ongoing student of, the art and science of selling.

A shameless plug: For many of the examples in this course I use my other company, MindIQ. Yes, I do it for promotion. However, it is also a business I am very familiar with, so it helps me create better examples. And, as you will learn in the upcoming lessons, you should never miss an opportunity to promote your brand; which is you. BTW – Check out my new 1-day seminar – Selling and Buying with Integrity: What the buyer and seller need to understand about each other.

My disclaimer: I cannot be there with you to work on these lessons. Please contact me at louie@sales-getters.com with questions, comments or ideas for additional lessons. I will do my best to respond to all emails. I have put forth the best advice I have for you inside this course. But how you interpret and deliver the messages contained herein, is up to you. I cannot assume any responsibility for your results; good or bad. So, if you’re ready to be a Professional, and Ethical, Salesperson, let’s get started!

All the best,

Louie Bernstein
Day 1 – Like, Trust, Buy!

This phrase is used, or should be, by every successful sales person on the planet. For many aspects of life, there is a certain order in which things flow. Grass seeds must be planted before they pop up and make a beautiful lawn. We learn to walk before we run. And so it is with sales. People need to like us before they trust us. People need to trust us before they will buy from us. Don’t confuse “like” here the way your best friend likes you; although that may end up being the case. Like, in the sales context, really means establishing a good business rapport. You are someone with whom your prospect “likes” speaking with and meeting.

You never trust someone you don’t like. It’s contrary to human nature. There’s probably something about that person that just rubs you the wrong way. Maybe you perceived them as pushy, or they made an inappropriate joke thinking it was funny. Your perception of them, whether you realized it or not, was that they did not have the same values as you. There is no like and no rapport here.

On the other hand, if someone does like you, you have a shot at getting them to trust you. Yes, I said a shot. Most people make you earn their trust. Don’t disappoint them.

To earn trust remember this:

- Do what you say you’re going to do. Be dependable.
- Arrive early.
- Follow up promptly and when you said you would.
- Find things that are of value to the other person.
- Always tell the truth. Even when it means possibly losing the sale.
- Understand that from their perspective, purchasing the wrong product could be career-ending for them.
- Be knowledgeable.
- Really listen.

The key concept of Like, Trust, Buy, is that it can never go out of this order. Approach Like, Trust, Buy in this order and you will be a step ahead of 90% of your competition.

Sales Homework – Write down three things that people said they like about you. Use those traits as you build your customer relationships.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Make a list of what you think makes a sales rep trustworthy, and share it with your team.
Day 2 – How’s your attitude?

I don’t think the old adage; attitude is everything, is correct. But it sure helps when you have a good one. I’ve walked into work with a bad attitude. Maybe it was from bad weather, horrible traffic, kids making me late, etc. I’ve also walked into work with a good, positive attitude. One thing I can tell you; when I have a good attitude, I get a lot more done, have better interactions with my coworkers and am more enthused when talking with my customers – which always lead to more sales and better profits.

YOU are in control of your attitude- every minute of your waking day. Things happen around and/or to you, but you have the power to decide how you’ll respond. This is really the true meaning of freedom; the freedom to choose how you react to the world. Nobody can give that to you or take it away. Before you get out of your car in front of the office, or pick up the phone if you are a work-at-home sales person, stop and do something that puts you in an awesome state of mind. You will be a happier, healthier and a more productive sales person, which is good for you and everyone with whom you come into contact. What I do believe to be correct is the old adage; a good attitude is contagious. Start spreading yours.

Sales Homework – List three things you do or enjoy that always makes you feel good and always improves your attitude. Be specific. Then, practice them every day. Here are some examples; listening to music that touches your soul, reading spiritual books, exercising, playing a musical instrument, writing. Now list yours.

1. ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – While it is not your job to be a therapist, it is your job to make sure your team is firing on all cylinders. Review the list above with your sales reps and think how you can support those activities. It will pay financial dividends to you.

P.S. Don’t forget about yourself.

Bonus Tip – Read, Man’s Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. Vicktor Frankl was a holocaust prisoner who survived by controlling his attitude.

This is the shortest lesson in this course. It’s at the front for a reason. If you lie to or mislead a customer or prospect, in any way, you should be terminated; right then. Sorry, but this unacceptable behavior for a professional sales person. And it gives the rest of us a bad name.

Sales Homework – Never do it.

Sales Managers – You need to establish a no tolerance policy against this behavior as well as setting the example.
Day 4 – Building rapport.

In Like-Trust-Buy, building rapport is how you accomplish the Like portion of these required steps to close a sale. This is really the time in the customer’s buying cycle that can be a lot of fun for you. You get to be yourself and make a new friend. This is something that’s easier for some people than others. But everyone can do it.

Before we discuss building rapport let me mention something about a “sales” personality. I believe if you are the kind of person who wants to have control over their income and is good with giving value and hard work to make that happen, then I think you will do just fine in sales. From there, it’s just learning the techniques and strategies. However, if you’re in sales to make a lot of money and it really doesn’t matter what you have to say to get the deal, or you’re not willing to put the time in to service your customer, then sales will be more difficult for you. But since you’re going through these lessons to learn how be a professional, you’re probably not that kind of person.

There are several cold call and follow up scripts in this system that can help you with what to say. Just remember the bullets below as you’re using those scripts with each prospect:

- Did I do my research on the company and my prospect?
- Do I know what common interests we may have?
- Am I calling with some information that is of value to them?
- Am I trying to make a sale where EVERYONE wins?
- Do I have a clear goal for the call?
- Am I focusing? (Hint: Close email, turn off cell phone, etc.)
- Am I smiling?
- Am I listening more than I am talking?

My best advice to you is to be a good person. Just being a good, sincere person will go miles in building a rapport that will lead you to Trust and then to a closed deal.

Sales Homework – Go do a random act of kindness. Then go call your prospects and establish rapport.

Sales Managers – Foster this type of attitude in your group. It pays dividends and is just the right thing to do.
Day 5 – The Trusted Advisor.

More than any other title in sales the one you want to own is **Trusted Advisor**. When your customer calls you their Trusted Advisor, you have arrived. Some think this title has become a sales cliché. They fail to realize it’s not about the words. This title elevates you to a level few sales people ever reach. It’s a club you want to be a part of. Here’s how you become a **Trusted Advisor**:

- Do what you said you would do.
- Do what your customers didn’t think could be done.
- Send thank you notes.
- Keep your customers abreast of industry trends.
- Inform them of what their competitors are doing.
- Introduce them to people and companies who can help them.
- Keep them up-to-date of any new pricing, products, policies or procedures within your company.
- Check in often with value and make sure they are still happy with your product. Be proactive.

You’re probably thinking, that’s not so complicated. Your right, it’s not! Sales is simple, it’s just not easy. Doing the above tasks takes a conscientious, daily effort. But the effort is worth it.

I heard a term a long time ago; Comatose Marketing. Picture this: A patient in bad shape is lying in a hospital bed. The doctor comes into his room and checks the chart, checks the patient and then tells the nurse to change the medication the patient is receiving intravenously. As the new medication starts to take effect, the patient’s eyes slowly open and a small smile breaks out on his face. The patient feels better and says thank you to the doctor with his expression. This is the kind of metaphoric relationship you want with your customer. They are giving you their arm and telling you, “You know what you’re doing. I trust you. Just give me what I need to get better.” That’s your job and responsibility as a **Trusted Advisor**. Do your part and give your customers what they need to make and keep their business healthy.

**Sales Homework** – Go through the bullets above for each one of your customers. If you are delinquent in any one of these items, fix it – and join the most rewarding, and rewarded, club in business.

**Sales Managers** – A team of Trusted Advisors will bring you wealth and happiness. Keep the bullets above posted and use them as a checklist when doing account reviews.
Day 6 – Setting sales goals: Preparation

There are entire books dedicated to learning how to set goals. This is the Sales Getters approach to setting sales goals. Let’s get a couple things out of the way:

- Goals are not just a, once-a-year thing. Yes, you should set goals annually. You can also set them quarterly, monthly, weekly and even daily. Once you get your formula down, it’s the same procedure.
- This is about setting sales goals. There are other ways to set goals for other job functions, but sales goals are unique to sales people and need to be treated that way. Sales goals can be measured in amount sold, commissions earned, new customers gained, etc. You measure whatever gets you to your end result. However, if you measure and set a goal for something other than commissions earned, you have to know how attaining that goal will translate into dollars in your pocket.

These are the parts you need to put together your sales goals:

1. Know what you want. I mean, know exactly what you want. You have to have a precisely defined target/goal or you’ll just be flailing away only hoping you’ll hit it.
2. You need to believe from the beginning you can achieve your goal. If you don’t totally believe with every fabric of your being that it can be made, it probably won’t be made.
3. Once you believe your goal is reachable, you must ingrain that goal by writing it down and saying it out loud over and over again. You must do this every day. Yes, you may look and sound silly to yourself, but you will be the one laughing on your way to the bank.
4. You need to know your numbers – it must be measurable. So, if you want to make $20,000 in commissions in a month, here are a list questions you need to answer for that to happen:
   a. How many calls from my list will deliver how many qualified prospects?
   b. How many qualified prospects, will result in how many appointments, demos, etc.?
   c. How many appointments, demos, etc., will become opportunities?
   d. How many opportunities do I need and of what value?

Your sales cycle may be 30, 60, 90 or more days. So, if your product’s average sale cycle is 90 days, it’s too late to set goals for this month. You need to think ahead.

Sales Homework – Get your numbers together. If you have historical data, that’s great. If not, find the top selling rep and use their numbers.

Sales Managers – This should be an exercise that gets reviewed on a monthly basis. Even if your goals are quarterly or annually, you need to make sure your sales reps stay on track. Go directly to the next lesson: Setting Sales Goals: Doing the math.
Day 7 – Setting sales goals: It all adds up.

In this example, we’ll assume the average length of time it takes a customer to buy your product is 90 days. The only thing you need to adjust if your product’s buying cycle is shorter or longer, is how far in advance you need to start planning.

I like to work backward in planning. First, I pick my number. This number should be in “pencil.” After you go through your numbers you may need to erase and change it. If the number is not realistic based on the data you have, then you need to adjust your expectations. For example; if you find it takes you 2,000 calls per month to reach your number and it’s physically impossible to make that many calls, deliver demos or prepare proposals, then you need to adjust your goal downward or sell a product with a higher payout.

Next, I visualize what the success of hitting that goal looks like; maybe buying a new guitar, taking a vacation, whatever it may be. I see it in my mind and get very emotionally involved.

Now I plug in the numbers I need for the next 30 days, so that 90 days from now I will have $20,000 in commissions. Assume a 10% commission on sales:

525 Calls per month – 25 calls per day x 21 days
26 Good prospects which lead to
15 Opportunities which lead to
10 Closed deals at an average deal size of $20,000, which is $200,000 in sales and
$20,000 in commissions.

Sales Homework – Walk through the goal-setting math using your numbers. Put this in writing and put it where you will see it every day. You don’t have to display it in your cubicle if it makes you uncomfortable. The important thing is that you look at it every day. Don’t just read it - See it. Believe it. Make it happen.

Sales Managers – Go through this exercise with all your sales reps. It’s best, and more efficient for you, if all the reps who sell the same product use the same formula. Don’t forget yourself. You need goals too. Your goals are based around how your group or department’s numbers add up to making your goal based around your compensation plan.

Note: Numbers above are illustrative only. Your results will vary based on product, opportunity definition, pricing, funnel setup, etc.
Day 8 – Turning a cold call warm - Preparation

At one point in all our sales careers we’ve had to make a cold call; picking up the phone, calling a complete stranger and very quickly gaining their trust...enough to keep them talking and stay on the line long enough to learn why we’re calling.

There are dozens of approaches to cold calling, but they all center on quickly getting someone to listen to you so you can ask them questions to see if they are a good prospect. The best way to do this is to talk to the other person about something that interests them. This could be something related to their business, their Alma mater, career, hobby, etc. If you’re calling me about an incredible new service for selling books that has brought five of your clients a million dollars in sales, I’m listening to you.

You must prepare before making the call. With internet access, there is no excuse not to take this extra step. You should have the following windows open on your computer so you’re ready to learn something about your prospect that will engage them:

- Google (or any search engine)
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Facebook

Sales Homework - Take your cold call list of prospects, choose five and learn about them on Google, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Then, fill in the blanks for each them.

What companies have they worked for? ______________________________

Do you know anyone else at those companies? _________________________

What part of the country do they live in? ______________________________

Where did they go to school? _______________________________________

What activities do they participate in and did they win any awards? ______

Sales Managers - Make sure your sales reps have internet access to these sites. Don’t worry if you think being on these sites will be a distraction. Monitor their calling activity and adjust based on their success.
Day 9 – The Cold Call: Score some goals.

Your research homework is done. You know your target. You know their title, how long they’ve worked at their present company, where else they’ve worked, where they went to school, who you know who knows them, and any other pertinent news about their career, achievements and items that may matter to them. You’re ready to make the call.

There are a minimum of three things you must achieve with your call:

1. Make it seem that the call was prompted by something special about them or their company.
2. Establish credibility about your company.
3. Get their permission to qualify them.
4. Set up another action step.
5. Bonus - Get your prospect to take some sort of action right then, like view a demo, fill out an application, etc.
6. Double Bonus – Get them to make a purchase decision right then. This will usually apply to low priced products which can be purchased on an impulse buy.

Sales Homework - Write out at least one script for each of the top three items above. For example;

“Hello John, this is Louie Bernstein with Sales Getters in Atlanta, Georgia. <Pause to see if they ask how you are.> (We will cover the pause in another lesson.) I’m so glad I was able to reach you. I was very excited to see Ultra Motors brought in 300 new customers last year. That’s fantastic and I understand that it’s your department that brought in those customers. Congratulations!

The reason this excites me, is that over the last three years, every one of Sales Getters’ customers who had a large increase in sales and used Sales Getters afterward, had a further sales increase of more than 10% in less than six months. Can I ask you a few questions to see if you can take advantage of our service?”

1. ____________________________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers - The scripts your sales reps write should be in line with your objectives for cold calling prospects. You may already have these scripts, and you may have been the author. If so, they should be modified and applied for consistency. This is a good chance to see if your sales reps understand those objectives and can put them into writing. Don’t punish creativity if they deviate a little. People need to feel they own the process.
Day 10 – Making the Cold Call – A successful pick up.

Just because you’re ready to call your prospect, it doesn’t mean they’re ready to accept a call from you. And if they’re not, you’ll enter one of two places no sales rep wants to go to; The Gatekeeper or voicemail. Drats! What to do now?

In this lesson we’re covering ways you can reach your, impossible-to-get-a-hold-of-prospect so you don’t have to worry about getting past the Gatekeeper or settle for a leaving a voicemail.

First, just trying calling early or late – Gatekeepers are usually on duty 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. You may get lucky and find your prospect answers their phone when their assistant is not there. If that doesn’t work, you have to determine how high a value you place on winning this prospect’s business. If you really want or need this deal, and think you have a shot at it, consider this: You have already done your homework on this person. You know their likes, dislikes, alma mater, career achievements, etc. With the internet, and the dwindling level of privacy we have, you could probably find out what they’re having for dinner. Use this information to do something clever and get their attention.

My wife, who has one of the best creative minds I have ever witnessed, came up with this idea; she was doing a marketing campaign for a magazine publisher looking to sell ad space. She sent a View Master. This is a cool little plastic viewing device from the 1960’s, which lets you insert a little wheel of photos, which look totally 3D and cool. She sent one to each of the clients they wanted to meet with. The slides had pictures of their brand, and how great it looked in her publication. It worked every time because she engaged the client and matched her product with the client’s interest.

P.S. She sent them overnight which added importance to the message.

Sales Homework - Come up with three ideas you can use to get in front of your high value prospects.

Idea #1 ________________________________

Idea #2 ________________________________

Idea #3 ________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps on never giving up and help them use their creativity. Be open to spending a little money on high value prospects.
Day 11 – The Gatekeeper

Okay – so you don’t have the budget for a super cool marketing device to send to your prospect to get their attention. You just need to pick up the phone and make the call. But something happens. Some other person answers your call and demands to know who you are and what you want. This person is known as The Gatekeeper. This person’s job is to screen calls for their boss. Nobody gets in who the Gatekeeper thinks does not deserve to speak to the boss. These are strict instructions, although often misinterpreted.

My first approach in dealing with the Gatekeeper is avoidance. I do this by pretending the prospect and I are good ole buddies. I do this with the tone of my voice.

“Bill Murray’s office - This is Joanne.” I reply in a very casual, slightly rushed, “Hi Joanne. This is Louie Bernstein. Is Bill there?” My tone sounds like I am calling just to confirm our golf date and I’m in kind of a hurry. You’d be surprised how often this gets you through. It’s all in the theatre. A good Gatekeeper, however, will stick to the script if they do not recognize the name. “Yes, Louie. Does Bill know you?” Or, “Yes, Louie. What company are you with?” Once those questions come up, so does the wall. Just answer honestly and succinctly. If Joanne will not put you through after your answers, my suggestion is to ask if you can leave a voicemail. Sometimes the Gatekeeper will say, “I’m Bill’s voicemail!” In this case thank Joanne very much and start to deliver a long and involved message. There is a good chance she will tire of this and either put you through to Bill or “discover” Bill’s voicemail.

Sales Homework - Come up with three things to say to get past The Gatekeeper.

1. _________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers - You want your sales people as aggressive as possible but you do not want them to act dishonestly or unethically. Coach them on being polite, professional and determined. You may only get one shot this prospect.
Day 12 – Gatekeeper Strategies: Make a foe a friend.

From the previous lesson you might think the Gatekeeper is there just to keep you from making a living. They are not. The Gatekeeper has a job to do, just like you. So, what’s the best way to work with them? It’s time to follow your mother’s advice - You get more bees with honey than with vinegar.

First, let me point out that you never know the relationship between the Gatekeeper and your prospect. When I interviewed for a District Sales Manager position at EMC before they were a multi-billion dollar company (I was actually employee number 56), I was greeted in the waiting area by a nice receptionist. We chatted for a while before I was shown in for my interview with Dick Eagan. Dick was the CEO and the “E” of EMC. It turns out that lovely receptionist was Dick’s wife! Remember, it was early on in EMC’s corporate life. Guess how my interview would have ended up had I been rude, arrogant or demanding with Dick’s Gatekeeper?

While on the phone, if your mad dash to the prospect doesn’t work, first try to make a friend and help them feel important. Ask the Gatekeeper this question:

“Can you help me out please, Margaret? I was told that Mr. Smith could really use our product. How do you suggest I get this information to him?” They will probably respond with, “Just send it to me.” Don’t. Reply with, “I’m sorry; I am not allowed to send this sensitive material to anyone other than Mr. Smith. What else do you suggest?” With this approach you’re making your new friend feel important by asking their advice. Even if you turn down their advice you have now put them in a position to come up another solution for you.

Sales Homework - Come up with another question you can ask the Gatekeeper once they turn you away.

__________________________________________________________

Sales Managers - Bring your experience into this session. This is a great opportunity for you to share things that have worked in the past for you. Compile the complete list and add them to your Sales Playbook.
**Day 13 – Leaving voicemail.**

If you’re selling to the right people, then your prospects probably get a ton of voicemails. I’m not a real fan of leaving voicemails unless they’re used for strategic purposes. For introductory voicemails keep the following in mind:

- Keep it short. No longer than 20 to 30 seconds.
- Speak slowly.
- End with your name and phone number spoken S-L-O-W-L-Y.
- Give them a reason to call you back. This is the most important element of the voicemail. This is very similar to the introductory part of the cold call:
  - Do your research on them.
  - Establish credibility.
  - Generate excitement and/or curiosity.

An example; “Hello John, I was very excited to see Ultra Motors brought in 300 new customers last year. That’s fantastic and I understand that it’s *your* department that brought in those customers. Congratulations!

The reason this excites me, is that over the last three years every one of Sales Getters’ customers who had a large increase in sales and used Sales Getters afterward, had a **further** sales increase of more than 10% in less than six months. If you can call me at (404) 555-2365 and let me ask you a few questions, we can determine quickly if Ultra Motors can take advantage of our service. This is Louie Bernstein with Sales Getters in Atlanta, Georgia. My number is 404-555-5326 <Slowly>.” It’s important you leave your name and phone number until the end. You have a better chance of someone listening to your entire message.

Nobody likes having to leave voicemail. It makes you feel like you aren’t getting anywhere. But it is part of the job. So, you might as well do it as best you can. Think about if someone were to leave you a voicemail. What would that voicemail have to have in it to get you to call back? Apply that same logic, or thought pattern, to your voicemails.

**Sales Homework** – Write out your voicemail for an introductory call.

**Sales Managers** – Help your sales reps write their scripts. Do this in a group setting and develop a best-of-breed list of scripts. Then add these scripts to your Sales Playbook.
Day 14 – Qualify your prospect.

How do you know if you have a qualified prospect? For most companies, at least the following is required for a prospect to be qualified. They should:

- Have a business pain, need or desire that has made purchasing your product, or one like yours, a top priority. This could be:
  - One of their customers (external or internal) is demanding something your product helps them deliver.
  - They’re losing deals to the competition.
  - They’re trying to stay, or become, a leader in their industry.
  - They’re looking for another revenue stream that your product provides.
- Have a budget allocated, or can get funds for your product.
- Have a sense of urgency.
- Be involved in making the final decision.

You need to put together your own list of what a qualified prospect is for you, as it relates to your product. For example; at Sales Getters, a qualified prospect for our business would be someone and a company who:

- Needs to grow a segment of, or all of, their sales. (Pain)
- Has a budget or agrees with the ROI that can be delivered to them. (Money available)
- Needs revenue quickly. (Urgency)
- Has the VP of Sales or CEO involved. (Decision maker)

Sales Homework – List at least four criteria that when met, make your prospect qualified:

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – After your sales reps give you their individual lists, go over all of them together with your team. Tweak them, add some qualifying criteria and replace whatever needs to go. You should end up with a tightly focused profile.
Day 15 – Deliver value. Always.

Nothing works better than your prospect believing you are there to help them. It builds trust. You should come prepared for your phone call or meeting with ideas, or at least questions, that convey to your prospect that you have their best interests in mind. Here are some ideas:

Go to their web site and look for news about their company, their CEO (if it’s not them), their financials, etc. Your conversation could be; “Mike, I saw on your web site you just established a strategic partnership with Sawyer Construction and are looking to expand on that. I have contacts at McKenzie Construction who may also be a good match for you. Would you like me to make an introduction?” Congratulations. You have now elevated yourself to business partner.

If you cannot find information like above, pose it in the form of a question. “Mike, it looks like Sawyer Construction could possibly benefit from contacts I have at McKenzie Construction. You service different industries, so there is no conflict. Would you like for me to make an introduction?”

You see, prospects are not looking for someone to sell them something. They are looking for a resource that can help them in as many parts of their business as possible. They can pick up the phone and call any company to order something. The odds of them calling you are as good as your competitors. However, if you are the sales person who is not only selling them a product or service, but the one who helps them succeed on a business, professional and personal level, then your odds getting and keeping their business will dramatically increase.

Don’t be a seller. Be a partner in your customer’s success.

Sales Homework - Research your top five prospects and come up with at least one idea for each prospect that lets them know you are a resource who can help them.

Prospect 1. _____________________________________________

Prospect 2. _____________________________________________

Prospect 3. _____________________________________________

Prospect 4. _____________________________________________

Prospect 5. _____________________________________________

Sales Managers - Review the list and the research with your sales reps. Two heads or more can be better than one for this project. You can never have enough good ideas.
Day 16 – Call and call again.

Sometimes I’ll look at a sales rep’s activity history and see call after call, showing voicemail after voicemail; sometimes every two or three days. This type of calling activity really generates a lot of discussion and debate. I once had a business owner tell me, “We just keep calling every day, sometimes twice a day, until they can’t take it anymore and call us back.”

While I don’t think the above example is a good way to talk to your prospects, I also don’t think there should be any hard and fast rules applied to this process. The first question to ask yourself is, “How many times would I need to be called?” By answering this honestly it helps give you the same perspective as your client.

A couple of other items that should weigh in on your decision:

- Is it a cold call?
- How far along are you in the customer buying process?
- Did they ask you to call them back in X number of days?
- Do you have new (valuable to them) information to speak with them about?

After the initial cold call I use this sequence for making additional attempts:

- 2nd call – after one week.
- 3rd call – eight business days after that.
- 4th call – 10 business days after that.
- 5th call – 20 business days after that.
- 6th call – 30 business days after that.
- Final call – 60 business days after that.

Note: An email should be sent after every call that builds on the previous email and voice mail.

Follow up calls, when no timeframe has been given, have a lot of different variables. Too many for one sales training lesson. A couple things to remember, however:

1. Don’t be a pest.
2. If you call too much you look desperate.

A final tip - A study done by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) revealed the following: The most successful time to reach an initial prospect is between 8:00am and 9:00am and 4:00pm and 5:00pm their time.

Sales Homework – Go through your prospects in your CRM system and set up six automated reminders for your cold or warm prospects for whom you have only made an initial call.

Sales Managers – Make sure your sales reps understand the balance between persistence and being a pest.
Day 17 – Trying YOU on for size.

Your product may need to be sampled or evaluated by your prospect before they buy. Many software companies offer this option. (If they don’t, they should.) Don’t be fooled into thinking your prospects are just evaluating your product. Your prospect is evaluating you and your company as well. They’re looking over your support, your customer service and how you respond when there are glitches during the evaluation.

When I’m evaluating a product or service, these are my thoughts if I’m not getting the kind of response or support I expect:

- If this is how your company responds before you have my money, what will the service be like when you do have it?
- How quickly does this company get back to prospect inquiries during an evaluation?
- What’s the performance of the support team?
- Does my account have the full attention of their management team?
- Does my sales rep readily share not only success stories, but examples of where they stumbled? (Every company does.)

I have seen companies purchase inferior products or products that cost more because of the comfort level they need to have in their purchase decision. So, don’t be fooled into thinking you will always win the sale because you have a technically superior product. There is a lot more going on here; particularly with larger purchases.

Sales Homework – When you have a product evaluation going on, mark your online calendar to periodically check in on the prospect. Tips:

1. Use the Recurring feature of the electronic calendar so that you will be reminded automatically.

2. Before you check in with your prospect, check with your support or customer service department and see if they have been contacted about any issues and how the problem was handled.

3. Be as forthcoming as possible about upcoming products or services, changes in support policies, and discounts that will be offered to all other customers soon. If you don’t, and your customer finds out after their purchase, you will have damaged a lot of the trust they have put in you.

Bonus tip: Have as many managers as possible, within your organization, call the prospect during the evaluation. Have them simply introduce themselves, outline their responsibility and offer whatever assistance they can.

Sales Managers – Always have an up-to-date list of all of your sales reps’ current evaluations.
Day 18 – Make the signer look good.

When you are dealing with large customers you might not meet the person that’s required to sign your order. The larger the company the less likely it is you will meet them. But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t get as close as you can to that person, while at the same time using that distance to your advantage.

An example; you have been negotiating with a product manager who has gone back and forth a couple of times with you on placing an order for your product. You finally come to an agreement and he even tells you “everyone” is in agreement. Off goes the product manager to the signer. Unfortunately, the signer, who happens to be the CFO in this case, decides he wants better terms. Now what? You gave your best offer and that was, “a firm offer.” From your position:

1. Hey, I thought everyone was in agreement. Surprise!
2. You really did offer a good deal. Not fair. (Wah, wah, wah. This is reality.)
3. You do not want to make the CFO look bad.
4. You don’t want to lose the deal.

Here’s what you need to remember – they are still the customer, they are doing the buying and they are giving you their money. If the deal is still good for you and your company, figure out how to accept the deal and give one final concession while taking something back. Either way you win. In our example, perhaps you can accept their terms but take away another concession which you gave earlier. They will either take your offer or come back with something less severe than their previous offer. To do otherwise would look greedy on their part and not many people like to be seen that way. Plus, your signer the CFO, can say he got what he wanted and save face with his subordinates.

If you are too mad or disappointed to do this, don’t do anything for 24 hours. You will be amazed how much better the deal looks the next day.

Sales Homework – There is no homework today. Just a lesson: Always save at least two things in your proposal that you can hold back and use in negotiations. You may never have to bring those out.

Sales Managers - For this strategy to work you need to be in a good, leveraged position with the customer. Make sure you understand how deep the prospect is committed to your product. Today is a good day to talk about selling value with your sales reps.
Day 19 – Drill baby, drill.

Most sales people don’t ask enough questions. They make the mistake of talking at their prospect. They think they will beat them into submission so they won’t have to hear “no.”

Good sales people have their questions either written down in a CRM system in front of them, or have those questions memorized. Great sales people know how to ask follow up questions that leave no doubt about what their prospect said and what action items need to be completed to get the sale closed.

An example; David has just finished a demo for a large company. The three participants on the call all seemed very impressed. David begins:

“Did I cover everything you needed to see today to go with Sales Getters?”

“Yes David, I think so.” Hearing this David keeps drilling.

“So Amanda, how are decisions to purchase products like ours made at Widgetmaker?”

“Well, we meet as a committee and then we blah, blah, blah.”

“I see. And then what happens?” David starts to drill.

“Then we pass it to blah, blah, blah, so they can do whatever they do with our recommendation.”

Undeterred, David continues drilling. “And how do they handle it?”

Hopefully, you get the idea. You need to keep asking questions until you know exactly how your product gets approved and purchased. The earlier you ask these questions and understand your customer’s buying process, the sooner you will know how real your opportunity is and who you need to speak with to make sure the your deal flows smoothly.

Note: I am not saying you have to get every answer you need to close the sale on the very first call. However, this drill-down questioning needs to take place on each call, leaving nothing ambiguous, with the result getting you to the next phase of the customer’s buying cycle.

Sales Homework – Pick three opportunities from your pipeline where you do not know how your order will flow to you. Call your top contact there and start with the question, “James, I’m putting together our success strategy for when you become a customer. Can I ask you a few questions?” Until they have laid out the complete roadmap, drill baby drill.

Sales Managers – Listen and record these calls for future training sessions. You should be able to ask your sales reps about each deal where you are at least 50% of the way home and see the path your orders will take.
Day 20 – Closing: Is there anything else?

Many times, a sales person will think they are close to getting the deal closed but then their prospect puts up another objection or raises a question. “Tom, we like your company but we need to have our order delivered by next Friday. Can you do that?” Tom, being the well intentioned salesman checks with shipping and confirms the order can be there on time. He gets back to his prospect. “Yep Eric, we can get that guitar shipped on time.” Now Tom’s really excited thinking he is about to get his order until Eric says, “You know Tom, your price is kind of high. Can you do any better?” What?!! Tom thought all he had to do was confirm the shipping date.

When a prospect gives you an objection that prevents the sale from closing, ask them this: “Eric, if we can get your shipment to you on time, is that all that is keeping you from placing your order today?” By just asking this one question you have narrowed down the conversation and cut out any other reasons your prospect would not move ahead with their purchase.

If Eric answers your question with: “Well, there is one other thing....” simply summarize his objections and repeat your question. “So Eric, if we can get it there on time, give you our “best customer” 5% discount, and give you the one you want in black, will you be placing your order?”

The key is narrowing it down so there is no wiggle room. Don’t be fooled into thinking your customers don’t know what they are doing. Most of the time, your customers are used to dealing with average sales people they can send on errands chasing things down for them. This really speaks to becoming a Professional Salesperson. A Professional Salesperson knows their time is a precious commodity. The Professional Salesperson learns and understands how to work efficiently and effectively. By asking this closing question you cut right to the heart of the matter, use your time wisely and convey to your prospect or customer that your time is as valuable as theirs.

Sales Homework – Role play these sentences using the objections for your product with another sales rep or your sales manager until the words just flow.

Sales Managers - Make sure you have a list of all the objections that can be thrown at your sales reps so they will be prepared to close every sale.
Day 21 – Do the math.

How good of a job does your pipeline or sales funnel do at telling you how much you need in order to make your quota? Don’t trust it until you do the math. Let’s say your quota for the year is $1,000,000. It is July 1st and you are sitting with $400k in sales. So, you need $600k to make quota. Do you know how much you need to have in your pipeline to make the $600k? Many sales groups figure it this way:

$900k - in the pipeline.
$630k - Total after weighting the pipeline (this is the average percentage given to close all of the deals. In this case it is 70%).

Looks like you’re in pretty good shape, right? Maybe. Take it one step further. Let’s say you’re a pretty good closer and you close 80% of everything in your weighted pipeline. Now you have:

$504k = $630k x 80%. This leaves you $96k short of quota.

While this may seem like double-cutting, consider it a reality check. Looking at your pipeline, you can come up short if you don’t take into account your closing rate. If you are new, or if you are selling a new product, don’t make your closing rate above 35%. In sales, it’s better to err on the safe side. The worst that can happen is you’ll get bonus sales!

Sales Homework - Figure out what you need to make your quota based on the above formula.

_________ Quota
- __________ Sales (YTD, QTD, MTD, etc.)

= __________ Amount Needed

_____________ Weighted Forecast
X __________ Closing Rate
= __________ Real Amount Needed

Tip: Take the formula above and plug it into a spreadsheet so you can have it handy. Using a spreadsheet makes it easy to look at different scenarios, based on new prospects, closing rates, etc.

Sales Managers - Walk through each of your reps’ forecast using this formula. Don’t let them fall short of quota be because you didn’t do the numbers!
Day 22 – Positioning your product.

How well do you know where your product fits in the market? If your product is sold horizontally across multiple industries or segments of the population, it may be viewed differently by different groups. Make sure you understand how your product excels in each of the groups into which you sell so you can position it appropriately.

Ask yourself, where does my product fit in the primary market into which it is sold? Examples; Market – Office supplies: Strength – Quickest delivery.

Market – Staffing: Strength – Quality candidates, high placement rate.

There is a common understanding in business about positioning your product. It is best to pick one of the three below and emphasize that strength:

1. Price
2. Quality
3. Service

Smart companies like Lexus and Walmart know this. To do otherwise confuses the customer. If you watch a Lexus commercial they hardly ever talk about price. They talk about how luxurious the car is. Walmart brags about their prices - “The low price leader.”

Some companies tell you to pick two out of three – fast, good or cheap. But, you cannot have all three.

Sales Homework #1 – Using your product list its strength in its primary market and start to emphasize that.

1. Market – Strength

Sales Homework #2 – If you have secondary markets you sell into, same exercise.

2. Market - Strength
3. Market - Strength

What are its key strengths against the competition? List three of those within each market (Think benefits).

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

Sales Managers - If your sales people aren’t sure who the target is and how/what to present to them, there’s not much chance they will ever sell to them.
Day 23 – Beating the fear of rejection over the phone.

The first myth to throw away is that a certain number of “no’s” will get you to a “yes.” This fallacy goes hand-in-hand with the idea that if you just make enough calls, surely you will find someone who will say yes or listens to you. It is a weak way to sell. If you aren’t doing the right things to begin with, you may never get a “yes.” It is a much better idea to learn and practice sound selling skills than to “wing it.” So, the first step in overcoming the fear of rejection is to make sure your basic selling skills are at 100%. This includes nailing down your calling script.

I know, nobody likes using calling scripts. Great! Use that to your advantage. Do the tough (and correct) things and leave your competition in the rear view mirror. Delivering your script is usually your first communication with a prospect and usually the place where they will say no, yes, or tell me more. Your script needs to be delivered as close as possible to the way it was written, and it should sound like you are talking to your best friend. As a matter of fact, call your best friend and ask them to listen to you. Better yet, call all your friends. If you get yourself on a mission to be a Professional Salesperson, to be number one, and to earn more than all your competitors, nothing seems too strange. Ever see an all star athlete talking to themselves before throwing free throws, stepping into the batter’s box, or lining up to sink a put worth six figures? Take note.

Sales Homework - Practice your script today by recording and listening to it over and over until it just flows. You should deliver your opening script at least 25 times in a row. It will give you more confidence. Once you get a few “tell me more” responses, your fear will subside.

Sales Managers - Make sure you have recording devices so you and your sales reps can listen to their practice calls together.

Remember, “Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.” Nelson Mandela
Day 24 – Don’t be Intimidated.

Unfortunately, many sales people view themselves as less-than-equal to their prospects. It’s probably the same fear that people have who are afraid to ask a celebrity for their autograph (if they want one). Trust me, your prospects get up in the morning, use the bathroom and eat breakfast just like you. But for some reason many sales people think they’re different; more important.

You are not only a sales person, you are a business person. Your time is valuable. And you need to let your prospect know that fact politely but firmly. If your prospect keeps putting you off, is continually late for meetings, or doesn’t show up at all you need to have a conversation with them. “Judy, we have been talking for several months now and, quite honestly, I cannot invest any more time helping you become successful with our product unless you are willing to commit to our mutual success. Please don’t consider me rude, but I have other active clients that are engaged and require my attention.” Sound harsh? Maybe. But this approach will do two things -

1. Determine if you have a real prospect.
2. Let’s your prospect know you are a professional who manages time wisely and someone who is willing to help them succeed. But only if they join you.

Sales Homework – Write out two other variations of the above quote that lets your prospect know you are a professional, your time is valuable and you are not intimidated by their title.

1. _________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________

Sales Managers - Emphasize to your sales people that their prospects may be important in title, but they are just people too; sometimes lesser paid people. In many cases, a good sales person will (and should) earn a better income than the person they are calling on.
Day 25 – When they don’t want to pay for the add-on service.

Sometimes you run into a customer that only wants to pay for your product but none of the surrounding services that help them get the most out of their purchase. It usually is penny wise but pound foolish on their part. A software product I once sold integrated into a customer’s application and had a technically complex installation. We had a large customer who purchased the product without the professional services we proposed, which would help them install and configure the software, despite our strong suggestions to include this add on. They did this to save money and/or they thought they were competent enough to install and configure it on their own. Of course they encountered issues which would have been resolved quickly by our support team.

You owe it to your customer to go that “extra selling mile” and get them to purchase (if it is not already included) any add-on services that will guarantee a successful experience with your product.

Here is an analogy you can use that may get their attention – “David, let’s say you have been saving up to go to a great but expensive restaurant you have wanted to take a favorite someone to for years. You have heard this restaurant always delivered an incredible meal and an amazing experience. The only catch is you’ll have to pay a few extra dollars for your silverware because they import it from France. But you get to keep it. Would you still go and mentally write off the few extra dollars simply to ensure everything was perfect? Or would you just not go?”

Their response can tell you a lot about the person you are going to be doing business with after the purchase. Don’t let your customers scrimp with add-ons when it can have an effect on their overall experience with your company.

Sales Homework – Call a few customers who did purchase a necessary add on and ask them how it worked out. Combine that testimonial with unrelated examples like the one above and write out a script you can deliver. Then be ready to present it to a prospect that is balking.

Sales Managers – While your reps may be able to convince these types of prospects to purchase your add-on, it may be indicative of a larger problem you are going to have with this customer. Scrutinize this deal. They may cost you more than they are worth.
Day 26 – Puppy love.

Car dealers and smart B2B companies have learned how to use this strategy and make a lot of money from it. Briefly, the idea is to let your prospect get emotionally attached to your product the way a pet store lets you take home the little puppy for a “few days”, knowing it will never come back. A new car dealer knows he has a high probably of their cars never coming back once you get the feel behind the wheel, smell that new leather, take the family for a ride and park it in your garage.

When we were selling memory boards at EMC for production computer systems, our first goal of moving the sale forward was to get an “eval.” An evaluation was essential to the sale because it was a huge commitment for the prospect to bring down their system, install the new board(s) and bring the system back up. Adding computer memory to these systems, most of the time, enabled them to process faster so users didn’t have to wait for a response after typing something. Seems a bit dated now, but in the 80’s and early 1990’s it was very big deal. The good news was that the memory did improve performance most of the time. So, the boards never came out and we usually got the sale.

Sales Homework – List three different ways you can get your product in the hands of your prospects to let them “take it for a ride.” You may be thinking your product doesn’t have that feature; “I sell buildings. How do they try out one of those?” Well, maybe you arrange for visits to some of your buildings. Give them an office there for a couple weeks. If you’re already using this strategy, think of new approaches your competitor doesn’t use. Whatever you sell, get them emotionally involved and attached, and then watch them “keep that puppy and love it.”

1. ______________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Set up a system for your sales reps that encourages, and gives them the resources, to get your customers trying out or evaluating your product.
Day 27 – Checking in is checking out.

If you get nothing else from these lessons, please get this: Never call a prospect and say, “I was just checking in to ….” It is weak. It is lame. It is unprofessional. Hearing these words, immediately tells your prospect you’re an amateur. I know this is a harsh truth, but it is the truth.

When you call a prospect or a customer, call with a purpose. Hopefully, that purpose will be to provide them with valuable information that makes them believe you are a valuable resource and they should continue talking with you. I know you want to know the status of your deal or if they plan on purchasing this quarter. But to your customer, you simply sound self-serving.

Let’s say one of your prospects is the President of an association. Try starting the conversation like this: “Hi Nina, I saw an article about how associations have really gotten creative about getting new members. The article went on to give some great tips. If you haven’t seen it, I’d be happy to share it with you.” Then, after a little exchange about the article, you might proceed: “How do you think an increase in membership would affect the use of our service that you are looking to purchase?” This does two things:

1. It gets them painting a picture of how they would use your service.
2. They will give you an update on where they are in the buying decision.

Sales Homework – Pick a prospect from which you need an update on a deal. Come up with a creative way to add value to your call. Make the call and deliver the value like above. This is the correct way to get the information you’re looking for.

Sales Managers – Get your sales reps away from, “Just checking in...” Help them find alternative words and actions that will get them better results.

Note: A call that starts out, “I was just following up on...” isn’t any better.
Day 28 – Unstalling a stall.

You’re at the point in the sale where you’re going to present your proposal to the prospect and ask them to make a decision. You have finished presenting and the prospect says, “I need to check with Elliot in sales first.” What?!! Where was Elliot in the whole qualifying and decision-making process up until now? (If this does happen to you, go to, Day 81 – Start at the top…wherever that is.) Regardless, you have to deal with this delay.

You can say, “I certainly understand, Lee. Can you please tell me exactly what you need to clarify with Elliot, and perhaps I can help you.” Now, if they are stalling, it should surface. Lee says, “Well, your product is going to be sold by our sales team, and I want to make sure they think they can sell enough of it.” Fair enough. You can’t blame the prospect for something you should have learned much earlier in the sale. You are not left with much here because Lee has deferred to someone else and gotten himself off the hook. It’s time to close again. Ask Lee, “If Elliot determines the sales department can sell enough, will you be placing your order?”

You do not want to be far into the customer’s buying process and find out you’re not dealing with the right person, and have to start over with Elliot. The other thing you do not want to do is leave this type of conversation without your prospect telling you exactly what’s going to happen next, and that if that action step is accomplished, that it will move you closer to closing your sale. Keep drilling.

Sales Homework – List three other questions you could have asked when Lee said, “I need to check with Elliot in sales first.”

1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers - Don’t let your sales people get to this part of the sale and be surprised. Practice uncovering objections and drilling for answers.
Day 29 – Know when to cut your losses.

Most sales people are, by nature, optimists. As a sales person you need that optimism to get you going every morning. Unfortunately, too many times we let that optimism cloud our judgment. We lead too much from our heart and not enough from our heads. You need to be disciplined when looking at your pipeline. And, more importantly, you need to be realistic and honest. You have to know when to walk away because you are a sales professional. Your time is your income. And if you don’t manage your time well, your income will show it.

Here are some questions you need to ask yourself about every one of your potential deals before you decide to spend your precious time on them:

1. Am I talking with the financial buyer or the person that can sign my order and write the check?
2. Is the person I am talking to keeping me from the true financial buyer?
3. Do I always have to call them or do they readily call me with questions during the buying cycle?
4. Is the buyer readily willing to talk to me about my competition?
5. Is there a weakness in my prospect’s current solution that I can use my product with which to help them?
6. Is their house on fire? (Do they have an urgent need for a product like mine?)
7. Is their company financially sound?
8. Have they cancelled several meetings?
9. Have they followed through on commitments they’ve made?
10. How many other vendors are they considering?
11. If they are looking at other vendors, are they comparing apples to apples?
12. Am I getting feedback from them?
13. Are they asking “post sales” questions?

If you cannot answer these questions realistically, and be prepared to add or remove your prospect from your pipeline, then your pipeline has no credibility. More importantly, you have not learned when to hold ‘em and when to fold ‘em.

Sales Homework – List three more criteria you can use to determine if you are spending too much time with a prospect that has no chance of closing.

1. ___________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Review your sales reps’ pipelines for any of the items listed above. This process will also make your forecast more accurate and reliable.
Day 30 – The takeover – Part 1

If you’re in vehicle sales, you’re probably very familiar with at least a version of this concept. This concept can also be very powerful in selling B2B products, if used correctly. The idea is to use your management to help you close a sale.

Timing of this strategy is important. You do not want to use this approach too early in the buying cycle. It will not have the same effect. But rather, you should be past the proof-of-concept stage, there appears to be deal at hand, but you cannot get the prospect to call you back or to take action.

Here’s one approach for a sales manager takeover - this when the deal is at about 60% to close: “Brian, this is Louie Bernstein. I’m the Vice President of Sales at Sales Getters, and I’m calling about the evaluation you are doing with our product.” Be very formal, very straight forward and very polite. Then pause. “It is part of my responsibility to make sure you have all the resources you need during your evaluation period. How is everything going?” You really are there to help him and you need to project that. With an open-ended question Brian will tell you how it’s going. So long as his reply is positive add; “Your Account Manager, Mike Kelly, has told me you are looking to roll this out next quarter.” It’s one of those statements that reads like a statement but has the effect of a question, if you are silent at the end. This will lead him to tell you exactly what his buying plan is, or isn’t. From there, you confirm everything you know to be true and accurate about the deal.

After your homework today go directly to “Day 31 - The Takeover – Part 2” for tomorrow’s lesson and we will pick it back up. There is enough for you to work on with today’s lesson.

Sales Homework – Choose a prospect which is at the point of “Takeover” and go over the details with your sales manager.

Sales Managers – Have your rep be the prospect and role play what you are going to say when you call the prospect. Record the role play. This will help both you and your sales rep. And as a byproduct you may also get a more accurate forecast.
Day 31 – The takeover – Part 2

Say your forecast indicates you are 80% of the way to closing a sale. However, your prospect is either not calling you back or throwing up a bunch of objections. It’s time for a meeting with your sales manager. The following approach is used at a later stage-of-opportunity for the sales manager takeover: “Brian, this is Louie Bernstein. I’m the Vice President of Sales at Sales Getters and I’m calling about the evaluation you are doing with our product.” Once again; very formal, very straight forward, very polite. Note: “I am calling because of the evaluation you have been doing on our software.” Those words are important. They are meant to convey they have been using your software and taking advantage of your resources so they owe you something in return. The sales manager continues - “Mike Kelly, your account manager, has told me that you are close to making a decision but you are not calling him back or have questions only I can answer.” Pause.

It is time to get in their face a little bit. Approaching the situation straight forward in this manner will usually flush out the issues. You might want to close with, “I have the authority to help resolve any of your issues but I first need to understand what they are.”

That last paragraph needs to be taken into context. I am not suggesting here that you get rude or aggressive with your sales prospect. You will never win a sale that way. However, the idea of bringing in sales management is to project the feeling of professionalism, and that you and your team are not just sales people, but business people as well. While you understand their time is valuable and perhaps they are not ready to make a purchase, your time is equally valuable. Getting that message delivered, however discretely you want to deliver it, will save you countless hours of “waiting” frustration.

**Sales Homework** – Same as yesterday. Choose a prospect which is at this takeover point and go over the details with your sales manager.

**Sales Managers** – Same as yesterday. Have your rep be the prospect and role play what you are going to say when you call the prospect. Record the role play.
**Day 32 – Be polite…please!**

I would be remiss if I didn’t have one short lesson on manners. I know it seems elementary, but I try to never assume anything. This really goes back to our **Like – Trust – Buy** philosophy. If your manners are poor or you are just plain rude, you won’t get past the **Like** stage.

Remember, people like to buy from people they like. At the end of the day we are all people with feelings and like to be treated with courtesy and respect. I like to preface many of my questions to sales prospects with, “May I ask you how many…?” Or, “Teddy, do you mind if we talk about how you plan to achieve the results you are looking for?” Aside for good manners this subtly conveys to your prospect that you are a decent person and will be considerate when discussing business with them.

Don’t stop there. If you go the client’s site, make sure you are polite to everyone you see. Just imagine that everyone there will have a hand in awarding you their business. One final thing – bring your behavior all the way to your car after leaving an appointment. I had a customer tell me once that after being called on by a sales rep, he looked out his window and saw the rep walking toward his car. Then the rep turned his head and spit on the sidewalk! He obviously didn’t have good manners…and he obviously didn’t get the order. Bottom line: Treat everyone the way you want to be treated and you will be rewarded.

**Sales Homework** – Rephrase three of your sales questions so they are more cordial and polite. And thank you for your diligence!

1. _________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Your reps represent you and your company. Insist they do it professionally and with courtesy.
Day 33 – Leverage: What’s yours?

Leverage in business is when one person has an advantage over another person. If you are the seller your leverage typically is, and should be, the overwhelming value of your product. If you’re the buyer your leverage is having multiple companies you can purchase from and knowing how much you are willing to pay.

The key for you, the seller, is to make sure your leverage is stronger than theirs. I really don’t think price is leverage. There are times, usually in retail for commodity items that are exactly the same, where price can win the deal. But most multi-call deals are not based on price. At the last minute, your competitor can lower their price and you instantly lose your leverage. Your real leverage is the value of your product in relation to the need your customer has for that product. To be clear:

- Your product needs to be the best solution, or be perceived as the best solution, by your prospect.
- Your prospect has to have a real need for your product. The more urgent their need, the more leverage you have.

One very powerful form of leverage is the urgency of a prospect’s need. If you know that your prospect has to purchase your product quickly to keep one of their customers, win a bid, come in under budget or have some type of compatibility with another product they currently have, then you a great amount of leverage. They probably need you more than you know. It is this urgency that is really driving their purchase. They may tell you it is price or some other objection to throw you off track. Here are a few questions you can ask to pin it down and see how urgently they need to purchase your product or one similar to it:

- What drove your interest in our product?
- What happens if you do nothing?
- When do you need to start seeing the benefits of our product?
- Is this purchase tied to a budget that has a particular timeline?
- Is our product being included as part of a rollout?
- Was our product’s functionality (or benefits) promised to a customer or user?

Unfortunately, average sales people think their only leverage is lowering their price. They never get to the stage in the relationship where they completely understand the pain the customer is experiencing. Prospects are looking at your product for a reason. It will save them money, put them ahead of their competition, get their customers off their back, etc. There are a lot of reasons they need to buy and those reasons are important to them; more important than price.

Once you have confirmed your leverage, stand firm. Don’t give away the profits or commissions you’ve earned.

Sales Homework – List three of your accounts where you absolutely know the pain your prospect has and what that pain is.

1. ________________________________________
2. ________________________________________
3. ________________________________________

Sales Managers – Selling on value and gaining leverage is an attitude you need to instill in your sales reps. Come up with a strategy for each of the above accounts that conveys to the prospect yours is a value solution that solves their problem and is worth every penny.
**Day 34 – Get proactive and get sales.**

Looking for more sales? Look right under your nose. Are your current customers getting everything they can from your product? Are they aware of all the new features your company has added since you last spoke with them? Has your product been adopted throughout the organization? If not, why not?

It’s always easier to sell more things to existing customers than new things to new customers. Look at all the ways your customer is utilizing your product. If you don’t know, call them and find out.

“Hello Christy, this is Louie. I was looking over your account and I noticed that you haven’t taken advantage of the new file extension utility we released. You get it at no charge as part of your maintenance agreement. I would be happy to show you how to use it.” Will this lead to more business immediately? It may and it may not. However, what it will lead to is:

- Your customer viewing you as someone looking out for their best interest.
- Giving your customer a reason when the next vendor who calls them to say, “We’re happy with our current vendor.”
- You having permission to talk to them about getting your product adopted in other departments, evaluating new products, etc.
- Uncovering problems ahead of time.
- Your getting referrals and a good reference.
- Your getting a shot at a new customer if your current customer switches jobs.
- Your phone call being returned next time.

Take the initiative and be proactive. You’ll win their hearts and their pocketbooks.

**Sales Homework** – Find three things you can talk to your current customers about that will continue to build the relationship and uncover additional opportunities.

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

**Sales Managers** – If you don’t take care of your current customers, somebody else will. Make sure your sales reps stay in touch with customers on a regular basis. Make sure they are always looking to deliver additional value.
Day 35 – An “ace” of an attitude.

Question: When is the best time to make a sales call to close a deal?
Answer: Right after you closed one.

When you close a deal you’ve been working on you are, hopefully, feeling good. Your attitude is right where it needs to be; pleasant, confident, self-assured. This is the attitude you need to bottle up and bring to work every business day and show it to your prospects and customers.

However, sometimes we fall into a rut. Maybe it’s been a long time between deals and management is starting to apply pressure, which adds to your own pressure, and you start to spiral into negative territory. It will be evident to your prospects and customers too. Just as your good attitude can be recognized over the phone or in your appearance, your negative attitude can be seen and felt as well. And your prospects may be feeling it as pressure coming from you.

I’m not at all suggesting you quit trying. Just don’t let it show. One thing always struck me when I would watch Roger Federer or Pete Sampras play in championship tennis matches: I could never tell if they were winning or losing. They always looked the same and played the same. Steady. Confident. Never quitting. Those are the traits I am suggesting you must embody every day.

Nobody likes to feel they are being pressured. Regardless of your personal situation, if you don’t put on your championship game face and get your attitude right, your prospect will not trust you. And if they don’t trust you they will not buy from you.

Sales Homework – Record a pretend sales call to yourself. Now, put a mirror on your desk and record the same call again while looking at yourself in the mirror. This time have a mile-wide smile on your face. Listen to the two different calls. You will be amazed.

Sales Managers – Listen to these calls and coach your sales reps. Give them feedback and assurances. Coach to the positive.
Day 36 – On that note…thanks!

Sales people often make the mistake of thinking they work for someone other than the customer. Of course your customer needed what you were selling or they would not, or certainly should not, have bought it. But once their decision was made to take your product they decided to take you too.

Brokers on Wall Street know that fact. That’s why the really good ones are so heavily courted by competing firms. They bring a book of business with them. They have that book of business because their customers like and trust them.

Trust can take a long time to build with a customer. Most customers make you earn that trust. Don’t let all the hard work you have done building and earning that trust, be wasted. Once you have a customer do everything thing you can to hang on to them. One easy and simple thing you can do is send a thank you card or note. You can send one via email and should. However, take time to do a handwritten note (I know, old school) and send it in the mail – or even overnight for a special customer. I guarantee your customer will appreciate the effort, as would you. Don’t forget your customer pays your commission. Your employer only signs the check.

And by the way, thanks for taking this course!

Sales Homework – Write five thank you notes a day until you have caught up on all the customers who have bought from you in the last six months.

Sales Managers – Print or email out the list of those customers and check them off as the notes get sent.
Day 37 – If you own the problem, you aren’t making money.

You’ve done a good job bringing in your customers. You beat out all the competition. They were sold on your ideas and they were sold on you. But with many products, especially technology products, things can go wrong and they may need additional support.

When this happens, if you have not managed the support component of the customer expectations, they are going to call you when there is a problem. The first thing to get out of this lesson is to bring in your support resources early in the customer buying cycle. Not only will this relieve your burden after the sale is made, it will instill confidence in your prospect that there is a team behind you.

Early in the post-sale, even if you do set the expectations correctly up front, your customer will probably call you first. That’s okay. They just need reminding. Try something similar to these words:

“Thanks for your call Randy. Sorry to hear you are having an issue. As you may recall, all of our support issues go through our support department. This way, you get a tracking number and someone who can really do something about your issue. Plus, once your issue is logged in, I will be able to keep track of it and make sure everything is handled correctly. You can reach them at support@___________ or (123)555-7890.”

If you don’t handle the call this way you will make less money because you are spending your time being a problem fixer and not out developing and closing new business. Sure you want your customers to feel fully supported. But you only have so many hours in the day. Ninety-five percent of those hours need to be selling. Use the other 5% to keep your word by making sure their issues are indeed being handled.

Sales Homework – Starting today, make sure all of your prospects know your company’s procedure and the best way for them to receive support after the sale. This is a good reason to call your prospect too. Tip: Have a support rep on the line or available, and introduce them.

List three prospects you will do this with today.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Make sure your sales reps don’t fall into the support trap. Ensure your communication lines are open with the support department. You have to make sure they understand the importance of their role (and that you respect that) and they work with the sales reps so everyone can focus on their jobs.
Day 38 – Don’t end up like Wally Pipp.

Most people don’t know who Wally Pipp was. However, most people, and just about every baseball fan, have heard of Lou Gehrig.

In 1925, Wally Pipp was the first baseman for the New York Yankees. As the legend goes, Wally Pipp had a headache that day. “I can’t play today Hug”, Wally told the Yankees manager, Walter Huggins. Huggins put in a rookie named Lou Gehrig. Gehrig didn’t come out of the starting lineup for another 2,130 games and became the Iron Man of baseball.

Ever feel like calling in sick because you just don’t have your “A-game?”
Think you have enough deals in your pipeline?
No need to sweat making a few more calls because you have the sales contest locked up?

If so, remember Wally Pipp. Given hindsight, do you think Wally would have toughed out one more game? I guarantee he would. Sales is a job that starts over every day. Every day you need to prove yourself; and improve yourself. When you think you can coast, understand that your competition is busy calling your customers. To be on top and stay there, you need to be an Iron Man or Iron Woman. Never quit. Get your butt to the office or on the phone. Make one more call - because if you don’t someone else will and you’ll be sitting on the bench next to Wally Pipp.

Sales Homework – This week put in an extra half hour at the end of the day. Call a customer you haven’t spoken with in over 90 days or call 10 new prospects. This week, go the extra mile and stay in the game.

Sales Managers – Are your team members inspired enough to do the extra things necessary to be Hall of Famers? Lead by example. Be the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night. Show them the commitment needed to win.

You may get prospects that call you up and say, “Just tell me what the price is for your product. I want to see if I can afford it or if it is worth exploring.” Resist simply blurting out a price. Doing that screams out, “Amateur.” Answer politely; “Thank you for calling. I can certainly help you get the correct price for that product.” What you’re saying is that you’re concerned with helping them get the best value for their money, by making the right choice.

Then continue with your qualifying questions:

- Are you looking for a single purchase or do you need multiple ____________?
- Are you going to need this right away?
- Have you ever purchased a product like ours before?
- Can you tell me how you’re going to use the ____________?

If your company needed someone to just give out prices, they could hire a minimum wage clerk or publish a price list online. They’ve hired you to be a professional sales person who is concerned about knowing your customer’s business so well, you will know exactly if and how your product can fix their problem. You can’t solve that problem unless you ask questions. Good, prepared questions. If your prospect seems bothered by you asking these questions, they aren’t a great prospect. You don’t have to ask a lot; just enough so you can determine if they are for real or just on a fishing expedition.

**Sales Homework** – Take the four questions above and make them your questions based around your product.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Don’t let your sales reps be automated attendants. Coach them through the process of taking their “price” prospect off their price quote agenda, while leading them with questions so they can give your reps the information they need to qualify them - in or out.
Day 40 – Are they Google-ing you?

One of the ways of researching and keeping up to date with your prospects and customers is to set up a Google News alert. At the very least, you should do an internet search for them on a regular basis. What are they going to find if they Google you? Or, look you up on Facebook?

When I’m purchasing something, especially something that is a large dollar amount for our company, I will do my own research on the company and on the sales rep assigned to our account. I need to make sure that rep is honest, reliable and trust-worthy. Most people are good at handling things when everything is going according to plan. You really find out the value of your vendor when things hit the fan. If I see something online in the background of the vendor or the sales rep that concern me, I bring it up.

For some sales reps, it’s really tempting for them to put up the pictures of them getting crazy at the holiday party or face-painted without a shirt at the football game. I’m not saying you can’t do these things (although behavior at the office party is whole other lesson). What I am suggesting is you save these personal things for a personal account. Make it an account that can only be viewed by people to whom you give that URL. Business professionals use these same sites to consider who to hire, who to do business with and who to avoid. Don’t kill your chances before you even get a chance to speak with a new prospect or CEO.

If you’re selling a product that’s very strategic for a company or a product that could cost your prospect their job if they make a wrong decision, they’re probably going to check you out. Don’t be naïve as to how important your professionalism and integrity are to your customers. Make sure your background and profile don’t display anything (however innocent) that would disqualify you before you even get started.

Sales Homework – Clean up your social media presence. Today.

Sales Managers – Google your sales reps. Make sure there is nothing on the internet about them or your company that could cost you a sale.
Day 41 – Sales is an art.

Shy sales people have skinny kids.

I believe selling is both an art and a science. The art is how you behave with, and react to, your customers. Like it or not you’re on stage. And the better an actor you are, the more sales you’re going to close. This doesn’t mean you’re insincere or you act like someone you are not. That’s being phony. What it does mean is that:

- You show a good attitude even when you’re down.
- You act interested in something that interests your customer.
- You show empathy for their situation.
- You can show absolute shock when your prospect low-ball’s you with an offer to buy your product.

Acting with your prospects and customers accomplishes two things:

1. It makes them feel good that someone is listening to them. People love to talk about themselves. And if they find someone who is willing to listen to them – you – they will want to talk with you more often.
2. They feel entertained. People love to be entertained. We spend billions of dollars on entertainment. If they can get it for free, they’ll feel great. If you have a good sense of humor, use it. If you share a common interest with your prospect, get excited about it.

People want to buy from someone they can relate to as well as someone who can relate to them. Above all, be yourself. But anyone can be more outgoing, attentive, curious, interested, shocked and excited. I realize what I am saying sounds like a contradiction: Act, but be yourself. And I guess it is a little bit contradictory. But you can be sad for someone at a funeral, and not be a sad person.

Like any other skill that can be done well, it needs to be practiced. This is a crucial element to your total sales persona. Do not underestimate its importance.

**Sales Homework** – If you are totally uncomfortable with acting and you still want to stay in sales, take some acting lessons. Otherwise, spend an hour and search the internet for how to become a good actor. Just a few good tips will suffice.

**Sales Managers** – Role play having different customer personalities and interests with your sales reps, so they can practice their acting skills before calling on customers.
**Day 42 – Sales is a science.**

Certain sales techniques, strategies and principles, when applied correctly will bring consistently good results. This is an especially important concept if you’re someone who believes you are not a “born sales person.” This is not to say there is an exact cause and effect; I say this and they will do that. Every situation is unique. However, for the most part human behavior is predictable.

One of the keys to your success is to have a full toolset of sales techniques and strategies so you can use them as a homebuilder would use the correct tool at the correct time. The principles, strategies and lessons in this book prepare you for the situations you find yourself in, in every day selling situations. These techniques, when practiced diligently, become an ingrained part of your personality and will flow effortlessly over time. And the more you deliver them, the easier it will become.

One other area to make your selling efforts more scientific is to develop your set of metrics that help you “predict” or forecast your sales. Every business and product has its own set of metrics. They can include:

- Number of calls needed to make an appointment.
- Number of appointments needed to generate a proposal.
- Number of proposals needed to make a sale.
- Etc.

Once you have a good history of numbers, your business can become very scientific.

So, the lesson for today is simple:

1. Develop your own set of metrics.
2. Read, study and practice because selling is part science. And science by its very nature can be measured; just like your performance against your quota.

**Sales Homework** – Think about an area in sales where you can improve. Face it head on. Find a place that addresses that area in this book (or find another resource) and work on it until it feels good and natural. Practice it with your sales teammates and your sales manager. Then deliver it to a prospect.

**Sales Managers** – Once your sales rep has selected an area to work on go over the technique with them, including role play, until they feel comfortable and successful.
Day 43 – Confirm your appointment… automatically.

You’ve just completed a successful prospecting call and they want you to call them back next Tuesday at 10:00am ET. So you dutifully thank them for the call, confirm the number to call back and say good bye. Now what? What is your next step before you document the call?

Your next step is a very effective one because it really takes advantage of technology at a low cost. All you need is an integrated email calendaring system. It could be Outlook, Google, whichever. Simply send them a meeting reminder with a thank you message in the body of the message along with any other pertinent information you discussed. If they’re serious they will accept and confirm the meeting.

Make sure you put a four hour window reminder in the email. If for some reason they forget about your follow up call they will receive an automatic reminder. By using four hours it gives them time to recover if they forgot or double-booked something. Serious prospects will appreciate the efficiency and be glad you are organizing everything to make it easier for them to purchase.

As sales people we tend to think it’s all about us; that our prospects spend most of their waking hours thinking about purchasing our product. They don’t. But that’s actually good news for you. If you are a Professional Salesperson, your prospects will come to realize they can count on you for taking care of the details. And if you can take care of the small details, like setting up appointment or meeting reminders, they will be able to count on you for the really important things. They will develop trust in you. And once they trust you, you are much closer to making a sale.

**Sales Homework** – Check out the calendar feature on whatever system you are on and be sure you know how to use it. Test appointment reminders on co-workers or your sales manager. Today’s homework is easy. Just start using this appointment reminder system.

**Sales Managers** – If you can, the ideal situation is to set up a shared calendar so you can view everyone’s meetings, demos, call backs, etc. Typically, there is too much going on in an active sales environment to study your sales rep’s calendars. But you never know when you may have to jump in on one of their meetings, call the client, etc. Make sure you have or can get access.
Day 44 – Mental wind sprints.

If you’re a sports fan, you have undoubtedly heard one of the commentators say at the end of a really close game that the winning team “just wanted it more.” In sports, when all else is equal, it can come down to a matter of conditioning and desire. Everyone has energy at the beginning of the game. But how you’re feeling at the end of the game may be what really makes the difference in the outcome. That’s why so much activity in sports is centered on conditioning. You physically have to be in better shape than your opponent when you’re both gasping for air.

In sales your conditioning, in part, comes from what you are doing right now. Sales training is similar to wind sprints at the end of a sports practice; making sure that even though you are buried deep working on deals, making prospecting calls, checking on your customers support issues, etc., you are continuing to fill up your brain with energy and ideas so when you are completely exhausted, you can function on auto-pilot as a result of your sales training.

You need to be in top “sales shape” to be a winner. You need to have enough in your tool bag, and have practiced it so much, that it does not sap energy from you when you can least afford it. If you have never seen the first Rocky movie, there is a great and telling scene at the end where both fighters are worn out, delirious and completely out of energy. They are stumbling around the ring, weak-kneed from the absence of any strength left, and you are not sure who is going to fall first. It was the fighter who stayed up and threw one more punch out of training, instinct and a desire to win, that was left standing. You need to be that fighter who can make that “one more sales call” as a result of your training, instinct and desire to win the sale.

**Sales Homework** – Think of one or two things that create a burning desire for you to keep going. These need to be things that you want more than having to experience giving up and losing. These things will propel you when you are “gasp[ing for air].”

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________

**Sales Managers** – You need to review these needs with your sales reps. They are key indicators as to what motivates each of your team members and will help you coach them to success.
Day 45 – Just send me a proposal.

You’ve made it to the stage in your prospect’s buying cycle when they either ask you for a proposal or you suggest, if the previous action or commitment steps have been completed successfully, that they should review a proposal to see if they can move ahead with a purchase.

Never send a proposal without confirmation that your prospect will review the proposal with you. Your conversation should go something like this: “Rick, we like what you have shown us so far, so you can you send us a proposal?” “Lee, I would be glad to. Let’s confirm what you are looking for.” Then Rick and Lee can verbally go over the details of configurations, quantities, resources, model numbers, etc. to be included in the proposal. Rick says, “Lee, I’m going to get to work on putting this together for you right away. When will you have time to review it?” The wording is crucial. Rick has not told Lee he’ll be emailing it over when it is ready. Rick said he was going to work on it.

If Lee says he doesn’t know when he will have time to look at it, Rick will not send the proposal. If your prospect will not schedule time with you to review the proposal, they are not qualified. Their pain or urgency is not great enough yet. If, on the other hand, they give you a time they will review the proposal with you, you are moving in the right direction.

You may get a prospect who will say, “Just send me a proposal.” Don’t do it. Simply say, “I’m sorry, we don’t send out proposals unless our potential customers schedule time to review them with us.” It takes a little bit of confidence to say those words but if you stick to it you will see your closing ratio go up.

Sales Homework – Starting today, never send out another proposal without your prospect willing to schedule time to review it.

Sales Managers – This one approach to proposals will save you and your reps a lot of time and effort and will give you a more accurate pipeline.
Day 46 – The easiest sell.

In the sales community, people make a great distinction between Hunters and Farmers. Hunters are people who go off, find new accounts and bring them home. Farmers are people who are supposed to nourish these accounts, keep them happy and make sure they stay a customer.

If you’re a Hunter and your only job is to get a one-time sale from a customer, you can skip today’s lesson. Go directly to the phone and make 10 additional calls. If you are a Farmer, or a Hunter whose job also includes managing the account once it is sold, please read on.

It is at least five times easier to sell something to an existing, happy customer than it is to sell something to a brand new customer. The existing customer knows you, knows your company, trusts you and, hopefully likes you. Always be on the lookout for additional items or add-on’s you can sell to your existing customers. It can be a new enhancement to their existing product or a new product your company has introduced.

There is one thing you need as a requisite to selling to an existing customer: You need to have stayed in touch with them post sale, either checking up to make sure your product is working well or calling them with valuable information about their industry, changes in your company, their competition, etc.

If you are good enough and provide excellent service and support, they may even call you for a new product. I once had a customer to whom we were delivering one type of IT training. My contact there called and asked me to have our company deliver something we had never taught before. After telling him we did not offer that type of training he said, “Learn it. I don’t want to start with somebody new. Your service is great, and we can wait. Please put it together for us.” Those are “the easiest people to sell.”

Sales Homework – Stay in touch with your customers at least every 30 to 45 days and provide them with something of value. Look at your customer base today and see who hasn’t received at least a phone call from you in this time period.

Sales Managers – Your existing clients can be your quickest source of revenue. Make sure all your sales reps (even the Hunters!) are good Farmers.
Day 47 – How to organize your day.

There are many fine books on time management that go into very great detail on how to organize your day. We can’t cover all that detail in a 33 minute sales training lesson. What I can tell you is how you need to be thinking when you organize your day, in order to make it the most productive.

First Things First (FTF) List – What are the top things you need to do today that will move you closer to closing a deal? For now put everything else out of your mind. Don’t worry about new prospects, research, Facebook or anything else. List the things you need to do now that will bring in commissions.

Second – List the tasks needed to be completed that will eventually put you in a position so the most important of those tasks end up on the First Things First List. List them in the order in which tasks can be moved to the FTF list the quickest. If you are not sure, look at your sales funnel and see where your prospects are in the pipeline. (If you have not set up your pipeline, please go to lesson: Day 21 – Do the math.)

Third – List the tasks that will assure you always have something in your sales funnel. This could be cold calling, contacting prospects you have not spoken with in a long time or researching new companies. These should be tasks that ensure you always have a steady flow of prospects to close. Too often, even good sales people close everything in their pipeline but didn’t prepare for that day. Don’t forget, your bills come due every month. Don’t get too caught up in the excitement of what you just closed. Keep prospecting.

Fourth – List your administrative tasks, expense reports, forecast reports, internal meetings, etc.

Sales Homework – Make a list of all the things you are doing in your day that are not part of the above tasks and quit doing them. Save those tasks for nighttime or out of office activities. Then go directly to the lesson: Day 48 - The smarter (and harder) I work, the luckier I get. Time Management.

Sales Managers – While expense reports and other similar tasks are important, make sure your sales reps prioritize their time in the most efficient manner with lists like the one above.

P.S. Don’t forget to include your 33 minutes of sales training every business day.
Day 48 – The smarter (and harder) I work, the luckier I get.

Time Management

The real beauty of the Sales Getters system is that once you master it, you can then throw hard work at it and really increase your income. It’s one thing to work a lot of hours. It’s another to make them the most effective and get the maximum productivity out of those hours. To be among the best and the top money earners, you have to outwork your colleagues and your competition while utilizing a top level of professional selling skills.

If your sales goals are written, the next best thing you can do is structure your day with the tasks necessary to hit those goals. Time management requires tremendous discipline and commitment. However, if you manage your day it will not manage you.

I’m making it easy for you. All you have to do is print this page the night before and fill it in.

My tasks for today ______________________ (Date)

7:00am ____________________________________________________________

8:00am ____________________________________________________________

9:00am ____________________________________________________________

10:00am __________________________________________________________

11:00am __________________________________________________________

12:00pm __________________________________________________________

1:00pm ____________________________________________________________

2:00pm ____________________________________________________________

3:00pm ____________________________________________________________

4:00pm ____________________________________________________________

5:00pm ____________________________________________________________

Sales Homework – Start using and filling in this list one day before your work day, so you are prepared when you get to the office.

Sales Managers – If your sales reps are focused on the right things, stick to their schedule, and follow the ideas in this system, they will sell more.

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Day 49 – A note on saying “thank you.”

Saying thank you never goes out of style. While it is ultimately for their benefit your customer put in time, effort and maybe even put their career on the line to make a purchase with you. Their purchase may have allowed you to pay your bills, surprise a loved one with a gift, take a vacation or just relax.

Yes, there are the customers who drag you through the mud, play you against your competition and beat you up on price. However, they still bought. Every one of your customers deserves a thank you note. Some sales people send a thank you via email and that’s okay. But if you really want to stand out, take the time to write a handwritten thank you note. (If your handwriting is really bad like mine, it’s okay to print the card out on a laser printer.) A hand written note shows you took the time and effort to appreciate what your customer did for you.

It’s best if you have nice, pre-printed cards with your company’s logo on them. If your company will not provide these buy your own cards. It’s not that expensive and it will pay dividends many times over.

Saying thank you isn’t just reserved for after you make a sale. Start to make it a habit throughout your prospects (and customer’s) buying cycle. All things being equal, would you rather do business with someone who is courteous and respectful, or a sales person who does not have good manners? When you’re buying something I’m sure you like to be treated nicely and with courtesy throughout your buying process. Just remember the simple rule you learned growing up: Treat others the way you want to be treated. It was good advice then and it’s good advice now.

Sales Homework – Put everything in motion today so you have your cards within two weeks. When they arrive, send one out to everyone who has bought from you in the last six months.

Sales Managers – Don’t overlook this easy step that will help bring you referrals, add-on business and happy customers.
Day 50 – How’s it going? Ugh.

Let’s say you’ve got a really good prospect and everything is moving in the right direction. It’s time for some decision making within their company. But, you’re dying to find out what’s going on now. DO NOT call and say, “How’s it going?” You’ll be wasting their time, they’ll think you’re just after their money and you’ll sound like an amateur.

If you have been reading Google Alerts or news clippings about your prospect, their company, or their industry, now is the time to use them. The conversation should go something like this: “Hi Cliff, this is Louie Bernstein at Sales Getters. I just saw that <their company name> opened up its first office in China. We have several contacts in China that can help you on the sales side, if that is of value to you.”

Cliff will give you an answer and if he doesn’t start talking about the China operation, you can start with your questions:

• Will this affect the work we are going to do for you? (Assumptive close.)
• Is China strategic for our project?
• Will you be visiting China to help with the new initiative?

If, after talking for a while, Cliff doesn’t say anything about your deal it’s okay at that point to ask, “Has our project been approved?” You gave Cliff something so it’s okay as a partner to ask for something in return. Ninety per cent of the time your prospect will tell you sometime during the conversation where your deal stands. The reality is that Cliff knows why you are calling. But you are showing him you are courteous and willing to give in order to get.

Business is a two way street. Information flows two ways when you have a good partner. Regardless, no matter how tempting stay away from, “How’s it going?” Ugh.

Sales Homework – If you have a deal in a stage similar to the one in this lesson find something of value to your prospect, then call them to discuss.

Sales Managers – Emphasize the importance of your sales reps being a good resource for your customers and not someone “just checking in.” You’ll know they’ve arrived when their customers start calling them for information about the industry, their competitors, etc.
**Day 51 – Networking**

Things happen when you meet people. Networking is an excellent way to meet people and make things happen. There are a few key points to remember about networking:

**Network with people you sell to.** I know that sounds obvious, but many sales people go where their colleagues go. Go to the same networking events your customers go to. If you sell security software go to the local user group meetings for security software professionals.

**It is about them, not you.** Too many people go to networking events trying to find deals. You should go to these events and try to find out as much as you can about the people you meet. They will probably ask about what you do, but let that conversation-starter come from them. It’s a good way to build a relationship.

**Do not be shy.** It can be difficult to walk up to a stranger, introduce yourself and start up a conversation. But don’t forget, that’s why they are there as well. It’s as easy as, “Hi, I’m Louie Bernstein. What do you do?” If you don’t start these conversations, you’ve wasted your time attending.

**Always get a business card.** When you are done with your conversation, write a brief note about that person and the conversation on the back of the card. If they don’t have a business card use one of yours to write down their information.

**Talk to as many people as you can.** You need to work the room like a politician. Don’t be rude, loud or butt in on others conversations. But try to have as many conversations as possible.

**Sales Homework** – Research at least three groups (of interest to your customers) that meet in your area and plan to attend one of their upcoming meetings.

**Sales Managers** – This may cost you a little money. But it can be worth it. Plus, if you are paying, you have the right to have a meeting the day after the networking event and go over all the contacts your sales rep made.
Day 52 – First impressions last.

As the old saying goes, you only get one first impression. What kind of first impression do you make – either on the phone or in person? Do people warm up quickly to you or do you feel it takes you a while to connect?

Don’t forget the first part of the Like – Trust – Buy equation: Like.

Your first goal needs to be to get people to like you. Think about the people you like. What is it about them that got you to instantly feel comfortable? It probably had something to do with them:

- Smiling.
- Being courteous.
- Being well groomed.
- Having breath that did not smell.
- Asking more about you than talking about them.
- Being respectful of your time.

In sales it’s always about them. When meeting someone, or calling them up for the first time, remember that. Think about the qualities that draw you to people and try to embody those qualities. You may not get a second chance.

Sales Homework – In addition to the six bullets above, list three characteristics you like in people and practice using those traits as your own on new people you meet or call.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – This is a good time to go over your sales reps’ initial introductions for outside sales calls and telephone cold calling. I suggest using a checklist like the bullets in this lesson.
Day 53 – Objection: The match game.

Have you ever heard “We like your product, but we like your competitor’s product, as well. They’re lower on price, however. If you match their price we will buy from you.” If you haven’t heard this you will. The first thing to remember is no knee-jerk reactions. Don’t respond with, “But you said I was looking good and I already put you in my forecast for the amount we discussed.” Not their problem. Second, don’t say, “I’ll do it.” This response gives your prospect the idea that you were charging too much to begin with and they will lose trust in you. No trust – no buy. You need to stay calm, stay respectful and respond with questions.

“I understand, Jonathan. Thank you for bringing this up and considering me. What is their price? <Pause for the answer.> Most likely they won’t tell you. So continue; “Before I can think about doing anything, can I ask you a few questions?” If they won’t tell you the price or refuse to let you ask questions, then wish them well and say goodbye. They care nothing about the value of your product and are happy to put you into a price war. If they agree to talk, follow these guidelines:

- Walk through all the requirements for their purchase as previously discussed. Confirm that you met all of these requirements.
- Go down your list of features, support options, upgrades, etc. and make sure your prospect is doing an equal comparison.

Then, ask if price is their only consideration for making the purchase. If it is, you have a few options:

- You can tell them you can match that price (if you can) but you will need to remove something else from the deal. That will uncover how much value they place on your offer and see if they are just price shopping.
- Ask for a longer term commitment, if applicable.
- Ask them, “If I match that price Jonathan, and I do not know if I can, do we have your business?”

If they tell you that price is only one part of the decision, ask them what the other parts are. Here you get to dig back in and reinforce the value your company brings to the table. Explain that your price is based on value and your company is in it for the long term so you will be there for support and they won’t have to go through the buying process again.

If, after going through all these steps, they will not budge, you have a decision to make. Because every situation is unique I cannot make the decision for you here. Politely ask your prospect for time to discuss with your management.

Sales Homework – List four things about your company and/or product that put you in a better light than your competition. Share these points with your prospect when they put you in “The match game.”

1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Make sure you know the competition. You can’t always know when they are going to discount but you should know their weaknesses.
**Day 54 – Closing time.**

How do you know when it’s time to close the sale? The time to close the sale is when your prospect has confirmed to you that they have seen enough potential value in your product to give you an order. So, you must ask your prospect a question or two to make sure they see the value:

- Have we met all the criteria you have for a successful implementation?
- Do you see how this will solve your <their problem> issue?

Once your prospect responds in the affirmative, it’s time to start closing:

“Josh, based on this, is there any reason we cannot move ahead with an order?” There may be several additional paths from here based on their response, but it becomes a loop. For instance, Josh may tell you that he is good with everything you have and he would like to move ahead, but the finance committee has to approve the order. Again you should ask; “Josh, once the finance committee gives there approval, is there any reason we cannot move ahead with an order?”

The idea is, after you have established the value to your prospect, to keep closing until all objections are met and the order is placed. That’s the time to close the sale.

**Sales Homework** – List three additional questions you can ask your prospect to make sure they see the value your product so you can close.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – It’s great to always be closing but you need coach your sales reps on the timing. In this case the timing is crucial.
Day 55 – Paint a picture for your prospects.

You’ve heard the expression; “A picture is worth a thousand words.” I’m guessing it was a sales person who said it first. When people are buying products, somewhere deep in their mind they see themselves enjoying the benefits of their purchase.

Unfortunately for you, not everybody’s mind is so well equipped. So, you need to “paint that picture” for them. This actually works to your advantage because you get to be the artist and you can paint whatever you want.

You need to start working on your picture early in the customer’s buying cycle. First, use your brush to create a vivid comparison. “Matt, we had a client that was close to bankruptcy before he hired Sales Getters. Every night he went to sleep worried and wondering where he was going to find enough sales to make payroll.” Now Matt’s imaginary canvas is drawing that picture with him in it. He is starting to get a sense of urgency to take action, as well.

Later in the buying cycle, you can add other brilliant images. “Matt, if you decide to move ahead with Sales Getters, this time next year I’m betting you will be thinking about how to invest and grow your business rather than trying to save it.” Now Matt’s canvas is filled with pictures of him relaxed and in control.

Words are powerful tools when used wisely, carefully and professionally. Paint your way to more sales.

Sales Homework – List four word picture scenarios that relate to your product. Spell out how this “painting” will get your prospect to take action.

1. ________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – While this sales skill is important for everyone, if you sell a service versus a product, it’s crucial that your sales reps master this. After your sales reps complete their homework, role play the scenarios and record them.
Day 56 – Have discipline.

If you watch American football, you’re familiar with the point-after touchdown. Briefly; after a team scores a touchdown, the scoring team goes for the “point after.” Unless the point after is a fake, it’s the same offensive play every time. The offense lines up, the ball is then hiked to the holder who holds the ball in place and then the kicker attempts to kick the ball between the uprights (goal posts). What has always amazed me about the point after is that it is discipline at its best. Everyone has to do their part because the defense tries like crazy to block the kick. The timing between the holder and the kicker has to be perfect and the offensive line has to hold off the defense. If any one person fails the play does not work.

This is the kind of discipline you need as a professional sales person and you need to cultivate it throughout your team. When you and every member of your team succeed, it’s perfect score.

Have the discipline to set goals, plan your day, execute on that plan and then plan your actions for tomorrow. This type of discipline is not something your sales manager can monitor, nor should he or she. That’s why it’s discipline. It’s something you need to control yourself in order to succeed.

This is not an easy thing to do. It’s simple, just not easy. But if you want to earn more than your colleagues... or get the MVP... it’s a mindset you should adopt.

Sales Homework – List three things you can do today to put discipline into your day.

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________

Sales Managers – This lesson is one of the areas that will make your team strong and get you closer to hitting your goals. Work day planning and goal planning discussions into your sales meetings on a regular basis. If you get adopters and they start succeeding, it will catch on.
Day 57 – Change is good. But hard!

When people are buying from you something new is happening to them. It may be as modest as when you are the new sales rep on the account and the customer is just placing the same orders. Or, it may be something disruptive such as replacing a current vendor or getting them to do business in a new way. Regardless of the level of change taking place, you’re asking your customer to step outside their comfort zone.

This part of the buying process is where you must clear the hurdle of Trust. (Remember: Like, Trust, Buy) If your prospect or customer does not trust you, you will have a difficult time making them comfortable enough to change their way of thinking or doing things.

Here are a few things you can do to help your prospects and customers be comfortable with change:

- Do what you said you would do.
- Show up for meetings on time.
- Call them with valuable ideas.
- Get your support or customer service department involved early in the process.
- Use written and video testimonials.
- Offer a great guarantee.

Sales Homework – List three ideas you can use to get your prospects and customers comfortable with the change you represent to them.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Continue to reinforce the concept of trust to your sales reps. It may not be apparent to everyone that it is not the actual change that’s holding back new business, but that it’s the trust which must come first.
Day 58 – Closing: The Ben Franklin Close

The Ben Franklin close gives your prospect the feeling that you want them to make their decision based on the facts. Of course, facts are really the paradigm through which we view them. If you don’t believe me just listen or watch a political debate.

This is the Ben Franklin close: you start with a piece of paper and draw a vertical line down the middle of the paper making two columns. At the top of the left column write the word Pros. At the top of the right column write the word Cons. In the far left, start listing the features and benefits of your product. After you list them, put a check mark under the Pros or Cons column. At the end, add up the checks to see which side wins.

The Ben Franklin close is not limited to product features. It can be used to compare you to your competition, support policies, etc. It is obviously important that you know all the features and benefits of your products and services and that you approach this close with a fair and open mind. However, if you have done your homework, this close should come out in your favor.

Sales Homework – Create your own Ben Franklin worksheets around your own product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Item 2</td>
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<td>Item 4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sales Managers – When your sales reps go through this exercise/close with their prospects, it is really a consultative selling strategy. Help them execute this flawlessly.
Day 59 – “No” fear.

Too many sales people are afraid of asking the tough questions because they worry they will hear the word “no.” What these sales people fail to realize is that they are either delaying the inevitable or they are being given a chance to uncover any objections that can help move their sale along.

Being a sales person requires guts. You have to ask questions that others would not ask because those questions make the conversation “uncomfortable.” You have to let the “no’s” bounce off you and move ahead. Most of your prospects will feel uncomfortable saying no. And that is the very reason you need to ask those questions. Your prospects don’t go to work looking for conflict. So, they may lead you along telling you what she thinks you want to hear. If you do not clarify and drill down for a yes or no answer, you are simply delaying the inevitable and wasting your time. Remember: Accelerate the inevitable.

In sales, the largest wage earners are the ones who provide the most value or perceived value to their clients. But if your prospects do not see the value you are presenting, and you take whatever answer they give you as the cue on what to do next, even if it is a no, you will never be a top sales person.

Sales Homework – Look at the list of questions you ask your prospects. If those questions don’t include the tough ones, list them below. Here is an example; “Teddy, you have been looking at our service for several months now and you have told me it is in your plan to purchase our service. Will that happen this month?”

1. _____________________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – If you want top selling sales reps, it’s crucial they master this skill and attitude. After your sales reps complete their homework, role play the scenarios and record them.
Day 60 – Learn from the best.

Dave Ramsey says, “If you want to be rich, study rich people.” I say, if you want to be a top producing sales rep, study the best in the business. The concept for both is the same. There is usually a formula for every field in which people compete to be the best (or the richest). Long term success does not happen by accident.

I hope and expect as you go through this course every business day, it will make you a better sales person. But don’t stop here. There are tons of sales experts who have a lot of good content and courses to help make you better. To stay ahead in life you need to be a life-long learner. Never think you know everything or can coast on your knowledge. If you don’t have one, develop a thirst for knowledge and information. People talk about the problem of “information overload.” Look at information like a smorgasbord table. Pick and choose the things that make you more knowledgeable, more successful and a better person. Leave the other stuff on the table.

Other places you can study and learn include:

- The top sales reps in your current and other companies.
- Your sales manager
- Sales user groups
- Sales-oriented web sites
- Seminars
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Blogs

If you talk to any world class athlete in training you’ll learn their training regimen consumes their life in preparation for their sporting event. Develop the mentality of a world class athlete, apply it to your sales activities and you will be amazed at the results.

Sales Homework – List two additional resources where you can go to learn from the best.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Compile the resources and you’ll have a complete go-to file for all your sales reps. This list should also be included in your Sales Playbook and in the package for on-boarding new sales reps.
Day 61 – Presenting your best.

Your product may require you to make presentations some or all of the time. Here are a few guidelines that make sure your presentations do the job – which is really only to support your conversation with your audience. Nobody is buying your PowerPoint™ presentations. Your slides are there to support you and keep your discussion on track.

With that in mind, here’s how your slides or handouts need to be put together:

- Have a pleasant, professionally done template page. Don’t go overboard, but make sure it doesn’t look like it was your child’s second grade project.
- Tailor the presentation to your prospect’s business problem and demonstrate the way you’re planning on solving that problem.
- Use simple bullet points. Your bullet points should be on the page just to keep you and the audience on track and to remind you what to discuss next. You don’t want your audience reading the slides. They should be looking at and listening to you.
- Use big fonts. You have to make your presentation easy for everyone to read.
- Use only three or four bullets per page.
- Don’t make your presentation longer than 22 minutes. You will start to lose your audience if you go longer than that. If you have to go longer turn on the lights, take a break or do something else to break it up.

Sales Homework – Take one of your existing prospects and put together a presentation based around their current buying situation. If you have a marketing department, ask them for help and see if they have relevant content that can be used.

Sales Managers – Develop, or have your marketing department develop, the template page for your sales reps. Also have your sales reps use identical corporate overview slides. This helps insure all your reps are delivering the same message about your company and your products.
Day 62 – Getting presentations delivered.

The big day has come. You’re headed to the client’s office to make a presentation. Since I always say that things happen when you meet people, let’s make sure good things happen. There are some key elements you must include to deliver a successful presentation.

- Sit at the head of the table. Unless you need to sit elsewhere for the electric connections, always sit at the head of the table. It is a subtle way for you to take control. The employees are used to seeing their boss sit in that seat and the respect automatically gets assigned to the person sitting at the head of the table.
- When you aren’t sitting and discussing your presentation, stand up and move around a bit. People will follow you and that helps keep their attention.
- Use inflection in your voice. You do not want people falling asleep on you! By altering the tone and volume of your speaking voice, it helps your audience pay attention.
- Periodically use the names of the people in your audience. Everyone likes to hear their name. Be careful not to overdo this, as it will start to sound phony.
- Ask questions and engage your audience.
- Turn the lights down so that your screen can be easily read.
- Don’t give your presentation between 1:00pm and 3:30pm. Humans have a natural wake/sleep rhythm. It’s very natural for people to want to take a “siesta” during that time. If you do, your audience may fall asleep on you.
- Only show one bullet point on your slide at a time. Cover the other bullets with a piece of paper, or use the fade in animation. You want your audience to concentrate on the exact point you’re making.

Sales Homework – Schedule time with your sales manager, friends and anyone else who will sit through your presentation and practice it. Keep practicing the delivery until it flows naturally.

Sales Managers – Make sure your team has consistency in their delivery. Use a training session to let each rep present to the group.
This is a very simple question, but one that hardly gets asked by lower-producing sales reps. This question is asked as soon as you determine your prospect is qualified. You don’t want to ask it too early because your prospect might not even know at that point what the key to the deal is. But when you start hearing things like; “We’re in the midst of reviewing all the alternatives.” Or, “We finished putting our results into our requirements document.” That’s the time to say, “Ellie, it looks like you have all the information you need to make a decision. What’s the key to earning your business?”

A great thing about this closing question is that it can be asked at different stages in the customer’s buying cycle. It doesn’t necessarily have to wait until the final stages of the deal. If they tell you exactly what the key is, you have a clear target and have a much better chance of closing the sale. However, many customers will respond to this question with something like, “There is no real key. We’re looking at a lot of things.” Even with this answer, you can keep drilling without really questioning that statement. “Oh, I thought price (or delivery, or quality, etc.) was the real key.” Then shut up. They will either tell you price really is the key or they will correct you. “Well, price of course is important, but we really want to do business with a company that has a 24/7 support department.”

Unlocking the key to the deal will open up opportunities very quickly.

**Sales Homework** – List at least three current prospects that you have *not* asked this question and ask them this week.

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
4. __________________________

**Sales Managers** – This question helps uncover so much about the deal. Make asking it part of your sales reps list of questions.
**Day 64 – Tenacity**

One evening I was watching the College Football National Championship game on TV. It was the fourth quarter with around 12 minutes to go, and Alabama was beating LSU 15 to 0. The camera kept panning across the LSU sidelines. Practically every LSU player had their head down, was not smiling and appeared lifeless. On the other side of the field the Alabama players were smiling, high-fiving and looked really pumped up.

I said to my wife, the game is over. She was astonished I’d say such a thing with so much time left. I told her to look at the LSU players. I even rewound the broadcast so she could see what I saw; dejection. A defeated attitude. No hope.

First, let me point something else out – I have been watching football for a long time. 12 minutes can be an eternity. I have seen 15 points scored in less than 20 seconds. It was not even close to being an impossible feat to win the game. The problem was the LSU players didn’t think they could win. It was written all over their faces and the way they carried themselves. I’m sure the Alabama players could sense it too.

When you’re a professional sales person you cannot give up until the check is cashed by your competitor. Are you going to win every single deal in your career? Absolutely not. But you need to have the attitude that “it ain’t over till it’s over.” You have to bring every skill, resource and technique to the game for every second on the clock, along with the most positive attitude you can embody. You have to know deep down in your heart that while it looks bad now, you have the courage, strength and determination to win. And then get on the field and apply those virtues. **This is Tenacity.** If you don’t have tenacity and you want to be a top sales person, you need to develop it or be prepared to go home without the trophy.

**Sales Homework** – Be honest and list two times you gave up too easily and vow never to do it again.

1. ____________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Make sure you explore every aspect of each deal to make sure your sales reps are not quitting too quickly.
Day 65 – Role playing.

Role playing is probably the single most effective exercise you can do as a salesperson. It feels a bit awkward at first, but that disappears quickly as your teammates join in and you start to see the results.

Sales role playing is like a baseball player taking batting practice, an actor going through dress rehearsal or a winner practicing their acceptance speech. Role playing gives you the opportunity to make (and eliminate) mistakes before the “live event.” You never want to be in front of, or on the telephone with, a prospect or customer and not be prepared.

You can role play any sales situation. Role playing is particularly effective when going through select deals with your peers and/or your sales manager. Pick an account you want to close or where you want to help move the buying process along. Discuss the strategy and then have someone else play the role of your prospect. Go through the meeting just like you would be having it with your prospect. If you stumble just keep going. One of the benefits of role playing in a group is that you can have multiple prospects firing questions at you from multiple points of view. It always amazes me how two people can be presented with the same information and come up with different interpretations and/or questions. Take advantage of that phenomenon.

Another benefit (mostly for the sales manager) of role playing in groups is that it keeps your sales presentations consistent. You may have multi-call deals where the prospect ends up talking to multiple people in the sales organization. It always gives the prospect confidence when they hear a consistent message.

At the end of the role play discuss how the “call” went, make any corrections as needed and do it again. You will be amazed how this simple exercise will give you additional insight into your deal, put you more at ease and fill you with confidence. Tip: Record your role playing sessions. Reviewing these really helps accelerate the learning and acceptance process.

Sales Homework – List two accounts you are working on that are ready to receive a call from you this week. Then role play those meetings.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Make role playing an ever-present part of your sales strategy and sales training meetings.
Day 66 – Restate the problem.

I was on a phone sales call with one of my reps with the purpose of closing a sale we were working on. My rep started with thanking everyone for being there and then proceeded to ask the decision maker for their business. At that point a lower level person who had done the evaluation our solution asked, “Did you get our support request resolved?” Before my sales rep could answer the decision maker joined in with, “What support request?” We spent the next 20 minutes answering and clarifying that support request question, along with other items that popped up because of the original question. We ended up with the sale but we certainly did not have to take such a long route to get there.

When it’s time to present your solution or it’s time for the close, never jump in and start delivering your pitch. You need to bring your prospect back to their state of mind when they first presented their business problem to you.

Try this approach - “Manfred, before I present our solution to you, can I take a few moments to review your business situation and how our company can lead you to success?” They will almost always say, of course. This approach will do a few things for you:

1. It makes sure that you are indeed addressing the correct problem. Things can change quickly in business.
2. If they add or change something from what you understood, you have time to adjust.
3. At the end of your clarification, and if it is on track, your prospect will give you their first agreement. The second one will be easier.
4. They will see you as a consultant who has taken time to really understand their business and mold a solution to help them succeed. It will build the all-important trust.

Sales Homework – Record yourself or role play summarizing one of your prospects business problems and how you can solve it with your product.

Sales Managers – Work on this process with your sales reps. If the prospect thinks they are being rushed, they will back off. Part of being a professional sales person is walking and talking with confidence and at a slow, controlled pace.
Day 67 – The slippery deal.

There may come a time when your deal appears closed. Either the CEO or your decision maker tells you everything looks good and they are going to sign. The key words here are “going to.” I had a six figure deal where everything was buttoned down, everyone agreed to all the terms and the CEO was set to sign it on a Wednesday. That Wednesday night, our contact, who really was the key decision maker, called my sales rep and said they could not sign the order or at least not that big of an order. It was December and I’m betting my sales rep had already spent that Christmas money. And I had already told my management team the order, as quoted, was on its way.

This is not a lesson on things I should have done or what else I could have said. Sometimes things just happen. As it turns out the CEO was planning on making the purchase but realized at the last minute, because of other factors, if he did make our purchase, he would jeopardize his cash flow position which might affect things like payroll.

First, understand that this is not a good situation for anyone involved. The CEO did not like pulling out and our contact did not like it because it made him look bad. There is no point in losing your cool and developing a “but you promised” attitude. You still have a customer who wants to buy from you. But now you need to take a step back, keep them engaged and work out something that will be good for both parties. Cool down and relax before responding to this kind of information. Like most big decisions, it is best to sleep on it.

Sales Homework – Make a plan for yourself or bookmark this lesson just in case this scenario happens to you. At some point in your sales career, it probably will.

Sales Managers – When this type of situation happens, know that it is not the time to start correcting your sales rep. They got the deal this far and sometimes tornados just pop out of nowhere.
Day 68 – Getting and using written testimonials.

A very good sales person once told me, “Self-praise is no recommendation.” One of your most powerful sales tools are customer testimonials. Your prospects are way more likely to believe something someone else says about you than what you tell your prospect about yourself.

The best time to get a customer testimonial is right after they have started using your product and are happy with their new experience. Thanks to you, they have just solved a problem or filled a need for their company so they are satisfied, proud and willing to give you a pat-on-the-back. The key to getting testimonials is to make the process easy. I usually say: “Steve, are you happy enough with our product to provide a testimonial?”

Hopefully, they will say yes. Now comes the part that will separate you from the average sales rep. “I know you are very busy. I am obviously very familiar with your account. Would it save you time if I wrote it for you and sent it to you for your approval? You can obviously change or edit anything.”

While it takes some guts to ask this, I have never been turned down. If they are indeed happy with your product they will not mind and they will appreciate your taking care of all the details.

Sales Homework – Call your three best customers and try this testimonial approach today.

Sales Managers – As soon as a deal closes and the customer is happy with the results, remind your sales people to get testimonials.
Day 69 – Emails with benefits.

I received the following email (names are changed):

Hi Louie,
I was hoping that we could reconnect to discuss profiling Sales Getters in our Business Intelligence Book for our lead generation program. I've included another sample lead to give you an idea of the type of buyers with whom we are speaking and the amount of information we provide with all of our lead’s contact information.

When would be a good time for you?
Best,
Teresa

In fairness, this email did contain a sample record – there for me to figure out by myself until we spoke. However, there is no benefit in the email that might compel me to call Teresa. What about:

- How will I be better off by purchasing her service?
- How have others benefited?
- What might I lose by not purchasing the service?

When sending correspondence or talking with a prospect, ALWAYS include how your product benefits them. There are several ways this could have been written for more impact. Here’s one way:

Hi Louie,
I’m confident you could profit from our lead generation program, like hundreds of other sales companies have. I was hoping that we could reconnect to discuss why. Louie, you have businesses out there that need your service. Let’s work together to make it easy for them to find you! They win and you win with increased sales.

I've included another sample lead to give you an idea of the type of buyers with whom we are speaking and the amount of information we provide with all our leads.

Let’s not wait to get this working for you.

Best,
Teresa

Sales Homework – Have your benefit-oriented email template prepared. Write it out now.

Sales Managers – Let your sales reps write their own benefit-oriented email templates. Then go over them in sales training and merge them to create the best one possible. Let’s not wait!
Day 70 – Feel, felt, found.

Using this sales strategy/verbiage is an excellent way to address a prospect’s or customer’s objection. It’s simple and actually quite fun to say. It’s kind of like putting a different riddle together time after time, using the same three words. (You “Words with Friends” friends out there will like this.)

“Chris, I know how you feel. Probably 90% of our customers felt the same way. No doubt, it is an incremental cost. But what our customers found was that the incremental costs were made up in two months and from then on it was all profit.”

“Laura, I know how you feel. You’re not alone. Some of our customers felt the same way initially. But what they found when they implemented the new features, was that both their output went up and their time-to-market decreased.”

“Robert, I know how you feel about this. Your team members felt the same way at first pass. But what they found is that they had a huge increase in customer satisfaction after moving ahead.”

I could go on, but you get the idea. Use this verbal strategy wherever appropriate. It needs to roll off your tongue so you don’t even notice the words: feel, felt, found.

Sales Homework – Write five of your own feel, felt, founds. They’re fun!

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – This lesson is “block-and-tackle” kind of stuff. It’s part of the basics. So, it is very crucial to have. Your sales reps need get it under their belts, so they can build upon it. Make sure all of them can rattle off a feel, felt, found at a moment’s notice.
Day 71 – Only swing at what you can hit.

If you ever played American baseball your manager probably said to you as you were heading to the plate, “Don’t swing at any bad pitches.” This was good batting advice and is equally great selling advice.

You have a finite amount of time to call, qualify and close new customers during your day. If you spend time swinging at unqualified prospects thinking you’re going to hit a home run, you will be disappointed. In baseball, you can be looking at the pitch coming at you. It’s coming right down the middle. It’s in your sweet spot. You’re just about to swing when, all of a sudden, the ball flies out of the strike zone. The pitcher has just thrown you a curve ball. Good hitters both anticipate a curve ball and adjust accordingly, or they don’t swing at it. If you know a prospect is leading you on or not qualified, for whatever reason, you need to adjust by walking away. You need to spend your time with accounts where you can hit home runs.

So, how do you keep from chasing these tricky pitches?

- Make sure to never deviate from the criteria you use for qualifying your prospects. This has to be your guideline.
- Ask your prospect for small commitments but something in which they need to put some effort. If they are willing to work with you, even if they are not in your exact sweet spot, they may be worth working on.
- See how quickly they respond to your calls, requests for information, and willingness to get you in front of the decision maker.

Sales Homework – Look at your current prospect list. If you have any prospects who are throwing you curve balls, list them below and adjust.

1. ___________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________

Sales Managers – Work with your sales reps to insure they are not wasting time with prospects that aren’t qualified.
Day 72 – The prospect in crisis.

We once had a prospect that was around 70% through his buying cycle when he had a catastrophe. One of his software developers had sabotaged their software and then quit. He told our rep everything would have to be put on hold. It was a tough situation for our prospect because it was affecting his customers. While it seemed like the deal was in jeopardy, it really presented us with the opportunity to do good for him...and good for us.

We decided to give him our software with really good terms. He was already under financial pressure from having consultants on site trying to clear up the mess with his application and the generous terms seemed like it would ease his pain. He could get good will from his customers and we would still make the sale...and a friend.

This is one of the most artful calls you will make in sales. You have to be helpful and empathetic, appear not to be self-serving and get the deal done. Here's the conversation:

“Hi Ted, I’m calling to see how you are doing after that horrible incident with your developer.” Pause here and let them tell you the story. Ask a few sincere questions, and listen. Do not interrupt. At the appropriate time say, “I was thinking about your situation and I had an idea. At this point, wouldn’t it be great if you could offer something to your customers and not have it hit your wallet right away?” Ted confirms that would be great. “First, let me say Ted this is not totally unselfish on our part.” (This is statement is crucial because you bring up the elephant in the room which is, what’s in it for you Louie? You continue; “We want you as a customer but we really want you as a happy customer. Let’s go ahead and sign you up for our software. You can then let your customers use it and enjoy its benefits so they are not thinking about how upset they are. You don’t pay us anything for 90 days while you work everything else out. You have enough to deal with.”

Sales Homework – Be prepared for this type of situation. List three ways a prospect could buy your product even if a catastrophe strikes them. Terms are not the only way.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Sales Managers – This is an exercise in creativity. Collect the responses above and put them in the “backup plan” file.
Day 73 – The Five W’s and an H.

Memorize these five W’s plus the H and you will never be at a loss as to how to ask your prospects a good question. The five W’s and one H are:

1. Who
2. What
3. When
4. Where
5. Why
6. How

The words start open-ended questions. An open-ended question cannot be answered with a yes or no. They require an explanation. They require someone to engage in a conversation. And that’s the purpose of these questions. Some examples:

- Who, in addition to yourself, will be involved in making the decision?
- What is the real key to earning your business?
- When will you be making a decision to purchase?
- Where do you think you will see results from using our product?
- Why is that an important consideration?
- How will you be using our product?

Here are a few things to remember about using these questions:

- Don’t make the other person feel like a spotlight is on them.
- Have your questions written out in advance.
- Mix them up.
- Be genuinely interested when you ask the questions.
- Don’t be thinking about your response when they are talking. Listen.

Sales Homework – List six questions about your product using the five W’s and one H.

1. _______________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________
4. _______________________________________________________
5. _______________________________________________________
6. _______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Compile a list of all the questions and add them to your Sales Playbook.
Day 74 – The perfect close (your mouth).

Average sales people talk too much. It’s usually out of nervousness, lack of confidence or lack of training. Maybe you’ve said something like, “Neal, how quickly do you plan to implement our product? Most customers like to implement in the first quarter.” Why are you asking the question if you don’t seem to care about their answer?!

You were given two ears and one mouth for a reason. If you, as a salesperson, are not listening at least twice as much as you are talking, you probably aren’t doing your job. Rest assured, if you have a viable prospect, there will be plenty of time for you to make your presentation. But if you talk too much on the front end, without learning about what you do need to say, you may never get the chance.

The worst time to over talk is when you are trying to close a deal. After you ask a closing question, SHUT UP. Let me repeat this because this one tip can make you a lot of money. After you ask a closing question, SHUT UP.

I know this concept seems obvious but it is difficult for many people because it creates tension. This pause is sometimes referred to as the “pregnant pause.” (You can draw your own conclusion.) No matter how hard it is to keep your mouth closed, no matter how much you want to say something to let your prospect off the hook, no matter how much you just want to be done with that uncomfortable feeling, do not say anything after asking the closing question – or any question. As your prospects start answering your single question, your confidence will grow and this will become a habit.

Sales Homework – Implement this lesson starting with your next call and BE QUIET!

Sales Managers – Make sure your sales reps embed this approach. It is essential for sales growth. It will also help develop their self-confidence as the orders start coming in.

“It’s better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool, than to open it and leave no doubt.” Abraham Lincoln
Day 75 – Don’t forget your anniversary.

Every spouse knows this rule. But do you remember your customer’s anniversary? You should. In whatever contact management system you use, record the date of your customer’s first purchase. Then, using the calendar function set a reminder for every year on that date. Call or send your customer a sincere thank you.

Here is sample for you - “Spencer, last year (or two years, three years or however many years ago) you made your first purchase with us. I want you to know I haven’t forgotten and I sincerely hope you have gotten great value from <your product>.

Thank you again and I look forward to providing you with many more years of excellent service. Please let me know how I can help in any way.”

People love to be appreciated. They may have been spending the company’s money and not their own, but your customer nonetheless put in effort and possibly staked their reputation on purchasing your product. So, when you call or write to let them know you are still grateful for their effort and confidence in you, it will mean a lot to them. It may mean the difference in your favor when one of your competitors calls to try to win away their business from you.

I remember a story I heard a long time ago about a kid who had a lawn cutting business. He would occasionally have his brother call his customers and pretend to try to solicit their business away. When the customers would turn him down, he would always ask why. Their usual response was what a wonderful job his brother did, and that he never forgot to remind them about how long they had been one of his customers. He did that with a hand-written thank you note once a year; usually at the beginning of lawn cutting season.

How long did it take to write that note? Probably less than a minute. How much impact did it have? Enough for a career of great earnings.

Sales Homework – Write your “anniversary” card. You need several variations because sending the exact same note every year would be unprofessional.

Sales Managers – This is a good but often overlooked part of account management. Add it to your Sales Playbook.
Day 76 – Jump on the lead. Leap ahead on sales.

A study done by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) revealed the following:

- The average company takes 41 to 56 hours to make their first response to a web inquiry.
- The average sales person makes between 1.5 and 1.7 call attempts before giving up.
- 35% to 65% of sales people don’t respond at all.
- 78% of the sales from the web go to the company that responds first.
- Every response past 20 hours actually hurts your chances of winning. Your chances of winning a web lead are 391% greater if you respond within the first minute.
- If you phone and then email them within the first 16 minutes of a response, versus just sending an email, you will have doubled your chances of success.
- The most successful time to reach an initial prospect is between 8:00 - 9:00am and 4:00 - 5:00pm.

Prospects are never more interested in your product than when they are on your website and make an inquiry. Do not squander this opportunity.

Sales Homework – If it is your day to get the incoming leads, build flexibility into your day. Immediately pick up the phone and call the prospect when the lead comes in to you (assuming you have their phone number). If you get voicemail, send the email right after leaving your message. Hold off on sending your email until you make the call. If you speak with the prospect, it may change what you put in the email.

Sales Managers – Create a sense of urgency around web leads. The facts show their value diminishes every minute you wait.

Bonus – Here’s one more interesting fact from their study regarding appointments:

The number of calls required to set appointments that close sales--

- 36.51% set on 1st call.
- **60.58% set on the 1st or 2nd call.**
- **90% set with less than 7 call attempts.**
- 95% set with less than 12 call attempts.
- 97.5% set with less than 19 call attempts.
Day 77 – Multiple contacts multiply your chances for success.

I once had a prospect at a company in Pennsylvania. I called him one day to help move his buying cycle along. His assistant came on the line told me Ben would not be in that day or any other day. Ben won the Pennsylvania state lottery and was now $9 million richer. I’m not kidding. Hooray for Ben and tough luck for me.

But a very good lesson came out that situation. I learned that it’s always better to have more than one contact at any account. It’s not always possible, but you should try your hardest to get to know and develop relationships with multiple people related to your deal at the company. People get terminated, get sick, get transferred, retire and even win the lottery. There are all sorts of reasons your original contact might not end up being there when your order is signed. So need to protect your investment of time that you have in the account.

If you’re selling into large accounts where there are multiple stakeholders, get to know as many as those stakeholders as possible. More than once, I have had my ultimate decision maker be someone who started in the buying cycle as just part of the evaluation committee.

Sales Homework – List three accounts where you can build a relationship with another strategic person in that account.

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

Sales Managers – This is a big part of strategic account management. You should look in the accounts for members who are of equal or higher status than you and build relationships with them. Aside from protecting the account, if something should happen to your sales rep, you are not going in completely unaware of the “landscape.”

If you take over an existing account, you want to make sure the people in that account will be glad you’ve arrived. However, you will not start off well by calling up and saying, “Hi, I’m your new sales rep. How’s everything going?” They know how everything’s going for them. If they really needed your help with a problem they were having, they probably would have called you. With that opening line they’re thinking you believe you just found a gold mine.

A good approach when you’re taking over an existing customer is to treat the introductions like they are a brand new prospect. It’s actually much easier since you know their history with your company. Before you make your first call to them:

- Study any notes on the account in your CRM system.
- Look at the products they purchased and the dollar amounts spent.
- Read through any support or customer services issues.
- Talk with other people in your company that have worked with them.
- Find something of value for them that the previous sales rep did not deliver. It doesn’t have to be a new product or add-on for them to buy. It’s usually better if you don’t try to sell them something right away.
- See if they are using what they have already purchased, as well as possible.
- Find trends, research or anything else that could be of value to them.
- Research their competition.

Now you’re ready to make the call.

Sales Homework – If you have been assigned any takeover accounts, go through the steps above and put your notes into your CRM system. This process is not exclusive to accounts that are assigned to you. If you are allowed, use this approach on accounts in your system that you can take over and are just drifting along and getting no attention. You may dig up some gold.

Sales Managers – When your sales reps call up with, “Hi, I’m your new sales rep. How’s everything going?” it’s a giveaway that your group has an amateur. Unfortunately for you, by association they will think you are too.

For the next lesson, go directly to Day 79 - The successful takeover: Part 2 - Making the call.
**Day 79 – Your new account: Part 2 - Making the call.**

Okay, you’ve done all your homework, research, spoken with everyone who knows the existing account within your company and you’re ready to make the call. Since your goal is to deliver value, you want that to be the primary goal of your first call. You are going to want to establish a relationship with all the pertinent people in the account, but your first call needs to be to the top person(s). This could be the CEO (never a bad place to start), the decision maker (if it is not the CEO) or the financial buyer.

Use this sample script and tailor to suit your situation:

“Hello Dan. This is Louie Bernstein at Sales Getters. <Pause to see if they ask how you are.> If not, in this particular case it is okay to say, “How are you today?” The reason for my call is that I have taken over your account and I want to make sure you are getting the most and best use out of the products you’ve bought from us. Do you have a few minutes to talk?” These two sentences will completely disarm them. If they say yes, continue. “In researching your account I noticed that you have enough credits to receive two months of our free lead generation service, but haven’t taken advantage of it. Is that something you would like to explore?” Unless they’ve lost their mind they will say, “of course.” You continue with, “Great. I had a couple of other ideas for you, as well. When would be a good time for us to get together?”

Once again, the goal of your first call in this situation is to be seen as their new Trusted Advisor. Go through this process with all the appropriate contacts at the account.

**Sales Homework** – Write out your script and practice it.

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – This is an excellent opportunity to penetrate deeper into existing accounts and to uncover information that may have gotten buried with your previous sales rep.
Day 80 – Your elevator speech.

The concept of the elevator speech came long before the internet, email and social media. The idea was that you’ve tried endlessly to get into see a prospect but despite your attempts, you could never get past the gatekeeper and your prospect would never pick up the phone. So, in desperation you would hide in the lobby where he worked and wait for him to arrive.

The big moment comes when you spot your prey walking through the lobby headed toward the elevator. You leap out of the bushes and casually get on the same elevator as your prospect. Still, ever so you casual, you look at him and say, “Hello Mr. Cleaver, I’m so glad I ran into you. I’ve wanted to speak with you for months now about our new Clean-o-Matic pot scrubber, which I think would be great in all your restaurants.” Hopefully, if this ploy worked, Mr. Cleaver would reply, “Well, tell me about it now.” By the end of the elevator ride Mr. Cleaver would be so impressed he would invite you into his office as you smirked your way past the gatekeeper. Mission accomplished.

Today, with that approach, you might be arrested for stalking. However, the concept is the same: When you meet someone and you only have 20 to 30 seconds to get them interested in your business, you need to be able to distill your message down to a few short sentences so that the next words coming out of Mr. Cleaver’s mouth are, “Tell me more.”

Here are a few suggestions and sequencing on how to craft your message to get your prospect interested in what you are selling...quickly:

- Say exactly what you do. It should read like the title on your web site. “We provide sales outsourcing for B2B companies.”
- First big benefit – “Our customers choose Sales Getters because we quickly bring in additional sales for them.”
- Second big benefit – “They like being able to focus on their core business while we drive revenue and find new opportunities for them.”
- Question – “How is your sales department structured for growth now?”

The entire sequence shouldn’t take more than half a minute and lead to a more in-depth conversation.

Sales Homework – Write out your “elevator speech” in four moves, like above.

1. ___________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________________
4. ___________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Play the role of the unsuspecting prospect. Then send your sales reps out to track down their hard-to-pin-down prospect. This time, they’ll be prepared to succeed.
Day 81 – Start at the top...wherever that is.

Call the CEO first. That’s usually good advice. But calling the CEO is not always the best place to start. A lot of who and where you start calling depends on the size of the company. If you’re calling on a Fortune 50 company and you’re selling a $2,500 product, the CEO is not the right place to start. (Unless the minimum order, at this price, is quantity 100.)

So, where is the right place to start? If so, start with the person who will sign your order without having to get permission from the CEO or CFO.

Many department heads or VP’s have signing authority. Then that might the right place to start. If you call the person who has nothing to do with evaluating your product either they or their admin will tell you who the right person is for you to call. Call that person and say, “Hi Tom, Kathy Whistley’s office told me to call you in regards to <your product>.” What they will hear is: “Your boss told me to call you and you’d better listen to me.” You keep going until you hit the person who will recommend your product.

When it is time for your recommender to buy, the people above that person will already be familiar with you. Make sure you say the following to the people who are referring you: “Thank you for pointing me in the right direction, Kathy. <Your product> will be great for the Whistley Group. Would you like me to keep you in the loop as the conversation with <whoever they refer you to> continues?” Now you have an open line of communication with the person at the top.

Sales Homework – Starting today, determine who has the top position at the companies that buy your product. Still not sure where to start for your product? Here’s a tip: Look through your other customer’s records. See who signed the order on those deals.

Sales Managers – Don’t let your sales reps get suckered into thinking they always have to call the CEO. Sometimes they or you do. Sometimes it’s not the right place to start.
Day 82 – Your proposal template.

One of the best ways to be efficient is to have a proposal template. This lesson can just as easily be included in the Sales Manager’s section. Regardless, let’s approach this lesson in a collaborative fashion and go over the importance of a proposal template along with what should be included.

When you take the time to put together a professional proposal template it is another indication to your prospects that you take time to do things right; that you are a professional. This leads to your prospect gaining confidence in you. Confidence leads to trust. Trust leads to sales. Your proposal template should be in the following format:

- **Title page with the prospects logo.** It’s always nice to use the phrase, Prepared especially for...
- **Brief profile about your company.** List your accomplishments, but frame them in the context of how they helped other companies. For example; Grew 75% last year by helping 35 companies enhance and bring their products to market.
- **Restatement of business problem to be solved with your product.** This is often called a Position Statement. If you have been taking good notes in your CRM system you should easily be able to go back and pull the important points about the problem your prospect is trying to solve. Try to includes dates, times, people involved, discussion points from the meetings, etc. Be as detailed as possible. In sales it’s hard to go wrong by adding too much detail. It shows your prospect you are on top of your business and track even the littlest details to make sure their account is handled correctly.
- **Quote with terms and conditions.** For a lot of companies you product will need to be delivered with a separate contract. Even so, it is a good idea to let your prospect know early what your terms are.
- **Signature page.** Don’t forget this one. Always make it easy for you customers to sign and buy. Include your email address, fax number and/or any other way for them to send you their signed proposal.

**Sales Homework** – Start working as a team and putting together a proposal template you can all use to help close business like a professional.

**Sales Managers** – See above.
Day 83 – Show me the agenda.

Do you prepare an agenda for a sales call or sales meeting? You should. Every professional, in every profession, prepares for their event. As a commission sales person, you’re playing in a high-stakes game. You only get money when you win. So, you need to make sure you do everything to stack the deck in your favor. The agenda:

- Ensures you don’t forget anything.
- Makes sure you *think* about the meeting or call.
- Shows your prospect or customer you are a professional because you act like one.

The agenda should include:

- Goals for the meeting.
- Introductory remarks.
- A list of questions for which you need answers.
- Action steps that move your sale forward based on their answers.

**Sales Homework** – Choose one of your upcoming meetings or phone calls and put together an agenda.

**Sales Managers** – if they don’t already, have your sales reps start using an agenda. Build an agenda template into your CRM system so you will always have a record of the meetings.

P.S. In your action steps don’t forget who is responsible for what and by what date.
**Day 84 – Closing: If I can, will you...?**

Using this close will save you more time than any other closing question. And it’s probably the simplest close. Somewhere in your customer’s buying cycle (probably toward the end) they may come to you and ask you for something extra or a concession of some sort. For example; “Louie, can we get an extra day of professional services?” To which you should respond with, “Jeri, I am not sure I can get that for you. But if I can, will you place your order?”

If they say yes, you’re in business. If they say “I’m not sure,” you follow with, “Please find out. If you can place your order, which includes an extra day of services at no charge, I will ask if I can get the services for you.” Restate your request and what they will receive if everything is approved. Never leave the conversation with the monkey on your back. This is very simple but unbelievably effective. The key is to keep it simple and have the verbiage naturally from you.

**Sales Homework** – Make it a point to ask this question the next time your prospect asks you for something extra or a concession. Obviously, substitute your product. Practicing this close will help flow smoothly. Take the time to practice.

**Sales Managers** – Having your sales reps use this close every time, at the appropriate time, will increase your sales. Guaranteed.
Day 85 – Save time for yourself and your family.

Balance. It’s finally okay to talk about balance in the workplace. I think it’s because everyone from the top down has been affected by having to do more work with less people. Balance, or at least an attempt at balance, between work and family is essential for a healthy life and a long, profitable sales career.

Being in commission sales can be all-encompassing. You’re tied to your phone, laptop, iPad. There are enough things you can do, even when you are out of the office, to keep you working 24/7. (This is another reason you need to work as smart as possible.) You need to turn it off and relax every day. You are in a marathon. There is always going to be one more deal. And that deal will be there in the morning. I’m not saying ignore the 10pm email regarding a deal that’s supposed to close in the morning. What I’m suggesting is to add time for you and your family on your daily schedule and stick to it.

One saying you’ve undoubtedly heard (because it’s TRUE) is that nobody ever wished they spent more time at the office, as they laid on their deathbed. I know my wife is laughing as she reads this because I am a very hard worker. I think over the years I’ve learned to work smarter, but I still put in the hours. When I ran my first business 50 or 60 hours per week was the norm. I missed a lot of things my four children went through and I can’t get that time or those memories back. I think I could have achieved the same results working 40 or 45 hours.

My advice to you is to make time for yourself and time for your family on your daily planner.

- Schedule a date night and stick to it.
- Be involved as much as possible in your children’s lives.
- If you don’t have one, pursue a hobby.
- Better yet, find your passion.

This lesson has no technique to learn, words to memorize or attitude to adjust. Just be you and give some of that to the people who love you.

Sales Homework – Follow the above bullets.

Sales Managers – Make sure you give your sales reps some slack to pursue outside interests and spend quality time with their family. They will be better, more productive sales people who will sell more over a longer period of time. And they will be better people to be around and have in front of customers.
Day 86 – Be the expert and be known.

Jeffrey Gitomer says “It’s not who you know, it’s who knows you.” He is absolutely right. You want to be known as the go-to person in your industry. You want to want to be the expert in the room. You want to be the person who the reporter calls for insight into your industry for an article they’re writing.

A large part of what you’re selling to your prospects is you. People buy from people. And people buy from people they like and trust. If you’re an expert in your field, that expertise will give you instant credibility.

First, become the expert. Read, study, watch video, talk to other experts. Do whatever you can to know as much as you can about your industry. Seek out knowledge at every opportunity then spread it around.

Get active in the world wide social web. Write, comment and question others in your industry on social media sites. There are so many social sites it’s impossible to list them here. And more are popping up every day. Your prospects go to these sites to become knowledgeable as well as to find people who can help them. You need to be there when they’re looking. I have met key people who helped me with this book (and get sales!) by meeting and interacting with them on sites like LinkedIn, Focus.com, Facebook and Twitter. It’s a small, focused world. Take advantage of it.

Sales Homework – Commit this week to continuing (or beginning) your effort at becoming the go-to person in your industry. Then pick four social media sites and get active. You will be amazed at how this elevates your stature and your income.

Site 1. _____________________________________________________________

Site 2. _____________________________________________________________

Site 3. _____________________________________________________________

Site 4. _____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Don’t be threatened by your sales reps necessity to be well known. The business will come back to you and your company.
Day 87 – Get excited or they won’t.

Excitement is contagious. In sales you need to be the one to start the excitement. But it has to be genuine. You have to be genuinely passionate and excited about your product.

I have a close friend and neighbor who at one time worked for Coca Cola. Coke has made its living on its brand and its brand loyalty. And that loyalty follows the employees home. One time when our kids were younger, his daughter ordered a pizza from Pizza Hut. Pizza Hut at that time was a Pepsi company. Well, that pizza never made it to the kitchen table. I don’t even think the dog got it.

The Coke employees are excited about their product and are very proud of their company. I never saw a Toyota in the parking lot of the GM factory near my home. And you would never FedEx your proposal to UPS. (Although sadly, I’m sure some have.)

Use your product. If possible, buy your product. Get to know it inside and out. And then get excited about your product. Your excitement will be transferred to your prospects. People love to get involved with things when excitement surrounds those things. It reinforces their buying motivation and makes it fun for them.

Sales Homework – Spend time every day using your product until its attributes are ingrained.

Sales Managers – Figure out how to get your product in your sales reps’ hands. They need to be the champions and lead the charge. Get everyone excited.
Day 88 – Voicemails that speak loud and clear.

I know you think all you do is leave voice mails and very few people call you back (unless you’ve read and studied the lesson in this course on voice mail). But there really are a few times when it is a good idea to leave a voicemail rather than speak directly with your prospect. Here are a few:

- The night before to confirm a meeting. When your prospect gets the message in the morning, they may cancel if they don’t want to or can’t meet. But if something has come up between the setting of the appointment and the day of the appointment, this will give them time to rearrange their schedule to fit you in.
- To let them know you are a hard worker. If you’re making business calls at 10:00pm you are a person who takes their job seriously. This works for leaving a voice mail on the weekend as well. You can let your prospect know you were working on their account over the weekend. Wow.
- When you can’t leave a voice mail during the day because the Gatekeeper won’t even put you through to your prospect’s voicemail.

Sales Homework – Think of two creative uses for intentionally wanting to leave a voicemail.

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Finally, there’s times when it’s okay to leave a voicemail. It’s really a good lesson for sales managers (and everyone else) that there are very few absolutes.
Day 89 – Let your prospects tell you how they buy.

Mediocre sales people talk more than they listen. I know it’s a cliché, but you do have two ears and one mouth for a reason. If you listen closely you can learn not only if your prospect is interested in buying, they will tell you how to sell to them. This really brings back a key concept; you may be selling but it’s the really customers who are buying. So, if you are talking more than half as much as you’re listening, you need to sit back and listen to the answers to the pertinent questions you’re asking. Within those answers your customer is telling you how things are going to flow. But you have to quit talking so much so you can listen.

Even one simple question can make a world of difference. I was on a demo with one of my sales reps. The prospect had sent him an email that outlined a few features in particular that he wanted to see. We started the demo and my rep showed the requested features. He then went ahead to show other features in our product. I politely stopped the demo before we got any further and asked the prospect “Is that what you were looking to see?” He replied, “Not really.” What my sales rep had not done was to pause, ask a relevant question to the features he had just shown, and listen for the answer. Once we clarified everything, we kept moving forward.

Quit selling and start letting your prospects buy. You do this by asking pertinent, relevant, prepared questions and listening to the answers.

Sales Homework – On your next call or meeting, have a notepad or sticky note handy. Every time you speak place a check mark down. Every time your prospect speaks put a check mark down. At the end of the call add them up. If your prospect doesn’t have twice as many check marks as you, you’re talking too much.

Try to keep track of the time as well. Your prospects should be talking at least three times as much as you.

Sales Managers – Listen to your sales reps’ calls and keep your own scorecard.
**Day 90 – Storytelling**

Early in my career, I was assigned a Fortune 50 customer. Shortly after taking over the account I made a very nice sale. It was to upgrade this customer’s systems in 147 locations across the US. But those systems were really just a place holder for much more powerful and expensive systems that were going to replace the 147 systems I had just sold, in about 18 months.

This new opportunity was a big deal. I had a cubicle at the customer’s location. I had also managed to get one of our large computer systems that was being evaluated to be placed on loan in the customer’s data center. I even managed to get a meeting with the CFO and my district manager. Everything was looking good. After the technical evaluation I was shown the internal report from the IT department where we had won, hands down. Not even close.

My competitor didn’t have a rep onsite and did not bring in any systems to loan to the customer. The technical review found their systems somewhat lacking. What they did have, however, was a close relationship with the IT Director. The IT Director always wanted to work at my competitor’s company and short of getting that job, he wanted a close relationship. He wanted to be “one of the boys.” My competitor flew the IT Director to their corporate office, wined and dined him, which made him feel important and endearing to my competitor.

Yep, you guessed it. I lost the sale. I came up with lots of reasons why, but the real reason was because I underestimated the power of relationships. I thought just being better was good enough. I never let that happen to me again. Don’t let that happen to you either. Good relationships, especially in high profile, high dollar deals, are essential - if not key - to winning. First build your relationship, and then sell your product. Never forget that.

Did you enjoy that story? Stories are powerful ways for you to get your message across to your prospects. People like stories and enjoy relating to them.

**Sales Homework** – Write out and practice your own stories. They are very powerful. You will never regret the time it takes to put them together.

**Sales Managers** – Teach your sales reps by telling your own stories. It will demonstrate that you have been in their shoes and are experienced. Stories can be very inspiring and we can all learn from them.
Day 91 – Objection: Your price is too high.

Ah, the sentence that strikes fear into the sales rep. The mediocre sales rep, that is. Learn how to handle this objection and your income will go up. Probably more than any other objection, there has been more answers provided as to how to handle “Your price is too high,” than any other objection. Here’s my approach:

1. **Acknowledge** - “Okay, I hear what you’re saying, Jerry.” It’s a simple deflection.
2. **Cushion** – “Money can mean everything.”
3. **Clarify** – “How high is it?” This question may short circuit a lot of discussion. If you told Jerry your price was $50,000 and Jerry comes back and says, “I was thinking closer to $48,000”, you now know what kind of discount you may have to offer. If, however, Jerry comes back and says, “I was thinking about half of that,” you need to go to step four. The key is, if you have to lower your price, you don’t want to leave any money on the table. If you were thinking you might give Jerry a $3,000 discount and Jerry only wanted $2,000 off, you saved yourself $1,000.
4. **Question** – “Jerry, how did you come up with that figure?” Jerry now needs to justify his position. Once Jerry gives you his reasoning, you need to revisit the case for Jerry making his purchase. You need to present again. Areas to revisit include:
   - The value your product delivers, including why Jerry was looking at your product in the first place.
   - The strengths of your product over the competitors. Do this without degrading the competitor.
5. **Reduce** – If the above does not work, let Jerry know you can offer that price by reducing or taking away something else. This could be delivery, quantity, service hours, etc.

**Sales Homework** – For a prospect who is hammering you for a lower price, list three of the already agreed on benefits you have discussed with them. Then write your own script to handle the “Your price is too high” objection.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Make sure your sales reps know how to handle this objection cold. This objection is great for role playing as you can practice many paths as the prospect.
Day 92 – How to build trust with your customers.

Trust is the second pillar of the, Like – Trust – Buy formula for making sales. You have to create trust between you and your prospect to make a successful sale. The ONLY way they will buy from you if they don’t trust you, is if you are the only supplier for what they need and they have no choice. And that will only be if it is a strategically important product.

It’s really not all that hard to get a prospect to trust you. Just a few simple steps:

1. Know your product cold.
2. Do what you say you are going to do.
3. Always tell the truth.
4. Under promise and over deliver.
5. Deliver solutions – don’t add to their problems.
7. Don’t be a know-it-all.
8. Know their business and industry.
9. Listen more than you talk.

Trust is usually developed after a culmination of events, many of which are listed above. Trust can take a while to build. And it is not only about simply telling the truth; although ALWAYS being honest is a required component to building trust. It is about being someone your customer can count on when Plan A isn’t working and you need to get Plan B into action quickly. Trust is about being the kind of person that anticipates potential issues your customer might face, and addressing them before catastrophe strikes. Trust means peace of mind. Your customer is so confident in you and your abilities that they can focus on their job and then sleep well at night.

An article I read recently said that more than 85% of Americans make their choice for President of the United States based mainly on trust. While the President’s job is probably a bit more important to world peace than yours, the concept is the same - Your customer votes for you once they trust you.

Sales Homework – List three more ways you can get your customer to trust you.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Do not overlook this issue. Compile the list of trust factors and have your sales reps pin them up in their cubicles or offices.
Day 93 – Using video testimonials.

It’s the 21st century and your prospects expect 21st century marketing and sales efforts. Written testimonials are very effective if you have to email a testimonial or hand one to a prospect during a meeting. However, people love to watch TV and be entertained. A video testimonial is really just a TV commercial for you. Video testimonials can be very effective if done correctly. It’s said that self-praise is no recommendation. When your customer gets on camera and tells the world how great you are in their own words, it’s powerful.

Here are a few guidelines for making a good video testimonial:

• Use a good high definition camera. It’s worth the expense.
• Use a lavaliere microphone. The quality is much better. You don’t want your prospects straining to hear the good news about you.
• Have your questions prepared.
• Don’t let it look staged. It has to be real to be believed. Let your customer respond to your questions in their own words. Let them ramble a bit too if they decide to go off in on a tangent. You can always edit the video.
• If you can record the testimonial in the customer’s office, that’s the best location for the video.

Once you have your video testimonial(s) you need to make sure the world can see them. With your company’s permission:

• Place them on your web site.
• Use them in your email signature, or as thumbnails that link to the video.
• Start a YouTube Channel and place them there. As a side note, there are lots of tools YouTube makes available to make sure your videos are indexed correctly so they can be found by new prospects. Take advantage of these tools.

Having and using video testimonials should give you instant credibility with your prospects. They are one of the best prospecting tools you can have.

Sales Homework – Work with your marketing department to get your first video testimonial done.

Sales Managers – If you are the liaison between sales and marketing, champion this effort. Make it easy for marketing by creating the video.
Day 94 – Return On Investment (ROI).

Customers always need to know what the payback is going to be for them after they purchase your product. This is called a Return On Investment (ROI). Companies have different methods of calculating ROI based on their own needs and internal systems. The bottom line, however, remains the same. If they don’t think they will get a positive return of some type from buying your product there will most likely be no sale.

Sometimes the ROI isn’t only money. Many companies will invest in a product to:

- Keep their customers happy.
- Stay the market leader in their industry.
- Leapfrog the competition.
- Improve efficiency or productivity.
- Appease internal users of your product.

It’s up to you to find out what a good enough ROI is for your prospect.

Here are some questions to help you uncover your prospect’s perceived ROI:

- How many years do you use in calculating a Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for products like ours?
- Are you planning on monetizing the purchase of our product or is it being used for good will with your customers?
- How many departments are involved in spreading out the cost of owning our product?
- What is your motivation for purchasing our product?

Once you know the answers to your questions and understand what a good ROI is for your product, for that particular customer, put together your analysis. Be prepared to use when it is the most strategic for you. Your prospect will respect you for being a good business person for both understanding their business and looking out for their best financial interests.

Understanding how your prospects plan on recouping their investment, and then helping them make the numbers work, will move you farther along more quickly in your customer’s buying cycle.

Sales Homework – List two other questions you can ask your prospects that enable you to understand their ROI.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Getting your sales reps to think like business people will elevate their stature in your customer’s mind.
Day 95 – Be an educator.

Your prospects and customers count on you to be an expert in the field in which you are selling. You should not only completely know your product, but you should have a really good knowledge of your industry and how it affects your customers, as well. Having this expertise gives you the opportunity to be elevated to the level of educator in their eyes.

Chances are your customers don’t have the time to keep up with everything that surrounds your business. If you sell printing, you need to be on top of what’s going on with printing technology; presses, digital imaging, etc. What’s the trend in data warehousing if you sell ERP systems? What are the latest advances in VOIP for telecom customers? You get the idea.

When you’re perceived as an educator, as someone who can help your prospect keep up with things in your field because they just don’t have time, you are of value to them and they will invite you in. And getting in the door is just the starting point.

Sometimes you will find yourself toward the end of the deal where your prospect (champion) has to present your solution to the CEO or Board of Directors to get approval. You should always ask your prospect if you can either be there, or listen by phone in case there are questions he cannot answer. If you are viewed as a seller and not as an educator, your chances of being allowed in are slim. However, if you are viewed as someone who can bring in legitimate value, your odds increase greatly.

Having thorough product and industry knowledge doesn’t end with your first presentation or cold call. That’s where it starts.

Sales Homework – List four unique trends, new developments, etc. in your industry that you can use to help educate your prospects and customers – and then make the delivery.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Going through this exercise will help round out your sales reps’ skill set including their consultative skills.
Day 96 – How to respond to setbacks.

The trap people fall into when things don’t go the way they want, is they think the issue is personal, pervasive and permanent. This is known in psychological circles as the three P’s. It can be a precursor (another P!) to depression.

Everyone thinks the world revolves around them. “Carey never called me back and I just found out she just went with our biggest competitor. How could she do that to me?” It’s not Personal.

“This happens to me all the time.” Pervasive.

“And I’m probably never going to sell to that group again.” You’re Permanently doomed!

Setbacks happen. Deals go bad. Products break. Here’s one more thing I know: If you keep thinking about those things, they will continue to happen. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of books have been written about the power of intention. The positive thinking put forth in, As a Man Thinketh written by James Allen in 1902, is still relevant today.

Focus on what you can do today. Look in the rear view mirror for too long and you’ll crash into what’s in front of you. Yes, you need to do a sales debriefing of what went wrong and what you did well. Take what you can get from a good or bad experience and move on.

From Senaca’s book, Letters from a Stoic, written somewhere between 4 BC and 56 AD, he said; “A man is as unhappy as he has convinced himself he is.”

Sales Homework – Make the commitment today to never let any business deals keep you down for too long. This sales training course is as much about your attitude as anything else. Without a good, positive attitude your chances for success are greatly diminished.

Sales Managers – More than anywhere else, you must lead here by example. Yesterday’s over. What are you getting done today?
Day 97 – The meeting follow up document.

This is a tip that will really set you apart from the average sales person. After a conference call or meeting, you should send a Meeting Follow Up document to your prospect(s). This document’s front page should be the same as the front page of the Proposal Template document which includes the recipient’s company name and/or logo. It’s a little branding on your part and subtly prepares them for the proposal which may follow.

The following page(s) should begin with this sentence:

“How to ensure accurate communication going forward from our meeting, I have noted the following topics were discussed and action items assigned: (Please add, modify or append.)”

After the sentence above list:

Meeting attendees (include yourself):

- Name 1
- Name 2
- Etc.

Discussed topics:

5. Item 1 that was discussed.
6. Item 2 that was discussed.
7. Etc.

Action items for <your company>:

8. Action Item 1
9. Action Item 2
10. Etc.

Action items for <their company>:

11. Action Item 1
12. Action Item 2
13. Etc.

Sales Homework – Start using the Meeting Follow Up document today.

Sales Managers – Using the Meeting Follow Up document will set your team apart and help you win more business. Insist on it. It also protects you against miscommunications.
Day 98 – There’s no money for second place.

In horse racing, you can win money if your horse comes in first, second or third place. That’s not the case in sales. The only person that walks away with the money is the person that wins the deal. If you are a commission sales person, the stakes couldn’t be higher. So, you have to think like a winner.

Your need to get rid of thoughts like:

- This proposal will be good enough.
- I can trust my lower-level contact to carry my message.
- I have other deals I know will come through.
- I’ve made enough money.

You need to replace those thoughts with the following:

- What other ideas can I come up with to help win the deal?
- I need to get in front of the final decision maker.
- I need a confirmation from the final decision maker they are choosing me.
- I want a perfect winning record. No losses.
- I hate losing.
- I love winning.

Selling is a risk – reward business. The risks are higher and so are the financial rewards.

Sales Homework – List four additional thoughts about winning you need to keep thinking. Plus, read The Psychology of Winning by Denis Waitley.

1. ______________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your team to think like winners. This is a place where you need to not only give your sales reps winning ideas, but where you need to pump them up. Schedule a meeting a few weeks out to discuss the book The Psychology of Winning which your reps should have had time to complete.
Day 99 – Be very careful when showing your screen.

I was attending an online meeting with one of my sales reps where he was showing our services on the screen for everyone to see. During the presentation our prospect wanted to show us something they were doing and asked for control so he could show us what was on his screen. When we gave over control it turned out he had his email inbox open and we were able to see and read the entries. In the inbox, there was an email from one of our competitors who we did not know was being evaluated by our prospect! Wow. Needless to say, we adjusted our thinking.

This doesn’t stop with screen sharing. I attended another online meeting with one of my sales reps. The rep and I were in the online meeting room but the prospect had not yet arrived. They were a couple minutes late. So, my sales rep left the meeting to call the prospect and see where he was. While he was calling him the prospect joined the meeting – by phone only and we started talking. After a few seconds my rep jumped back in the meeting still not seeing the prospect in the meeting, and started talking about the gatekeeper at the prospect’s office and something else, not realizing our prospect was on the voice line. Thank goodness the conversation didn’t go much further and I jumped in and screamed, “We are all on the call now!” At least it felt like I screamed.

Let this be a lesson to you if do live or online meetings.

- Learn how to use the online meeting software flawlessly.
- Only have the applications and documents open you want your participants to see.
- ALWAYS assume you are not alone in the meeting.

Online meetings are a great way to “meet” with your prospects and customers quickly and inexpensively. Use this technology with skill, preparation and care.

Sales Homework – Practice using your online meeting software so you can focus on your meeting and not the technology.

Sales Managers – Have your sales reps practice giving their online meeting presentations to the whole group.
Day 100 – Don’t throw up ridiculous bluffs.

Nothing diminishes your prospect’s trust in you more than using a bluff which has no merit. A while back we were looking at upgrading one of our software applications, as we were on a hiring spree. I went back and forth emailing with my vendor’s sales rep going over how many accounts we needed and what the pricing would be. I knew she had the ability to flip a few switches after the deal was done to make available what we needed. However, she sent me the following email:

Louie,

Have you made a decision yet? Please let me know as soon as you do – I need to update my teams.

Jen

This email really rubbed me the wrong way. I knew she didn’t have to let anybody know anything. She was bluffing in hopes of getting me to take action. I’m guessing she thought I believed there would be a delay after we placed our order. This is amateurish and does nothing to build relationships. Or, all-important trust.

If you have legitimate leverage that can help move your prospect’s buying cycle along, I’m all for using it. But, the key word here is legitimate; a time-based offer, limited inventory, etc. My need with Jen was real, but not an emergency. Acting admittedly immature, I waited as long as could before ordering from her.

Sales Homework – List three legitimate reasons your prospects should accelerate their purchase with you sooner rather than later.

1. __________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – If you want a professional sales team that sells more to the same customers over a longer period of time, coach them to be “legitimate.”
Day 101 – Be a business person.

If you really want to elevate yourself above the average sales person, become a business person. Business people ask questions like:

- How will this purchase increase sales?
- Will it reduce costs?
- Will it increase profits?
- How long will it take to implement?
- What kind of resources do I need to accomplish this task?
- How will this put me ahead of my competition?
- What will happen if I don’t make this purchase?
- Do I have the support of management?
- Will it improve productivity?
- Could this decision be a career-ender if it goes badly?

To make sales to business people you need to think and act like them. Put yourself in their shoes and answer the questions about your product listed above. Once you go through this exercise and have this discussion with your prospects, they will see you in a very different light. They will see you as a serious, professional business person and, hopefully, a partner. Yes, they know are a sales person. But, not like the usual suspects that call on them.

One other benefit – When you go through the business/numbers side of the deal, your prospects are less inclined to ask for discounts because you have done your homework. If they do want you to start lowering your price, you can always go back to your business case on why lowering the price would not be a good idea for either of you.

Sales Homework – List four more business questions to discuss with your prospects.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Once you have a team of sales reps that think like business people, your profits and commissions will start going up and never come down. Don’t settle for less than top notch sales and business professionals.
Day 102 – Negotiating

Negotiating is one of the most important skills you can learn. While it is a skill, it’s an art as well. Learn to negotiate like a pro and your sales career will be much more rewarding, in all aspects. Negotiating is a topic that covers much more than we can cover in a 33 minute lesson. However, here are some points to remember:

• **NEVER** negotiate for something for which you aren’t prepared to walk away. Once the person you are negotiating with knows you have to have what they are holding from you, they have the upper hand. Make sure before you start the negotiation that you have alternatives or you can live without whatever they have. If you learn nothing else from this lesson, please learn and understand this point. Everything else follows behind it.

• Be patient. Most people aren’t. Many times you will get what you want by just waiting out the other party. This point follows closely behind the second point. If you can live without whatever you are negotiating for, then you do have the luxury of being patient. Along those lines, when talking over the phone or face to face, don’t respond immediately to an offer. Many times your silence will be taken as a sign that you do not care for their offer. This can be difficult, but you must bite your tongue. Many times, having used this approach I have had the other party come back with something like, “Well, I can see you don’t like that idea, how about this…” and offer something better.

• Be professional and courteous. You don’t want to appear confrontational. Never give someone a reason to want to “stick it to you.” I hear this frequently from sports coaches before big games. They don’t want their players “trash-talking” about their opponents. They don’t want the other team to have any additional reason to fight harder to win.

• Be willing to listen. You have a better chance of being heard if you really listen to the other person. Sometimes this requires parroting back to the other person what you believe you heard. If the other person thinks that you are not listening or paying attention, they will become frustrated and either physically or mentally quit negotiating. There are plenty of books and articles on listening. Check one out before you start negotiating.

• Find out exactly what the other party wants early by asking them. “What do you want out of this negotiation?” is a legitimate question that shows you care. It also helps you prepare what you are going to offer or concede before you open your mouth. You may get someone trying to be coy with you and say something like, “I want to get the best deal possible.” You can respond with, “Come on, Joe. Let’s get it all on the table so we can work together to get this done.”

• Figure out how to let the other party win something from the negotiation. Decide ahead of time what you can live without and keep that in your back pocket. If you believe it may be of value to the other party, let them “win” it. Everybody likes to “save face” and be able to walk away feeling as though they won something.

• Never negotiate when either party is angry or distracted. You will be wasting your time. And, if you do go ahead with the negotiation, you probably won’t get what you want.

• If you are the one starting the negotiation by making the first offer, be certain you convey your excitement about your offer. You are thrilled you could offer this to them and nobody else. Many times people will accept this as they don’t want to disappoint you or start the relationship off on a negative note.

**Sales Homework** – There are excellent books on negotiating. Get a few of them and read or listen to them. One I can personally recommend is, *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher.

**Sales Managers** – You want sales reps that aren’t going to cave in the first time a prospect throws something at them that’s just a negotiating technique. Encourage them to learn negotiating skills and situational role play with them.
Day 103 – What happens if they do nothing?

This is an excellent question to ask your prospects, but one that can cut both ways. So, to make sure this question works for you, make sure you know the answer. For example; let’s say you’re selling a product that’s a huge improvement over what your prospect currently uses. They’re okay with what they have in place no matter how inferior it is compared to what you are offering. In this case, if you can ask them, “What happens if you just stick with what you currently have?” You’ll probably get an answer like, “We’ll be okay.” And that’s the truth. But, they’re just okay.

This question will be much more effective, however, if they do not have a solution in place. It can lead to the following questions:

- Will they lose or continue losing money?
- Will they fall behind the competition?
- Will they lose their leadership position?
- Will their current customers leave them for the competition?
- Will it hinder their productivity?
- Will it increase costs?

Make sure these questions are asked at the right time and for the right reason. If your prospect does say, we’ll be okay; one way to respond to this is to ask the question “Is “okay” good enough for you?” When they respond they may tell you how to sell them. For example, they may tell you “We want your product over what we currently have, but cannot justify the expense.” At least then you have something to work with. If you have prepared a favorable ROI, now would be the time to pull it out and present your case. If, on the other hand, they come back with just, “Yes, okay is good enough” you need to keep drilling for reasons that allow you demonstrate the value of what you are offering is vastly superior to what they currently have. They need to feel a sense of urgency to switch. This urgency will probably be based around one the bullet points/questions listed above.

**Important:** How you respond can vary based on the person and title to whom you are responding. For instance; “We’re okay” coming from a support person or administrative assistant is different than hearing those words from a CFO or CEO. Practice your response for both types of prospects. Typically, someone without profit and loss responsibility will utter that phrase just to get you off the phone. Whereas the CEO will (if they really care about their company) respond favorably to your questions on why “We’re okay” is just not good enough.

**Sales Homework** – List three more questions that get your prospect thinking about why it would be better for them to leave their comfort zone and switch to your product rather than stay with what they have.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Don’t let your sales reps be discouraged when their prospects don’t want to switch. Coach them to find a way through good questioning.
Do you act differently with your prospects than you do with your customers? Don’t.

Put yourself in their shoes. What if you act one way during their buying cycle and another way after they’ve given you their money and their confidence? During the buying cycle you’re calling every day, bringing gifts and getting your prospects all the resources they need. Don’t stop doing those things. You probably don’t have to call as often because there won’t be as many details to cover. However, while there may be fewer calls, your calls should still deliver the same amount of value to your customer.

This approach is simply good business because:

1. You want your existing customers to buy additional products and services from you.
2. You want them to tell other prospects how good you were after the sale.

You cannot be one type of person before the sale and another type of sales person after the sale and have a profitable, long-term career in sales.

**Sales Homework** – Look at your customer list and make sure you’re treating your current customers the way you’re treating your prospects. List three things you can do this week to enhance your existing customer relationships.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Coach your sales reps to raise their game to this level of professionalism.
Day 105 – Listen to this.

This could easily be the first lesson in the Sales Getters Sales Training Course. If you aren’t a good listener, you’ll never reach your full potential in sales. There is nothing as self-defeating as not listening to what your prospect is saying to you.

There are several keys to good listening:

1. Look the person who is speaking in the eyes. Don’t glare, but consciously make eye contact. This will signal to the other person that you are paying attention; even if you are not.
2. While the other person is talking don’t be thinking about what you are going to say next. Not only is this a bad habit, you’ll miss what they are saying.
3. Occasionally, repeat back all or part of what they said or asked you. Keep it conversational and don’t be a parrot. If your prospect says, “Louie, I am going to have a tough time getting this past the Operations Committee.” It’s okay to reply with the question; “Max, Operations can be tough. How do others get things through them?” Max then knows you heard him.
4. Listen for tone and inflection. It’s true that it’s not always what you say, but how you say it. Your prospect may be telling one thing and meaning another. You have to listen carefully to detect this nuance.

After developing good listening skills you can sometimes tell what a person really means. I had prospect tell me, after we had sent a proposal and agreed on the date to review it, that he had not had time to look at it. I could tell from the tone of his voice he had no intention of looking at the proposal yet. When I pressed him with, “Larry, you’re really not interested enough yet to start going through our proposal, are you?” Larry replied, “No.”

Sales Homework –

1. After each of your calls this week, write down the salient points you think you heard from your prospect. Double-check to see if what they actually said is consistent with their actions. They may be saying one thing while meaning another.
2. Start practicing the listening skills listed above.

Sales Managers – During your sales meetings practice a “total recall” at the end of the meeting to see how your sales reps listening skills can improve.
Day 106 – Pin the cushion.

When a prospect gives you an objection the natural thing to do is react and tell them how wrong they are. That’s what amateurs do. NOT professional sales people. You need to let your prospect’s objections bounce off you like water off a wet duck.

Remember that objections are a prospect’s way of:

• Looking for more information.
• Trying to get clarification on a point.
• Stalling.
• Negotiating.
• Being difficult.

When a prospect throws an objection at you picture a couple boxers in the ring. When one of the boxers throws a punch that barely hits or grazes the other boxer, the recipient feigns a response. He looks at the other boxer with, is that all you got? It’s very similar in sales. You need to acknowledge the objection was thrown and show that it hasn’t hurt you by cushioning it and responding - with a question. Your counter punch to the objection is a well prepared question. The key is to not take the punch too hard. You want to relax and cushion the blow.

Some examples:

Objection – We’re happy with what we’re using.
Cushion – It’s always good to have a smoothly running operation.

Objection – Your price is too high.
Cushion – Price can certainly be a consideration.

Sales Homework – List five objections for your product, and a cushion and question for each.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Having your sales reps act like a skilled boxer in the ring will give you added confidence knowing they can “hold their own” in any situation.
Day 107 – Objection: We’re happy with what we already have.

Here’s another dagger into the heart of the average salesperson. Master this objection and leave your competitors behind. Here’s the best part about this objection – your prospect is telling you they’re already using something similar to what you’re selling. You don’t have to spend time educating them on why it’s wise to use a product like yours. They’re already sold on the concept. Now you need to help them understand why it’s a better idea for them to start using your product for the same purpose.

The first thing you want to do when you hear this objection is cushion it and affirm how smart they are for using a product like yours. “Kelly, I’m really glad to hear you see the value in outsourcing your sales function.” This one sentence will lower your prospect’s guard and make them more receptive to what you are saying.

From here there are several things you can say and/or questions you can ask after cushioning this objection:

- Most of our current customers used <competitor’s product> when we first contacted them. (My favorite.)
- If there is anything you could change about the way they do business, what would it be?
- You mentioned you were just “happy.” People who use our service brag about us to their colleagues. Can I tell you why?
- <Competitor> is a fine company. Can I tell you why we win so often when competing against them?
- Are you open to being a good consumer and consider an alternative?

Selling to a company where the competition is currently embedded can be very difficult. However, handling it with the right questions will give you a shot at removing the incumbent. And that can be the sweetest sale of them all.

Sales Homework – List three additional responses to, We’re happy with what we already have.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Sales Managers – Don’t let your sales reps crawl away when they hear this objection. Practice, drill and rehearse.
Day 108 – What to say when you’ve lost the sale.

I haven’t won every sale. Neither will you. I was once in a very heated competition. After a huge effort on my part the prospect awarded the deal to my competitor. When they first sent me the email letting me know they selected someone else, I was furious. I wanted to pick up the phone tell them they were crazy, and worse; stupid. In my heart of hearts, I believed we had a better solution for them.

You’re obviously going to do your best and try to win each deal, but some are just going to get away from you. Once the deal was finally irretrievable, I wrote my prospect the following email:

Hello Beth,

Thank you for the note.
I want you to know I have appreciated getting to know you and your team.
I certainly wish you the best with your new project. If I can be of service in the future don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Louie Bernstein

Did I get the business after this email? Nope. But what I did was leave the door open. I didn’t act like a sore loser, which nobody likes. Let’s say, for example, the implementation goes bad with my competitor’s product. Or, it turned out their product wasn’t what they had promised. Do you think my prospect would have called me back if I had acted like a spoiled brat? No way. So, keep your cool and be a professional.

And yes; not for this particular sale, but this type of email has gotten me business after the initial sale was lost. Copy both the email and the attitude.

Sales Homework – Your homework for this lesson is to keep this email handy and work so you never have to use it.

Sales Managers – Go for the win every single time. But coach your sales reps to accept defeat gracefully and like a professional. Never burn your bridges.
Day 109 – (Most) Prospects hate confrontation.

Most normal people don’t go to work wanting a confrontation with a pushy salesperson. Who would? They actually don’t go to work looking for a confrontation with anyone; which should give you a little insight into your prospect’s psyche.

You need to be continuously working on your rapport-building skills. If you haven’t already, please go through the lesson, Day 4 - Building rapport, now and come back to this lesson. By establishing rapport with your prospect, they learn to like you, which is essential. With rapport, you have a much better chance of success than with confrontation.

This is also true the farther along you are in your customer’s buying cycle. Let’s say you’ve been working on a sale for a long time (whatever that is for your business). Now, there’s a problem on their end. Your prospect knows he’s taken up a significant amount of your time and is hesitant to tell you whatever the problem is. Maybe they yanked his budget. Maybe he overstated his importance. Whatever the issue is, your prospect is being non-committal. And he doesn’t want to tell you because he does not like confrontation. That is his personality.

This is why you must ask pertinent and prepared questions from the start of the customer’s buying cycle. You don’t want to get to a place in the sale where you are heavily invested, and get blind sighted. This is also why rapport building is so important. Part of rapport building is learning about your prospect as a person. You need to know their personality so that you can ask the right questions and then study their responses.

Sales Homework – List the three most important questions you can ask at the beginning of the customer’s buying cycle that keep you from getting in this situation.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – If you keep a close eye on your sales reps’ deals you should be able to spot these. Coach your reps to qualify hard and early.
Day 110 – Show then tell.

This is a very simple point but one that’s often overlooked. There is a grocery store near my house that I frequent. If I’m looking for an item there and I cannot find it, I usually just ask one of the store employees. What happens next is the important part of this lesson. The store employee drops what they are doing and walks me to the item. This is a subtle, but effective sales strategy. Aside from me feeling important and good about their service, it solves an issue for me; time. I usually squeeze going to the grocery store in between my other tasks for the day. I want to get in and out as quickly as possible. They know that about me, and most of their other shoppers.

As you’re giving a demo or presentation, one of your prospects may ask you a question about an additional feature or some additional functionality within your product. Don’t simply say, yes we can do that. If you were planning on showing that later in the presentation, and there are other features that need to be shown first because they build on each other, say “Good question. I am going to cover that in a bit.” However, if it is a standalone feature just go ahead and show them how it’s done. If you don’t, they’ll be thinking about their question when you want them focusing on what you are presenting. They may also think you are hiding something. Relating this back to the grocery example - you are getting a request of something that is important to them and showing and/or acknowledging it, and “walking” them to what they want, right then. You also start to build trust with this approach because it shows you are listening and are considerate of their time.

An exception; if the decision maker is on demo and asks to see something, stop and show it right then. And compliment them for asking the question.

Tip: Set the stage for your demo by having your questions written out and mentally placed at the right point in your presentation. This also gets them engaged and makes the session interactive.

Bonus demo tip: After the introductions, start off by asking each attendee, “I know your time is valuable. What is the most important thing I could show you today?”

Sales Homework – In addition to practicing your demo in a sequential order, move things around and practice demonstrating features (with benefits) in a random order.

Sales Managers – When your sales reps can demonstrate any single feature in any order, it goes a long way toward showing product knowledge mastery.
Day 111 – Yikes! I sent the wrong information.

We all have probably done it: Sent an email or a package with the wrong information or sent it to the wrong person. It happens. Simply apologize then send the correct information to the correct person. The real question is, how did this happen? It’s one thing to make a mistake. But, unless you uncover why you made the mistake, you’re prone to do it again. Unfortunately, this cuts into the trust you are hoping to, or already have, built with your prospect or customer.

In most cases we simply rush too quickly through what we think are mundane sales tasks. So, we tend to do them without much concentration or while multi-tasking. This can have serious consequences for a salesperson. In the case of the errant email, I once had a sales rep that received an email from a prospect that was being unusually difficult. The prospect indeed was being tough to work with and I was about to suggest cutting off contact and wishing the prospect well. My sales rep responded to the email, and thinking he was forwarding the email to me, sent it to the prospect. Fortunately, as I mentioned, we were going to cut this prospect loose. Because after reading the email and what my rep had to say about this woman, she would have been gone regardless.

But what if it had been one of our best customers? What if a $100k deal was on the line? We would have destroyed our chances for any long-lasting relationship or deal. Take your time. Slow down. Focus. And don’t ever put ANYTHING in an email that you wouldn’t want the whole world to read.

Your wallet will thank you.

Sales Homework – Make it a point to double check all your work – and email recipients.

Sales Managers – If you have a sales rep that is not great with details, coach them to understand that details really do matter. Start to check their work. If they are very independent, they won’t like it and should improve their QA quickly.
Day 112 – Objection: I’ll be back.

I have a friend that has owned a used car dealership for many years. He told me that on his tombstone he wants written: “I’ll be back.” This objection is heard most often in B2C selling but its ugly cousin often shows up in B2B deals as something like, “We’ll revisit your solution in a few months.”

Similar to most objections this is really a stall because you haven’t done your part to get your prospect to understand and want the value your product offers. They do not feel enough urgency to move it up the priorities list. For example; while making a follow up call, you hear from your once-thought-hot prospect, “We’ll revisit your solution in a few months.” The first step is to acknowledge, cushion and respond with a question; “I understand Tom. This is probably an important decision for you and the team.” You continue; “Can I ask, what will be different in a few months?” Now shut up and let your prospect respond. They may have been hoping they were dealing with an amateur and you would simply crawl away. They were also thinking that in three months, if you did call back, they could put you off for another three months and on and on and on.

The reason your prospect gives for putting off their purchase may sound logical:

- We lost funding. Can you get funding from another department?
- We have to do more comparisons. Which part of our product are you looking to compare against?
- Priorities have shifted. How do you evaluate your priorities? If I could show you, based on your priorities how we could <whatever their top priority is> would we be a top priority?

The point is, don’t take their answer at face value. Keep asking questions and get creative.

Sales Homework – List three more excuses prospects may use to put you off and what your response should be.

1. ___________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your team to not be discouraged at the first “no”, stall or objection. Build a team of professional fighters.
Day 113 – Persuade with statistics and numbers.

What’s the difference between the two statements below?

1. A majority of our customers let us know they like our new features very quickly.
2. 82.43% of our customers call within 18.5 hours of a new release to say they love it.

I look at statement #1 and think, that’s very nice.
I look at statement #2 and think, these guys must be awesome.

Why? Few a few reasons:

- People believe statistics and numbers.
- People can use those numbers and statistics as a “logical” reason to buy.
- Numbers don’t lie.
- It looks like we track our data very carefully so we must be concerned about customer satisfaction.

However valid or invalid this logic is, it exists in people’s minds; your prospect’s minds. Whenever you can, you should include numbers and statistics into your presentations.

- 91.4% of our customers see a Return On Investment in less than nine months.
- 97.7% of people who call our support line get a return call in less than 17.5 minutes.
- Our average customer stays with us for 7.6 years.

The one obvious key to using numbers and statistics is they must be true. I once heard a comedian tell a story that was really amazing only to conclude with, “And that’s a fact I just made up.” You, however, cannot make up facts. They have to exist. But if you do use them wisely, they will reward you. And that’s a fact!

Sales Homework – Write down four things about your product that you can brag about using numbers or statistics.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Help gather as much data about your products, service, etc., and put numbers behind them. They can be your most powerful form of persuasion.
**Day 114 – Dealing with a difficult prospect.**

Some sales prospects can very difficult to work with. It’s one of the hazards of the job. The Difficult Sales Prospect feels they can bully their way through a sale. There can be several reasons for this including:

- They feel empowered because they work for a larger company that purchase in large amounts.
- Unfortunately, they may be a lower level employee and they feel that *they* finally have someone to boss around...you!
- They feel that if they don’t drive a hard bargain their status will be diminished in their boss’s eyes. If they are the person who can sign your order form, they really don’t care if you make a decent profit or not.
- They just are not nice people.

Whatever the reason, if not handled correctly, these “problem children” can waste your time, your money and sap your energy. You will not always be able to control their behavior. However, there are steps you can take to minimize their impact and ways you can actually conclude quickly if they will ever be worth your effort. **You do not want all of your prospects to be your customers.** It’s natural to think the more, the better. However, if the Difficult Sales Prospect is trying to bully you *before* they pay you, they will be even **harder** to work with as a customer. Here are few tips on dealing with the Difficult Sales Prospect:

1. **Determine early.** The quicker you can figure out if the sales prospect is worth investing in, the less aggravation you will face down the road. One tipoff is if the sales prospect is talking about price at the start of the sales cycle. They’re letting you know they don’t care as much about the relationship as they do about coming out on top. Good relationships are evenly balanced.
2. **Show one additional good faith gesture.** You should do this with any potential client. If it gets to the point in the customer’s buying cycle where you must threaten to cut off the deal, you will have a cushion against being the “one who was difficult.”
3. **Ignore them for a while.** If they have a real need, they’ll be calling you back. When they do, it’s time to explain to them what real business relationships are about and for you to restate the ground rules.
4. **Go above their head.** You can always throw a Hail Mary and call the CEO. It’s not a step you take every time, but it should be an option if the sale is in jeopardy. In taking this measure you should consider what your relationship is going to be with the person whose head you went above after the sale.
5. **Give them one last chance.** When you realize dealing with this person is never going to be good for you and your company, it is time to pleasantly and diplomatically say, “We are not on the same page. This is best we can do for you. If this is not good enough, we wish you well.” Then, hopefully, they will find your competitor.

**Sales Homework** – Identify your difficult prospects and follow the steps above.

**Sales Managers** – Help your sales reps identify these income stealers.
Day 115 – When you’re pushed with unreasonable requests.

Sometimes a prospect will push you for as much as they can get. Who can blame them? One of the best things you can do is relate what they’re asking you to do back to their company. For example; you sell software with a 30-day evaluation period and your prospect keeps pushing for another week and then another week, and on and on. In your best non-confrontational voice ask, “Mark, how much time does your company allow your prospect to evaluate your product?” Be a good lawyer and make sure you know the answer to this question before asking it.

It’s always easy to throw stones when you’re holding all of them. But having one thrown back at you isn’t as pleasant. Unfortunately, this task of throwing back a few stones in your list of sales duties, can be difficult. You run the risk of insulting your prospect and having them tell you their done. So, it’s important to be aware of a few things:

- Know where you are in the customer’s buying cycle. Pushing back too early and before you have established trust, can be trouble for you.
- Be willing to walk away from this prospect.
- Be polite and have a professional attitude.

Sales Homework – Practice delivering this message with another sales rep or your sales manager until it flows naturally.

Sales Managers – This is an area where you need to coach your sales reps to stand up and be professional. And be a little tough.
Day 116 – Optimism

Optimism is a multi-dimensional street. You can have it, give it and you can receive it.

Optimism is your internal belief that things will work out well. It doesn’t matter if it’s your health, money, relationships or anything else. If you are an optimist, you believe in your core that whatever you are experiencing, life will work out for the better.

I believe some people are born optimists. They have, and always will, see the positive side of life and its possibilities. Not all of us are that lucky. But I have good news for you; optimism can be learned! It’s like any other mental conditioning skill. If you work on it with diligent practice, you will achieve the desired result. Here are few tips that will help you become an optimist and elevate your sales career:

• When faced with a potentially negative situation, stop and think of the other possibilities. If there is absolutely no other way around the situation think how you can make the best of it with the least amount of damage.
• Look back and remind yourself. You have probably faced many tough situations that you made it through. Think about those situations and what you did to help yourself and what you did to adjust. And remind yourself that you did make it through.
• Read and listen to positive and inspirational books. Seek out stories that can lift you up and show you how anything is possible. The Chicken Soup books are a great compilation of inspirational stories.
• Finally, and most importantly, surround yourself with other optimists. Negativity will bring you down. Stay away from negative people. They will drag you into their world. There is a reason the old cliché “misery loves company” has been used for so long.

People (except negative people with no desires in life) love being around optimists. It makes them feel better. Your prospects and customers are no different. They don’t want to talk with Mr. or Ms. Downer. They have enough of their own problems. If you are an upbeat breath of fresh air in their life, they will look forward to talking to you.

In sales, if you approach each deal optimistically, meaning that you believe in your heart you will win it, your chances greatly increase in making the sale. You can believe that or not. I take every advantage I can get.

Sales Homework – List three things you can do/change to make you a more optimistic person.

1. __________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – If you have reps that tend to be negative, do your best to get them to change their thinking or release them. They will never achieve their full potential and they will bring the rest of your team down.
Day 117 – Make sure their objection is resolved.

I’m a guy, so I’m pretty literal. This is a source of real frustration for my wife. If you don’t spell it out for me, it usually goes over my head. It occurred to me during the course of my sales career that a lot of salespeople, men and women, don’t act like my wife has decided to act. When it’s my sister’s birthday, she’ll say, “It’s your sister’s birthday.” Hah, like I didn’t remember (I’m about 50% sure I did). Then she’ll add, “You’re supposed to send her a gift.” Why does she add this part? Because she wants a confirmation from me that I:

1. Definitely know it’s her birthday and
2. Definitely know I need to send her a gift.

When you hear an objection from your prospect and respond accordingly, you need to get confirmation from them that you have answered the objection to their satisfaction. If you don’t, your prospect will not move ahead in their buying cycle. Ask questions such as:

- Did I answer that to your satisfaction?
- Does my answer make you feel more comfortable?
- Is that okay?
- Have I addressed your concern(s)?

Remember to take nothing for granted. Assume nothing. It can cost you big. And you might miss an important birthday.

Sales Homework – List three additional questions you can ask your prospect to make sure that everything is good with your answer to their objection.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Sales Managers – This may seem like a small detail, but it’s the little ones that will catch you.
Day 118 – Prospects hear what they want to hear.

Words can be very powerful. And they can get you into trouble. I have said to a prospect, “James, if you can commit to a three-year contract, I can probably get you a discount.” What James heard was, “I can get you a discount.”

It is very important to follow up conversations where you are discussing pricing, terms, special considerations, etc. with written correspondence of what you actually said. Then, make sure your prospect received it. The next time you speak with them say, “James, I want to make sure you receive my email regarding....”

Never take for granted what you think they heard.

Sales Homework – Make it a habit to follow up any important conversations and/or conversations where money was discussed with written correspondence.

Sales Managers – Make sure your sales reps get into this invaluable habit and copy you on all the correspondence. You never know when you will need it.
Day 119 – Improve your hearing.

I had a sales rep whose pipeline always had more potential deals in it than anyone else in the group. The problem was that he also had the lowest number of closed deals. For a while I thought this was because he was attempting to show how much positive activity he had going on. However, after several meetings with this sales rep, I discovered the sad truth; the customer was telling him one thing and was hearing what he wanted to hear. Note; this was not done to try to fool me. He actually believed what he was telling me through his pipeline until I started drilling down on each deal. I asked questions like:

- Are you speaking with the decision maker?
- Are you speaking with the person who can sign the order?
- Do they have budget or can they get it?
- When do they want to implement our solution?
- Have we delivered a proof of concept?

After hearing the answers to these questions, I realized he was somehow convincing himself he had a good prospect. He had made the leap from hearing “I’m part of a team that’s evaluating solutions” to “I’m the decision maker.”

As a sales rep you have to be realistic. Good news or bad news, you have to hear...and face...the facts. Nothing will get you into more trouble with your sales managers or disappoint you more, than inflating your pipeline based on what you imagined you heard. Again, I am not suggesting this is intentional on your part, but it is extremely self-destructive nonetheless.

Sales Homework – If you even think you have this issue:

1. Record your sales calls.

2. Listen to them as you put your notes into your CRM system. This should help keep the facts straight and realistic.

Sales Managers – If your sales reps’ pipelines seem out of whack in comparison to their sales, use the questions above to drill down to find out why.
Day 120 – Closing: One last thing.

This is one of the most effective closes. And it’s very simple too. After you have gotten to what you think is the last objection or question your prospect has, say to them, “I will find out the answer for you. Is this the only thing that will keep you from moving ahead with your order?” If they say yes, you say, “Great. I will get the answer and prepare our order form for you.”

You don’t want to get an objection and think you are done when you are not. For example; your prospect says “Jill, can you get us delivery next week?” This question sounds like they’re ready to go once you get them the answer. So, Jill dutifully runs off to see if shipping next week is possible. Jill gets the good news and reports back to the prospect; “Yes Stephen, we can deliver next week. How will you be paying?” To which Stephen responds with “Oh, we need to talk about pricing, too.”

Had Jill simply asked, “I will find out the answer to this for you. Is this the only thing that will keep you from moving ahead with your order?” she would have saved herself a lot of disappointment. Using this one phrase can save you a ton of time and heartache.

Sales Homework – Make sure this question is on your list of closing questions.

Sales Managers – Having your sales reps incorporate this one question will eliminate a lot of back-and-forth with your prospects and get your sales reps to the signed order form (or purchase order) much quicker. Make sure they use it.
Day 121 – Forget the jargon.

Do you want to be understood or get people to think you’re smart? Salespeople, in particular salespeople who sell technology products, think they have to use techno jargon or acronyms within their industry to appear to know what they’re talking about. Prospects, even technical prospects, just want someone who knows their product and can explain its features and benefits, so they are easily understood. Consider the following statements:

- We dynamically reconceptualize cross-media relationships.
- With our tool you can distinctively generate scalable manufactured products.
- Our partners holistically provide access to long-term high-impact outsourcing.
- We have quickly revolutionized long-term, high-impact internal or "organic" sources.
- Our research interactively disseminates market-driven products.
- You will have time to authoritatively synergize timely paradigms.

How stupid do the above statements sound? I don’t even think all of these sentences contain real words! If you’re using statements like the one’s above or acronyms that you think everyone knows, you’re digging a hole for yourself. Go directly to the lesson; Day 122- Humility. Quickly!

Sales Homework – Don’t use techno jargon. Learn to speak in plain and simple language. Your sales will move along at a better pace as your prospects won’t think you’re trying to overly impress them. Your prospect will like you better for doing so, which will lead to trust, which we all know leads to sales.

Sales Managers – Don’t tolerate this kind of goofy-speak.
In Steve Martin’s (not the comedian) excellent book, *Heavy Hitter Selling*, Steve interviewed thousands of top sales people. Sales reps who had made the President’s Club and other top achievement award clubs. One of the things he found in these top producing sales people was a high dose of humility.

You cannot be a braggart and have a completely rewarding career in sales. You may make your share of sales, but you will have higher than average customer turnover and you won’t work well with your teammates over an extended period of time. If you cannot contribute positively to the team you may be forced to become a free agent.

I don’t believe you can be one kind of person and another kind of sales person. A sales person works too closely with his prospects, customers and the sales team, to keep switching personalities. You burn out quickly.

The most successful sales people realize they are no better than any prospect, customer or other sales rep. They understand humility. This does not mean you shouldn’t be confident or strong. It means you:

- Can laugh at yourself.
- Help another sales rep without feeling threatened.
- Admit it when you’re wrong.
- Give without expecting to receive.

**Sales Homework** – Print out the bullets above and keep them with you until they become a part of you.

**Sales Managers** – This is a great opportunity for you to coach your sales team on how humility can bind them together and raise the level of the team...which lifts all individual boats.
Day 123 – Closing: The price hasn’t changed...yet.

This close can be effective when used at the right time and in the right situation. If your prospect is emotionally and financially committed to your product but you’re having difficulty getting them to place their order, suggesting to them a “price increase is in the works” can help move them along. It’s especially useful when your prospect had voiced price concerns earlier in their buying cycle.

There are a few cautions to this:

- It has to be based in truth. Your company has to have a history of raising prices without notice.
- Your prospect has to be mentally sold and committed even if they haven’t placed the order.
- The amount of the planned price increase is a large percentage compared to what they thought they were originally going to spend. A $5,000 price increase isn’t as big a deal on a $150,000 order. A $5,000 price increase on a $15,000 order is a big deal.

Sales Homework – Look for prospects in your pipeline for which price was a big concern and see if this approach has merit. You may need to wait until you do know a price increase is indeed coming.

Sales Managers – You should probably be in on this call. Pricing aligns itself with management structure and policy. That structure includes you and when your prospect hears this information in your presence, it adds credibility to the statement.
Day 124 – Sell with Integrity.

If you don’t have integrity, nothing else matters.

Early in my career I was working for a technology company selling their memory boards. The goal was to get as many evaluations (evals) of the boards in customer’s hands as possible. This meant getting prospects to install our boards into their systems so they could see for themselves the performance improvements the memory boards added. I was in Florida making sales calls with my boss, the regional manager. While we were driving we called one prospect he had been talking to for a couple months. He told our prospect we were in town that day and asked if we could stop by and install one of our memory boards. Our contact was very hesitant because his boss was out and the only machine available was the production system.

My boss managed to talk our prospect into it, against the prospect’s better judgment. As soon as the memory board was installed my manager turned to me and said, “Let’s get out of here. I’m not really sure the board is going to work in this guy’s system and I don’t want to be here if it doesn’t.” What?? Are you kidding me?!!

I tried to talk him out of leaving but he insisted. I’ll never forget seeing our prospect come out of the building yelling at our car as we pulled away, “Hey, come back here. My system won’t come back up.” We kept driving.

I left the company shortly thereafter. The incident however, as you can tell, left a permanent impression on me. It also showed me the other side of sales; the dark side of which you want no part. He was a con man.

Sales Homework – Make a commitment today to sell with integrity. Period. Your career will thank you and it’s just the right way to be.

Sales Managers – You cannot tolerate unethical behavior. If you are this kind of sales manager, please find another profession for all us who make an honest living selling with integrity.
Day 125 – Clarifying questions.

It’s one thing to ask a question in response to a question when it is needed for clarification. It is another thing to dodge a question and/or appear manipulative. I was watching a political debate on TV. The way the candidates were answering the questions, you would think if they answered the question in a straightforward manner, they would have to turn over all their life savings right after the debate. It was unbelievable.

Here is an example for you to use on how to handle clarifying questions as a professional salesperson: Ed has tried out your software, he likes it and is moving along in his buying cycle while trying to determine how much he can afford. Ed says, “What’s your price for three users?” A dodge of the question would be, “Why do you want to know about three users?” Or, “What price has our competitor given you for three users?” These kinds of questions are simply going to irritate your buyer. A legitimate response question might be: “Are three users all you are ever going to need?” This question subtly implies that you may be able to get your prospect a discount based on a volume purchase. You are looking out for them and not being evasive.

Sales Homework – List three questions your prospects ask you about your product and write three clarifying questions that will uncover the motivation or thinking behind the questions, which may also uncover additional opportunities.

1. Question: ____________________________________________
   1. Clarifying Question _____________________________

2. Question: ____________________________________________
   2. Clarifying Question _____________________________

3. Question: ____________________________________________
   3. Clarifying Question _____________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps to not be defensive when prospects ask questions. Role play with them the correct way to uncover opportunities with clarifying questions.
We always beat ourselves up when we lose a deal or we don’t get the results we wanted from a meeting or phone call. Too much of this can send you into a downward spiral. Humans, particularly sales people, seem naturally wired with negative thinking which has more weight in your mind than the positive things that happen to you. You have to take control and get rid of any negative mindset right away or it will seep through to the next person you call. They really don’t care how your day is going.

A good practice is to have notepad or sticky note next to your desk and list the positive things that happen to you throughout your business day. I call it The Success Log. Your list can include:

- Got a call back I wasn’t expecting.
- Had a meeting with the decision maker.
- Closed a deal.
- Made my quota.
- Etc.

When you leave in the evening and when you get in to work the following day, read through your list. This practice will start reinforcing the positive parts of your day and help rewire you to be in the best possible sales mindset.

**Sales Homework** – List as many positive sales things that have already happened to you this week.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
   Etc.________________________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Go over The Success Log with each of your sales reps. Emphasize and coach to the good.

**P.S.** This is a good habit to develop for all aspects of your life.
Day 127 – Sweeten up that meeting.

I read an article about two women who run an ad agency that started bringing chocolates when they met with clients. They said the clients really perked up if they could get them eating the chocolates during the meeting. It has to with chocolate releasing endorphins in your body which puts you in a good mood and causes you to be more receptive.

So, I tried it out in a sales meeting and, aside from a little hyperactivity, it really worked well. From then on, when appropriate, I would have my reps bring chocolate on their appointments. The key is to get the prospect to eat the chocolate at the start of the meeting so by the time you get to your presentation the endorphins are flying.

Now, some people may consider this as manipulative. I prefer to think of it as a nice courtesy that puts everyone in a good mood. DO NOT try and force your prospect to eat the chocolate. Whatever you think about this idea, at least give it a try. At a minimum your customer will consider you thoughtful.

Sales Homework – Bring chocolates on your next meeting and report the results.

Sales Managers – Pay for the chocolates.
Day 128 – Connect.

99.99999% of the time, there is something about the person you’re speaking with that you can connect on. You have to find that connection point. Maybe you both:

- Are from the same hometown.
- Are from the same state.
- Went to the same school.
- Played the same sport.
- Listen to the same music.
- Like the same food.
- Share a birthday.
- Work in similar businesses.
- Are lovers of impressionistic art.
- Hate winter.
- WHATEVER……..

Grab hold of that connection and don’t let go. People like talking about what interests them. And if you listen closely to them and then engage them on that topic, you have made a friend. It shouldn’t be insincere or over the top.

An example; “Ed, I looked at your company profile and see you are an avid pilot. Wow. That would scare me like crazy. I always wanted to learn how to fly a plane. How do you find the courage to take control of the steering wheel in those little planes?” Ed will take this opportunity to share and educate me (which will make him feel good). And I don’t think the steering mechanism on a small plane is called a steering wheel. But we knew that, didn’t we.

Sales Homework – List three additional ways you can find a connection point with a prospect.

1. __________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Take the time to do some research on your reps and surprise each of them with information that connects the two of you. They will see, and now understand, how good it feels when someone has an interest in something they do as well.
Day 129 – FUD

FUD – Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt. Sometimes you just have to scare your prospects into buying something they need. Pest control and security companies know this and have used this knowledge to build huge industries. I’m sure you’ve seen the commercials with cockroaches crawling all over the kitchen. Or the single mom, home alone with her young children, as some creepy guys break into her house. The announcer chimes in, “Do you want this to happen to you?” Heck no. I’m picking up the phone right now and ordering so I can be safe.

Fear of what’s going to happen to you if you don’t take action is an extremely powerful motivator. Regardless of what you’re selling, if your product can help a company improve in a particular area and that company is currently not using your product, you have a prospect that stands to lose by not purchasing your product. Your job is to make sure they don’t lose out.

Let’s say you sell network security software to small businesses. Small businesses are just as vulnerable to cyber threats as large businesses. And the consequences can be far worse. Small businesses often don’t have the cushion large businesses do to recover. Your questions to this type of prospect might include:

- Do you know 42.6% of all small businesses suffer from some type of security breach?
- Did you know it takes a small business, on average, 17.5 business days to get up running again and fully recover from a security breach? How much revenue do you bring in on a daily basis?
- What are you using now for network security?

You are doing nothing dishonest or sneaky. Bad things happen to good companies. If you totally believe in your product, you never lie or mislead and you sell with integrity, using FUD is your responsibility. If it sometimes takes scaring one of your prospects into taking action in order to keep them from harm, then use FUD to close the deal.

Sales Homework – List three FUD questions you can ask prospects about your product.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – FUD is a strategy that makes some sales reps uncomfortable. Let them see you use it on calls to help them feel more at ease. Then make sure they have their FUD questions ready for the right situation.
Day 130 – It’s okay not knowing everything.

Nobody knows everything. Relax; your prospects and customers know that. They’re not looking for a walking Encyclopedia or even a Wikipedia. What they are looking for is someone who can get answers so they can make a decision about your product.

Believe it or not, sometimes you’re better off not knowing the answer to a question. I was once working on a deal and I got a question that stumped me. This was not a problem for me. I went back to my support people and had an answer for the customer in 20 minutes. When I came back with the answer, my prospect thanked me and said she never had a sales rep turn around an answer so quickly and she was extremely grateful. From that point on we had a very easy buying cycle and she became a long term customer.

That event really triggered something in my head that I never forgot: It’s not always how smart you are, how well you speak English, or how nice a car you drive that impresses a customer. It’s what you do, how well you do it, and how quickly you can get it done that impresses a customer.

While I have been tempted on occasion to tell a prospect I didn’t know the answer to a question that I actually did (which would be dishonest) I have never felt bad saying, “Good question. I don’t have the answer, but I will find out for you.” It gives me a chance to show my value to them. So, don’t run because you may not know everything. Accept their question as an opportunity to show your value.

Sales Homework – When you get a question and you don’t have the answer, find that answer as fast as you can. If it’s going to take a while, make a note of it on your day planner and check on it every day. Call your prospect as often as appropriate to keep them up-to-date on your progress. It will build Trust between you and your customer-to-be.

Sales Managers – Make sure your sales reps don’t let issues slide. Keep track of the issues. Customers don’t forget.
Day 131 – Don’t be a politician.

Have you ever watched a politician being interviewed? They never give a straight answer. **Question** - “Do you think we should keep air available for the humans on our planet?”  **Answer** – “I think air is very important. Air is something we have had for a long time. And if I’m elected, we will do a thorough investigation of air.”

You may think this is funny (and it is, thank you) but I’ve had sales reps who’ve called on me sound this way.

I was doing internet banner advertising with a publisher who owned several online publications (sites). We spread our ads over all of their sites. After the initial campaign we looked at the results. Some of the sites did better than others. In my conversation with my sales rep, who wanted me to buy another campaign, I suggested we just run the ads on the sites that beat the overall average response rate. First he said, “That’s a good idea.” Then he said, “But we probably can’t do that.” I asked, “Why not? Don’t we want to put our emphasis and money on the better-performing sites?” What happened next set me back. He said, “We need to use all the sites.” I didn’t say anything. I was just trying to digest what I heard when he continued; “You can’t pick just one or two publications. We have to do that.” I still said nothing. Now I’m thinking this guy’s story keeps shifting and he’s hiding something from me. Within 30 seconds he went from “probably can’t” to “we need to” to “you can’t.” **Trust** was gone because he flip-flopped within 30 seconds.

When a prospect asks you a question give them a straight answer – even if your answer is in the form of a sincere, clarifying question. Anything other than a straight yes or no or an honest, straightforward response, including a clarifying question, will be seen as your hiding something. In the above example I would have understood it if he had said “I’m sorry, but it’s our company’s policy to run campaigns across all our sites at the same time. We cannot isolate or leave out sites.” I would not have liked it, but I would have understood it. Plus, he was correct about how his product is sold, and I was uneducated. Many online publishers require you to purchase the “run” across all their sites. If he had come off as more of an authority, my **trust** level would have gone up and I probably would have advertised again.

**Sales Homework** – It’s simple. Just answer your prospect’s and customer’s questions honestly and in a straightforward manner. You will gain more **trust** and more customers. Sadly, however, you’ll never be elected.

**Sales Managers** – You don’t have time to check every response your sales reps give to a prospect or customer. Emphasize that fact during in your sales meeting today.
Sales can be physically demanding work. Not in the same sense as digging a ditch. However, the connection between mind and body is undeniable. Exercising and being in good physical shape will help to keep a clear mind. You’re spending a lot of time learning and ingraining these sales lessons. It would be a shame when your prospect brings up something you have been training on or have learned only to be too mentally sluggish to respond quickly and clearly.

I view exercise the same way I view sales training and practicing guitar: a half hour, five to seven days a week, is much better than three hours on Sunday. Depending on your age and desired outcome, you don’t have to train or exercise like an Olympic athlete. Studies show that just walking a mile or two every day will do wonders for you. Some of my best sales strategies have come to me on long walks in the river park near my house. There’s something about being in nature with lots of fresh air and no phones to get your creative juices going.

There are also things you can do in the office to keep the blood flowing.

- Take a walk around your building.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Stand up while talking on the phone.

One book I like is, Office Yoga by Julie Friedeberger. There’s nothing mystical about it. Just some good stretching routines you can do right at your desk.

Being in good shape can have a profound effect on your income. Don’t lose a deal just because that deep dish pizza has clogged up your thinking.

Sales Homework –

1. If you are not already a member, join a gym. And go.
2. Start in-office activities so you stay alert during the day.
3. Walk, run or do some type of aerobic exercise every day.
4. Remind yourself that it takes 21 days to develop a habit. Exercise is one habit you want. Keep at it.

Sales Managers – Encourage your team to get and stay healthy. They will be sharper while working with prospects and customers, and they will be more able to put in long hours when required.
Day 133 – Body, Mind, Spirit: Mind.

Every waking moment of your life you get to control what you allow into your mind. What a great freedom. Like any freedom, don’t take it for granted or squander this opportunity to fill it with good ideas and positive thoughts. The result of continuous of positive thoughts starts to take effect in as quickly as 21 days. Your outlook will change. You will become more positive, have more optimism and hope, and be a better person. One catch: your mind needs to be calm and open to accepting these ideas. Basically, you have to relax your mind to let in all the goodness. A closed mind accepts nothing.

There are two good ways to open and relax your mind:

**Meditation** – Meditation is 5,000 years old and probably the best method for calming your mind and body. You can start with 15 minutes a day. Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed and dedicate this time to yourself. There are several types and philosophies for meditation so choose one with which you feel the most comfortable. *Meditation for Dummies* by Stephan Bodian is a good book to help you get started.

**Hobbies** – Hobbies are meant to take you out of your daily thought pattern and put you into your fantasy zone of hitting a tennis ball like Roger Federer or playing guitar like Eric Clapton. It really doesn’t matter what your hobby is. What matters is that it puts you in “the zone.” That place where you cannot worry about other things and you enjoy your activity.

A resource I’ve found that gives me a 20 minute dose of wisdom and inspiration is *Philosopher’s Notes* by Brian Johnson. Brian has done a great job of distilling the great books written throughout history which focus on helping you reach your full body, mind and spiritual potential. They’re presented in audio format and very reasonably priced. You can find them at [www.philosophersnotes.com](http://www.philosophersnotes.com).

**Sales Homework** – List two things that you will start this week to open and calm your mind.

1. _______________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – You need this too. Same homework for you.
This is not a lesson on religion. I am no one to tell anyone else what to believe in. Belief is highly personal and a freedom we’re all entitled to. When I think of spirit I think of the inward and outward “vibe” you embody and give off. This can come from formal religion. But, it is not restricted to that.

As a sales person there are times you are going to need to dig down deep and find that spirit in you that keeps you going. Every sales rep has gone through a slump. It probably seemed like a conspiracy; no shows, cancellations, lost customers and lost deals. Everyone was out to kill your income. They weren’t, but it sure felt that way. It’s at these times when you need your spirit and your belief system firmly planted in your soul. You have to know within your core that you have the strength, the track record, and yes, the belief that everything will work out.

Your spirit will help pick you up when things are down, but you have to make the effort. It will not just happen. You need to:

- Make that one more call, with a smile on your face, when you really don’t feel like it.
- Wish the customer well who just left you, with a sincere attitude. You never know when they’ll be back.
- Look back at your history when you were having great success. Re-live those deals in your head. What did you do correctly? How did it feel?
- Visualize yourself winning again. Brian Tracy calls this successful pre-play. It’s a great thing to do. See yourself shaking your new customer’s hand after a great deal closes. Visualize yourself buying that “thing” you’ve been wanting and now have the commissions to get it.
- Fake it till you make it. Nobody wants to be around a downer. It only makes the situation worse.
- Be grateful. Nothing fills the spirit more than an attitude of gratitude. You will feel better for it and it will help put things into perspective.

Sales Homework – List three things for which you are grateful. Say them to yourself on a daily basis and call upon them when you need them.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

Sales Managers – You too.
Day 135 – The sound and tone of your voice.

You may think you know what you sound like but unless you’ve recorded yourself you really don’t. I’ve recorded sales reps’ conversations with customers only to hear them tell me afterward, they couldn’t believe it was them talking. More interestingly, they would say things like, “I didn’t realized I sounded so timid, or loud or so vague.”

The sound and tone of your voice is especially important if you use the phone to make your living. When you make a call you need to sound:

- Calm
- Confident
- Knowledgeable
- Happy
- Business-like

If you’re serious about being a sales professional start recording yourself. Record yourself when you’re practicing cold calling or as a dress rehearsal for the big closing call. Then, record yourself on the call with your prospect or customer. One of the great things about recording yourself is that you have instant feedback. Part of any good system is to deliver the feedback right away. Over time (even minutes) feedback loses its effectiveness.

Note: In some states, it is illegal to record a conversation without letting the other person know they are being recorded. I am not suggesting that you do anything illegal, in any way. Use this practice and self-improvement tool the best way it’s practical.

Sales Homework – This week break out whatever recording mechanism you have available and start recording and listening to yourself. It will take your game up a couple notches. It just might make the difference between winning and losing.

Sales Managers – Do what you can to put a recording system in place. Then, insist on having your sales reps record themselves. This is a tremendous coaching opportunity. It can also give you great insight into the deals your reps are working on along with what’s working and what is not, with those deals. You may hear a pattern.
Day 136 – To the best of my recollection.

Whenever you see people testifying on TV after getting caught doing something criminal they always use the answer to the question of whether or not they knew a fact, with the phrase, “To the best of my recollection.” Talk about sounding guilty. This is one phrase you need to completely eliminate from your sales vocabulary.

When a customer says something to you such as, “Susan, you gave us discounts three years ago and said you would give us the same discounts in the future, which is now.” If you really can’t remember simply say, “Okay, let me go back and check my paperwork to verify everything.” Nobody will be upset with a business professional checking the history of transactions that involved discounts. At this point you have not said yes or no to the discounts. You have bought some time. Whatever you do, whether you think they’re right or wrong, don’t come back with, “To the best of my recollection, those discounts were a one-time concession.” Or, “To the best of my recollection, I think you’re right.”

Why, you might ask, would I not want to tell them they’re correct right then if I think they are? It’s because, “Okay, let me go back and check my paperwork to verify everything,” gives you time to:

- Look and act like a professional. This builds trust.
- Come back with a “gift”, if you choose to do so, if the paperwork shows they’re not entitled to the discount or whatever’s in contention. Sometimes giving a little something is worth it to keep a good customer.
- Uncover an opportunity to possibly renegotiate a new contract.
- Think about it for a while. This is one time you want the ball in your court.

Unfortunately, dishonest people have given the “To the best of my recollection” phrase a bad name. You can’t do anything about that except avoid it like a verbal disease.

Sales Homework – List three more reasons why saying, “Okay, let me go back and check my paperwork to verify everything” is a better approach.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – This is a subtle mistake that many sales people make. Learning how to handle this situation can help your profits and keep your customers happy.
Day 137 – Just think.

You cannot be creative or effective if don’t take some time to think. I had CEO tell me one time that people who take a day a week, or even a half a day, to just sit and think earn 30% more than people in the comparable position. I’m not sure that’s absolutely true, but I think there’s some truth to it. It’s at least worth embracing the concept.

As a sales rep you may talk to 25, 50 or 100 people a day. You’re coordinating demos, installations, shipping, handling paperwork and working office politics on both sides of the deal. It can all get to a point where you cannot think straight. And that’s when mistakes happen.

Don’t work more than two hours without taking a break. People will wait an extra 10 minutes for you to return that email. Get up. Walk around. Stretch. Sit silently. Do whatever you need to in order feel like you’ve taken a break. Pace yourself. When you return you’ll be much fresher and have a clearer mind to work on your next sale.

Most of us aren’t fortunate enough to be able to take a day off and simply think. I wish we were because I really believe what that CEO told me. The relaxed mind is an open mind and a sticky spider web just waiting for a great new idea to fly by and get stuck.

Sales Homework – List four ways you can break up your day or week to just think.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – You need thinking and break time, as well. Work it into your day. Use a Do Not Disturb sign if necessary. Or, just get out the office. You’ll be amazed how this will increase your performance and that of your team.
Day 138 – One thing at a time.

I recently read an article about multitasking. It told me something I’m sure I knew but just did not want to admit: We do not squeeze out any more productivity multitasking, and in fact, we are less productive when we’re multitasking. According to JordanRivals.com research done at Microsoft’s office in Redmond, WA, showed that employees took on average 15 minutes to return to the task they were working on after being interrupted by a phone call, email, or instant message. Fifteen minutes! Add up all those 15 minutes and you have a real disjointed, unproductive day.

In almost every study I looked at preparing for this article, they all had one fact in common: people who multi-task the most, and claim to be the best at it, are actually the worst at it. “People can’t do it very well,” Professor Earl Miller said of multitasking. “And when they say they can, they’re deluding themselves.”

I think when multitasking we are trying to adjust our evolutionary status to the speed of change in technology. Technology is simply moving too fast. When multitasking we are not only sacrificing brain cells we are losing money.

What kind of message are you sending your customer when he can hear you typing out an email while you’re talking to him? Ever check your phone while you’re in an important client meeting? Think that makes the client feel important? It doesn’t.

Focus. Do one thing at a time and do it well. Listen to the experts and scientists. The facts are there: if you’re a multitasking sales person you’re earning less money than if you would simply focus on one task at a time. Seems pretty intuitive, doesn’t it? Are you paying attention?!

Sales Homework – List three multitasking activities that you will cut out this week.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Same homework.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
Day 139 – Be clear.

I’ve heard prospects tell me something that, at first pass, seemed to mean one thing. But upon closer inspection it turns out it wasn’t at all what I had thought they meant. For instance, “We’re weak in lead generation.” In sales and marketing the term lead generation means lots of different things to lots of different people. Does it mean?

- We don’t do enough advertising.
- We don’t have enough people making cold calls.
- We don’t know what to do when a lead comes in.
- We don’t act quickly enough on leads that come in from the web.

Get the idea? You cannot afford to guess what your prospect means when they use terms, phrases and business jargon. If your prospect or customer says something like, “We need a tool or service that can give us a 360 degree view of our distribution system”, say “Lilia, the term 360 degree view means different things to different people. What does it mean to you?” By asking this question, not only are you getting clarity on their meaning of the word or phrase, they’re telling you exactly what they want from your product! By asking this simple question you’re now in a position to match your product to their belief of what they want from a product.

You have to pay close attention for these nebulous words or phrases. In other words, you have to LISTEN. If you’re too busy thinking of what you’re going to say next you’ll miss it. Focus on what your prospect says and seek clarification. Let’s be perfectly clear on that!

Sales Homework – List three words or phrases in your industry that prospects use in different ways for which you have to ask, “The term _______________ means different things to different people. What does it mean to you?”

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

Sales Managers – Compile a list of these phrases and include them in your Sales Playbook. Make sure when your sales reps hears one of them they seek clarity. Otherwise, you run the risk of your reps working on ideas and proposing solutions that have nothing to do with what the prospect was truly seeking.
Day 140 – Using alternate of choice questions.

If it’s Friday night and your spouse or friend says, “Would you rather go the movies or out to dinner tonight?” you kind of get the feeling those are the only two options they’re offering. They’re giving you a choice but both are things they have picked to do. I’m not saying they’re devious. They probably don’t even know they’re using one of the oldest sales techniques ever invented.

To me, the “alternate of choice” series of questions is like having your prospect walk through a series of doors which they choose, that eventually land them to where you want them. These questions are especially useful in appointment setting. For example; you may not care too much exactly when the appointment happens, so long as it does happen soon.

“Sami, I’m glad everything we’ve covered sounds good to you. Why don’t we meet in person to go over the details? Is this week or next week better for you?”
Sami – Next week.
You – Good. Would you prefer early or late in the week?
Sami – Early.
You – Monday or Tuesday?
Sami – Tuesday.
You – Is morning or afternoon better?
Sami – Morning.
You – How about 10:00 am?
Sami – He will with either say fine or suggest the time Tuesday morning.
You – Sounds great. I will see you then.

It’s important that your “alternate of choice” questions are delivered naturally and don’t sound manipulative. You need to practice them. Would you rather practice them now or lose the sale later?

Sales Homework – List three places you can use “alternate of choice” questions. Hint: product choices, delivery, vendor selection...

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – This is a basic sales technique but one that keeps your sales reps focused on getting the outcome they need. Practice this one in sales training until all your reps have it nailed down.
Day 141 – Um...You know.

I give credit for this phrase to Beavis and Butthead. I think they ushered in this non-committal, I’m not really sure what to say, expression. When someone asks you about your product and you start with, “Um, you know, it helps you save money” your prospect, while you might not be seeing it, is rolling their eyes. In their minds:

1. “Um” signifies you don’t know what you’re talking about.
2. “You know” has your prospect thinking, how does this person know what I know?
3. You sound very “unconfident” about what you’re about to present.
4. They’re thinking you watch too much Beavis and Butthead and not spending enough time learning about them and their company.

Not much screams louder to your prospect that you’re an amateur than starting your sentence with, “Um, you know.” But this is very easy to fix. Just don’t do it. Watch:

Butthead-like:
“Zelda, tell me about your after-hours support please.”
“Um, you know, we give the usual eight hour support.”

Professional Salesperson-like:
“Zelda, tell me about your after-hours support please.”
“We offer eight hour support, which is standard in the industry. Would you need something different?”

Yes, in addition to removing the, “Um, you know,” I added a more professional response. I cannot help it. I’m a professional. And you should be too.

Sales Homework – Practice delivering your responses to typical prospect questions without using “Um, you know.” Record yourself. You may not realize how much you’re doing this.

Sales Managers – You want a team of professionals. A team of professionals will attract other professionals. Nobody wants to join a team of amateurs. Don’t let this little phrase bring the team down to the minor leagues...or worse, cartoon parodies.
Day 142 – Take charge!

It would be nice, but not every prospect is going buy from you during your first communication with them. This lesson is really marketing territory but there are certain things you can do on your own to make sure you are “top of mind” when your prospects are ready to move ahead to either explore or purchase your product. Here are few sales suggestions:

- **Research** and obtain as much information about your prospect as possible.
- **Align** what’s happening in their company or your prospect, with your product. For example; if their company just announced a takeover of another company and you offer outplacement or recruiting services, think of creative ways reminding them of that fact.
- **Create** a series of emails to produce your own email “drip” campaign. An example of a drip campaign is when you sign up for someone’s newsletter on their website and you start receiving automated newsletters and promotions. Marketing automation software handles this quite nicely, but you can run your own semi-automated drip campaign.
- **Schedule** your emails to go out on a predetermined basis. Depending where you are in the customer’s buying cycle you can schedule them for weekly, biweekly or monthly distribution.
- **Call** regularly with valuable information about their industry, how your product has helped others and how it can help them.

I’m not suggesting you try taking over the marketing department. But don’t sit by idly, hoping the marketing department saves you either. What you want is when your prospect comes out of a meeting and the boss just said to him, “Go find me a product that....” your prospect should think, “I just got email from Dave at <your company> about that very thing.” Imagine that.

The same professional salesperson rules apply:

1. Your email content must have value to your prospect.
2. You must be consistent and professional.
3. You cannot be a pest or a spammer.

**Sales Homework** – Write three emails based on the top four bullets above for your best prospect. Then repeat for your other high-value prospects.

**Sales Managers** – Help your sales reps organize their campaigns. They can do these after hours or on the weekends.
Day 143 – To respond, or not to respond. That is the RFP question.

Unless you wrote the Request for Proposal (RFP), the deal is probably already done; and not in your favor. This statement may be confusing because aren’t RFP’s, especially when the government is issuing them, supposed to be open to everyone and not have any biases? Yes they are. But that’s usually not the reality. I’m not suggesting anyone is doing anything illegal. I am suggesting that people have certain biases, likes and preferences. And these can bleed over into the RFP process.

The purpose of the Sales Getters system is to prepare you for any kind of sales situation. RFP’s are sometimes one of those situations, especially if you sell to the government or large companies. One of the problems with RFP’s is that they take a long time and plenty of resources to complete. Sometimes they take entire departments. So, you have to be able to determine if the RFP is biased toward another vendor and if you want to participate. There are few things you want to ask yourself, and the prospect, before jumping in:

- How long have I had this relationship with the company and how good is it?
- Did I know this RFP was coming?
- Is there wording or phrases in the RFP that look like (or did) come from my competitor’s web site?
- Was I asked what should be included if they sent an RFP?
- How and who will make the decision? Do I have a relationship with them?
- Will I be able to make a presentation?
- Will the decision be made on price alone?
- Is consideration being made for the incumbent?

You may have no choice whether or not you must complete the RFP. However, if you do have a choice and you came up with the wrong answers to the questions above, save yourself the time and trouble. There is a good chance this RFP received help, knowingly or unknowingly, by your competitor.

The best thing you can do to head this off is establish a relationship early, get them using your product in an evaluation setting and seeing its benefits, and trying to get some of your unique features into the RFP.

Sales Homework – Your only assignment in this lesson is to ask yourself the questions above when deciding whether or not to respond to an RFP.

Sales Managers – If you make the decision to proceed, you better know you have a good chance of winning the RFP before investing the resources.
Day 144 – Sales rituals.

Rituals are very powerful to help you stay on track and achieve great successes. Wikipedia says a ritual is a set of actions, performed mainly for their symbolic value on a consistent basis. The purpose of sales rituals is to get and keep you in the habit of doing certain sales activities on a regular, consistent basis.

There is a subtle difference between habits and rituals. You can make a habit out of anything. Rituals are saved for really special things you want as a part of your life: to make your life better, give your life purpose and to help you achieve your highest potential.

If you want to be a top sales person, develop sales rituals. This is how:

- List the activities you know are important which lead to closing short and long-term sales. Get very detailed. For example; 13 calls before 9 am, sending a hand written thank you note after every sale, learning everything about the CEO of the companies you call on.
- Write down whatever it is you’ve done or know you need to do, to achieve success. Write the sequence, or the cause and effect, of each ritual – When I close a sale I send a thank you card. I make a call within three minutes of ending a successful call. Etc.
- Each of your rituals either has to have a proven track record or be something others have used with success. (Copying successful people is encouraged!)

Sales rituals will keep you focused and will deliver results. Make them a habit.

Sales Homework – List four sales rituals you can start this week. Start and don’t quit.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________

Sales Managers – Apply sales rituals to your sales meetings. Write down the things that consistently work for you and the team. Build the list and put it to work.
Day 145 – Ice breaking information.

Junior sales people often say they have a hard time “breaking the ice” with prospects. First, this assumes there is ice to break! Believe me, there really are people out there that are very polite, well-mannered, and friendly. And some that need and welcome your product! That is how you need to approach them – Friendly until proven guilty.

Here is the right way to approach your new friends:

Before you pick up the phone make believe that the person on the other end has a huge sack of money. You only need to accomplish one thing to get this sack of money: make that person a friend. How would you treat a person who is willing to give you a lot of money and all you have to do to get that money is win them over as your friend. Selling is almost that simple.

If you approach selling with the attitude of simply making friends you have a superb chance of being a very successful sales person. Plus, you will have a very enjoyable business life. If you use this approach and have this attitude, you will not feel there is any ice to break.

Sales Homework – This week, before making each call to a prospect or customer, close your eyes and picture that huge sack of money.

Sales Managers – Some sales managers think they need to train their sales reps to be hard-asses. Don’t be one of them. Coach them to make friends and watch the bags of money come in.
Day 146 – I’ll be in your area.

I did some work for a computer training company that had about 12 inside/outside sales reps. I say inside/outside because 85% of their selling time was over the phone. Since they sold to local clientele, the reps would also set up and go on outside sales calls.

Shortly after starting at the company, I was sitting in the sales bullpen and I heard one of the sales reps say to a prospect, “Hi Paul, this is Leslie with ________. I am going to be in your area on Tuesday and wanted to see if I could stop by.” This obviously piqued my interest and I asked Leslie who else she was visiting in the area. She said nobody. I then asked why she told the prospect she was going to be in the area. Leslie gave me two reasons:

1. It’s a way to get in to see this prospect. It’s harder for them to turn you down if you are at the front door.
2. We have a contest for whoever makes the most outside sales calls.

Next, I asked Leslie what qualified this prospect to get her to drive there, maybe or maybe not see the prospect, and drive back to the office taking up 90 minutes. Leslie said she would find out when she got there.

I explained the following to Leslie:

- Never lie to a prospect or customer. It’s wrong and it will get you into trouble.
- That she was probably wasting her time which was costing her money. She had no idea if this prospect was qualified to purchase her training. If she spent those two hours making calls and looking for qualified prospects to visit, it would serve her much better.
- The prospect probably didn’t believe Leslie would be in the area anyway. He had already heard that one from other amateur sales people.

Using the “I’ll be in your area” line to try to see someone before qualifying them on the phone will cost you money. When you do make expensive outside sales calls make them valuable calls...for both you and your prospect.

Sales Homework – Make a commitment to never make an outside sales call without having qualified your prospect first.

Sales Managers – Don’t let your sales reps go on these frivolous sales calls.
Day 147 – Assume the sale.

Go into the sale believing you will win. It sounds simple enough. And it is. Unfortunately, too many sales people let the “doubt devil” creep into their sales psyche. You know who this is. It’s that demon who wakes you up at 3:00am telling you that you probably won’t win the deal, which leads to your having a bad sales month, which leads to your being concerned about your boss and your income, which leads to a really bad night’s sleep, which leads to that entire scenario coming true – if you let it. There are many ways you can get rid of the doubt devil, most of which are covered in this course. Many of these lessons incorporate the belief of developing a winning mindset. To do that, you need to assume you’re going to make the sale.

I know how to spell ass-u-me, and I am not suggesting you be cocky or over confident. What I am asking you to do is go into every sale where you have a qualified prospect, who can take advantage of your product, believing with every fiber of your being that you are going to close the sale.

There was a popular book a while back called The Secret. The concept is that whatever you focus on the universe will bring that to you. James Allen wrote about this same idea in 1902 as well as Seneca in 4 BC. In other words, this is not a new concept. I too believe in this concept. Focus on winning and you will eventually win. Focus on not losing and you will lose. Will you lose every time? Probably not. But more than you want or need to.

Here are few things that will get you into the mindset of assuming the sale:

- Review the deals you’ve won.
- Talk to your current customers and ask them why they bought from you.
- Ask your prospect if there is anything that would keep them from buying.
- Totally believe in your abilities, your team and your product.

Sales Homework – List three more ways to put yourself into the mindset of assuming the sale. Then go get some sleep.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach winning. Coach thinking like a winner. In addition to teaching sales, managing the processes and other sales duties, develop winners.
**Day 148 – Use humor.**

Think about the funniest comedian you know. When you do, I bet a smile comes across your face. That’s exactly what you want from your prospects. When someone is laughing with you or smiling about something you said, it’s the best time to sell something. We tend to think of people who make us laugh as friends.

Learn to use humor. Learn to be funny. I’ve heard sales trainers say you should only use humor if you are comfortable with it. I agree. So, you need to learn how to tell a joke or a funny story, naturally. It will help you immeasurably in developing relationships as well as with public speaking. I have known sales people that have taken standup comedy classes just to get better at using humor. It may not be an easy thing for you. However, it’s a skill like any other that can be learned.

A few pointers about saying something funny to a prospect or customer:

- Know when to use humor. Timing is everything. I actually had a sales person cold call me and start the conversation with, “Hi Louie, this is Bill Walters at XYZ, you wanna hear a joke?” His joke was related to what he was selling, but we hadn’t gotten that far yet.
- Do not use a dirty, religious or political joke. It’s the same business conversation rules that apply to sex, politics and religion. Stay away from them.
- It’s even better if the humor is self-deprecating; meaning you can make fun of yourself.

**Sales Homework** – Write or learn three jokes and practice them. Try them out on friends, coworkers and family first to make sure someone other than you thinks they’re funny. Then, be bold and work them into your conversations.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Working laughter into your customer interactions will lighten the mood and put everyone more at ease. Laughter can also work wonders in a sales meeting. Try it.
Day 149 – Be a chameleon.

Everyone likes talking to people they think are like them. It’s human nature. That’s why, when talking to a prospect or customer, it’s important for you to be like them. You’ll find greater success if you deal with a Type A personality, with a Type A personality. I’ve learned after living in Atlanta for a long time that conversations move at a different pace than they do where I was born in Chicago.

You don’t have to have multiple personalities to be a chameleon. You just need to listen and respond accordingly. Plus, you need to react early in the customer’s buying cycle. It can be tricky.


Personality types aren’t partial to a particular part of the country.

- Driver – Northeasterner
- Amiable – Southerner
- Introverted – Midwesterner
- Laid back – West Coast
- Driver – West Coast

There are endless combinations of personality types in the world. This isn’t something you can pigeonhole. Do not try. Your key to making this successful is in trying to relate to all of them. Be a chameleon. Caution: I’m not saying you should be someone else. You need to be yourself. There is a subtlety herein where you need to be able to relate “to” without imitating or being disrespectful “of.”

Sales Homework – My advice here is to:

- Listen.
- Go slow.
- Be sincere.
- Work on it. It takes time to do well, but it’s worth it.

Sales Managers – If you can coach this skill you will have elevated the level of your team immeasurably.
Day 150 – Prospecting

“Hey boss, we don’t have enough good leads.” I wish I had a dollar for every time I heard that. Have you said that before? Think and be honest because it’s okay. The truth is, if you are a highly-skilled sales person, with a high closing ratio on qualified prospects, then your company should spend as much as they can getting you leads. That’s the whole idea of marketing as it relates to sales. It’s a cycle:

Lead generation -> Qualify prospect -> Close sale -> Collect -> Reinvest

If you’re a motivated sales person who wants to be and stay number one, and even if your company is delivering enough qualified leads, you should want more. But don’t stand there with your hand out. Prospect! You need to continually prospect. If you schedule time in your day planner (electronic or otherwise) and commit two of hours of every day for prospecting, I guarantee success. That success will also spill over into the deals where leads are being delivered to you. Here’s why: When you’re prospecting for new business, you’re using all your skills; cold calling, presenting, objection handling, closing, etc. The more you practice anything correctly, the better you will become at that skill. So, aside from being a money-maker, prospecting is a great skill and career builder.

Here are some places you can prospect:

- Your company’s database. Most likely there are old accounts in there that haven’t been touched in a while. Maybe they weren’t ready then. Or, maybe they didn’t have the right sales person.
- Trade shows. To save costs, attend the shows that come to your town. Many times admission is free if you only want to walk the exhibition floor. Call your current prospects; ask them if they are attending. See if they can get you tickets if there is a cost.
- LinkedIn
- Newspapers, radio ads, TV ads, trade journals.
- User group meetings and networking events.
- Google news alerts.
- Sales leads exchange groups.

So go prospecting for sales gold. Prospect on a daily basis and watch your sales and income grow.

Sales Homework – List three other places you can prospect.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Bonus tip: If you cold call someone and create the need, the odds of your having in a competitor in the account go down dramatically.

Sales Managers – Build continuous prospecting into your sales reps’ day.
Day 151 – Objection: Let me think it over.

How many times have you heard this stall? You’ve probably used it a few times yourself. I have. When your prospect says this, they’re really telling you that they haven’t seen enough immediate value (in what you are offering) to move ahead. This objection is really a failing on your part to get your prospect to understand and want the value your product offers.

As with most objections the first thing to do is acknowledge and cushion. “Sheila, I completely understand. This sounds like an important and strategic decision for <their company>.” Now you have to get to the heart of the matter. “Can you tell me exactly which part you need to think over?” They may come back with another stall like, “The whole thing.” Don’t fall for it. Politely keep drilling. “Is it our product, our service, our price, your boss, me?” Keep rattling things off until you hit the real issue. They will stop you when you hit the nerve; especially if you throw in “me.” Most decent people do not want to offend others.

Once your prospect does come clean with the real issue it’s time for the, “Is there anything else?” close. For example; “Brad, what it really comes down to is that your support hours are not long enough for us.” Brad replies, “So Sheila, if I was to be able to arrange for our support hours to meet your needs, is there anything else keeping you from going with us?” With these two questions, you have zeroed in on the real concern behind,” Let me think it over.” You have addressed the objection and tried to close the sale.

You never know when this objection will show up in the customer’s buying cycle. It might not be at the end of the deal. For instance, you may have just given a presentation or a demo when your prospect says, “Let me think it over.” Brad could reply with, “What is the think-it-over process for you?” This will help him prepare better and focus on the next steps.

Sales Homework – List two other questions you can ask when drilling down on, “Let me think it over.”

1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps on the importance of not giving up and to keep on drilling with questions. This will become easier and easier for them through reinforcement and role play.
Day 152 – Will you get back up?

Almost every sales or self-motivation book has the quote: “It’s not how many times you get knocked down; it’s how many times you get back up.” Is life that difficult that we know we’re going to keep getting knocked down and we have to worry about getting back up!? Do sales people need to keep reminding themselves that in just about every one of our business days there are going to be issues that knock us down? If yes, why have we chosen such a tough profession?

There is another saying that I believe to be equally as true: “Nothing worthwhile comes easy.” Maybe top sales people, in addition to wanting control over their own income potential, are passionate about doing things worth doing. Here are a few reasons why sales people get up time after time:

- Providing for their family.
- Having money to help others.
- Buying cool stuff.
- Bringing health, happiness, or wealth to the people who purchase their products.

The sales business is a tough business. You get rejection on a daily basis. Your prospects pit you against your competition. Your boss demands constant improvement. These are tough, daily mental challenges. But then, you look down at your reasons for getting back up and you remember why you always work your way through it.

Some people are not meant for sales and quit early. Even worse, some get to the two yard line and give up. The top sales people, the sales people who have their reasons straight in their minds, are the ones that get up every time. They know getting knocked down is part of the game. But they also know they have more reasons to get back up than to stay down.

If you’re in sales and you want to be at the top of the profession, get your reasons straight and get back up. I guarantee you will be glad you did.

Sales Homework – List your four reasons for getting back up...again.

1. _________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________
4. _________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Your job isn’t much easier. List your four reasons too.
Day 153 – The juggler...you!

To be a top sales person you have to be a good juggler. A good juggler can keep several balls in the air without dropping any. Too many sales people get to the end of the month, quarter or year and complain they don’t have enough sales or enough deals in their pipeline. I have heard the following too many times; “I could have done a lot better if I didn’t have so much paperwork to do.” Or, “My accounts are very demanding and I have to spend a lot of time just managing them.”

The problem with these complaints is that not enough consistent time has been spent on prospecting. Nobody put you in this position. You did this to yourself. So, you can change it. Here’s how:

- Juggle your priorities around prospecting. Commit to two hours of your day for prospecting – even at the postponement (not instead of) follow up calls. If you follow this discipline, your pipeline will always stay full.
- Ask for help. If you have a sales administrator, use him or her.
- Do your paperwork at night or over the weekend. Most sales people typically have between 8 to 10 hours of calling time during the day. These are the money hours because that’s when you make money. Push your paperwork outside of these hours.
- Train your customer how you do business. I am not saying ignore customer emergencies or very important customer requests. But from the very beginning of your customer’s buying cycle, they need to view you as a business person who has a list of important responsibilities. So long as you respond to their requests in a timely, consistent manner, they will understand, appreciate and respect you.

Sales Homework – Commit to two hours every day just for prospecting.

Sales Managers – Keep track of this metric with your CRM system. Your goal should be to smooth out the pipeline so you have a consistent number of deals in various stages of closing.
Day 154 – Don’t bad mouth the competition.

This lesson is really simple. **Never say anything negative or derogatory about your competition.** It does no good at all. If your prospect asks, “We’re also looking at XYZ. What do you think of them?” Here is an answer that will never get you into trouble, and will elevate your stature in their eyes: “XYZ seems like a fine company, but let me explain why we are the best choice for you.” Then, go on to explain your benefits. If you have customers that were once customers of that competitor, you can add on “and why we have several of their former customers.”

You never know what the motivation is behind that question. Your prospect may be testing you to see what kind of person you are. Maybe a relative works for the competitor. Who knows? That’s the point. Playing into the competition question only tells your prospect you’re an amateur. And not a very nice one.

**Sales Homework** – Make a point to - **Never say anything negative or derogatory about your competition.**

**Sales Managers** – You want an aggressive team but you don’t want a nasty one. Coach your team to elevate their game. They’ll be invited back more often.
**Day 155 – The next step.**

In my CRM system we have a required field labeled Next Step. You cannot save the record or proceed to the next screen until the Next Step field is filled in. It’s that important. You should never end a phone call, conference call or meeting without setting up the Next Step. If, for some reason, you’re not sure what the Next Step is, ask the prospect. What’s important is that there is a next step that is getting you closer to closing the sale. Then, make sure you include the Next Step in your Meeting Follow Up document.

Your Next Step should include:

- **Who** is going to do what?
- **What** they are going to do?
- **When** they are going to have it done by?

You have to have these details. Otherwise, you’re just hoping it gets completed. If you agree on a next step with your prospects you will keep the buying cycle moving forward.

**Sales Homework** – Make sure you never end a call, conference call or meeting without setting up a Next Step(s).

**Sales Managers** – If you don’t have one, add a Next Step field to your CRM system and make it mandatory. Your sales reps will only complain for a day or two. After the procedure starts helping them close more sales they’ll see the pay off.
**Day 156 – The buying cycle.**

If you haven’t read it, Mark Sellers has written a great book called *The Funnel Principle*. I highly recommend it. Mark’s book goes into great detail on how to set up a sales funnel for better and more accurate forecasting. The part of *The Funnel Principle* that spoke loudest to me was the basic concept of the **buying cycle versus the sales cycle**.

In the buyer/seller arrangement, we as sales people have been taught that we’re in the sales cycle. That it’s all about us. When in reality, while we may influence part of the transaction, it is the customer that is buying; it is their **buying cycle**. Everything that happens in the evolution of the sale takes place because the customer does something or commits to doing something to further the buying process. The customer buying cycle is a mind shift that gets you thinking about the process of a sale in a different way. You start to think like your prospect.

The foundation of the buying cycle is that we cannot forecast, or be any closer to a sale, than what the prospect has done or committed to doing. The forecast, or funnel, is only that accurate. For example; our sales cycle used to give a 25% weighting to a deal if the prospect went through our demo. But what did that really tell us just by itself about how close we were to closing the sale? Nothing. It could have been a couple guys just killing time at work attending our demo. When we switched to the buying cycle, we did away with that metric and replaced it with 35% if the prospect attended a demo, downloaded our software and delivered a proof of concept to management. Guess what happened? The total forecasted dollar amount shrank a ton. But it was realistic.

Adapting the buying cycle is something sales management needs to support. However, you as a sales person should take away these lessons.

- You’re not the one in charge. You facilitate and lead, but the customer buys for their own myriad of reasons.
- Don’t fool yourself into thinking you are further along in the sale than you are. You are only as far along in the buying cycle as the customer has committed to being.
- People really don’t enjoy being “sold.” They much prefer buying for their own reasons. With good questioning, you will uncover those reasons and as your prospect explains them to you, they will “sell” themselves.

**Sales Homework** – Look at your pipeline. How much weight have you given to deals based on how close you think your prospects are versus the commitments they have made that bring them closer to buying? Fix the differences. Don’t wait for the disappointment in your check.

**Sales Managers** – Check out Mark Sellers’ book. If you follow his guidelines, your rolled up forecast will be much more accurate and realistic.

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Day 157 – Team players finish first.

Baseball is a competitive sport. So is selling. Each individual contributor wants to hit a home run or pitch a no-hitter, but ultimately it’s how the team does that will bring you the greatest success. You will be a highly compensated sales person by closing your share of deals. But I will tell you from personal experience, you will sell more when your team members are behind you. My team has helped me earn more commissions by:

- Brainstorming deals.
- Sharing best practices.
- Role playing with me.
- Alerting me to opportunities within my accounts and industries.
- Reminding me of ways we won deals in the past and how I could use that particular strategy again.
- Picking me up when I needed it.
- Kicking me in the pants when I needed it.

In sales and life you usually get what you give. There are plenty of deals and lots of money for everyone. By helping other sales reps you are not losing money. To the contrary - you are setting the foundation for someone to help you close more sales. You are showing yourself as a team player and willing to “pay it forward” so others may help you when you need it.

Speak up in sales meetings.
Keep your eyes open for news events in the other sales reps’ accounts.
Offer help without being a know-it-all.
Be a contributor; and you’ll always score.

Sales Homework – List three things you can do to be a contributor to your sales team.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Sales Managers – A team that functions in harmony will sell more than the individual contributors. Foster an environment of sharing and growing and watch all the homeruns add up – along with your income.
Day 158 – Sell the sizzle, not the steak.

Yeah, it’s corny, but it’s some of the best advice you’ll ever get. What this expression means is to sell the outcome of having your product, not its features. Even if you’re a meat eater, looking at a steak packaged up in the grocery store is probably not all that appetizing. But the thought of that steak, having been slowly marinated in a perfect blend of seasonings, cooking on a grill, with the delicious juices oozing out, starts you salivating. The verbiage in that last sentence at least painted the picture in your mind and probably got you hungry. (Vegetarians – think veggie fajitas at your favorite Mexican restaurant.)

You need to take the same approach with your prospects. Your prospects need to visualize how good they are going feel, how much better off they will be or how their lives will improve, after buying your product. That cannot happen if you simply rattle off a bunch of features. Consider the following:

“Mr. Rother, our Cool-a-Tron 9000 air conditioners for your hotel have 2000 BTU’s, 85 megaflops per hour and get really cold.” Versus, “Mr. Rother, if you want guests that will have the most comfortable experience this sweltering summer and brag to their friends what a wonderful night’s sleep they had in your hotel, despite the 100 degree heat outside, then you need the Cool-a-Tron 9000.” See the difference?

The first sentence told me about an air conditioner. The second sentence had me seeing happy guests that told other guests to come to my hotel, so I could keep the rooms filled and make money.

Some other “sizzlers”:

- Freeing up time.
- Increasing revenue.
- Customer retention.
- Adding new customers.

Sales Homework – Use your product and sell its sizzle in one or two sentences below.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps to think “outside the feature.” Then you’ll be eating more steak – or veggie fajitas.
Day 159 – Who are your competitors?

Yikes! Why did they ask that? Are they going to call them? They must not be happy with me. Okay, hold on. There can be several reasons why you get that question.

First, you need to be prepared for and expect this question. So, address it with confidence. You must be so firmly grounded with your product and company that you should not care if they look at your competition. You need to put on that game face. It’s one of the few times in sales where you almost border on the cocky side. It’s like standing up to a bully...which is what your prospect is acting like by asking this question.

A few reasons you get this question:

- They’re told to ask it.
- They want you to believe you have competition for their business.
- They want you to believe they’re good shoppers.
- They really do think you’ll tell them honestly so they can call your competitors and compare you with them.

Your preparation involves identifying a competitor who is really not a competitor. For example; if you sell an add-on that competes with the manufacturer, use their name. They will already know that option so it’s harmless. Plus, if you phrase it like, “Albert, we really only compete against XYZ” it helps elevate your company. As if, “there may be other companies, but they’re small and they’re not in our league.” You can also defer to a foreign company. “Albert, I think every now and then we bump into some company in Europe. But I’m not really sure who are.” Regardless who you compare yourself to, you need to end the conversation with, “Honestly, when our customers do an apples-to-apples comparison we win approximately X% of the time.”

Two things:

1. Get the winning percentage so you can quote it. It doesn’t have to be exact but it needs to be high.
2. It has to be true.

Don’t run from the competitor question. Prepare for it.

Sales Homework – Write down your list of “competitors.”

1. _______________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – You need to make sure your sales reps are ready for this question. This lesson should do it.
Day 160 – Your best prospects want what you have.

From managing sales people, I’ve learned how to spot who their best prospects are without even looking at their forecast. I can do this if I have been on some of their calls and look at their activity log. Their best prospects are the ones which have the fewest voice mails logged (meaning an actual conversation took place) and which have the most call backs from the prospect in their activity log. This tells me their prospect wants what we are selling. Those prospects are motivated. They are engaged.

This is an excellent way of reality-checking how hot your prospects are. The ones you have to track down every time, don’t return your phone calls or never provide you feedback about their needs are not good prospects. Or, they are just not far enough along in their buying cycle to where your product has bubbled up to a need-to-have.

The important lesson here is, don’t ignore these signs – good or bad. They can include:

- Many types of questions about your product.
- If they have a current requirements document for a product like yours.
- They bring up their “pain.”

You have to know where to spend your time which equates to your income. It doesn’t matter what the prospect tells you. What matters is that they engage, commit and take action. Some prospects will tell you anything to get you to quit calling. They really don’t care about the accuracy of your forecast or your paycheck. My kids used to get excited when I told them we were going to Disneyland. They would run away happy as could be and let me keep watching football. I just didn’t say when we would be going.

Bottom line: Actions speak louder than words. And lead to better paychecks.

**P.S.** Please don’t send me any “mean daddy” emails. I took all four of my children to Disneyland lots of times. After football season.

**Sales Homework** – List three indicators, which apply to your product, that you need to see and/or hear from your prospects to know they are really engaged.

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

**Sales Managers** – Coach your sales reps to not waste time with prospects who are not engaged. Check their activity logs to ensure they are spending time with the right prospects.
Day 161 – Save the added value.

I’m not against adding “value” to a deal to get the sale closed. Added value can come in several varieties depending on your product. It can be:

- Extra service.
- Add-on products.
- Publicity.
- Access to experts, customers, etc.

However, there is a correct time during the customer’s buying cycle to offer the appropriate added value. Here’s the caution: Only use it as a last resort. Never lead with it or make it part of your proposal. I know that in certain industries, such as advertising, added value is common and is often included in the original proposal to the customer. But those are the exceptions and even then, I usually advocate holding some portion of it back.

There is no exact time when to offer added value, but typically it should be used at the close. If you are at the point where your prospect says things like:

- “I like you, but my boss always likes to get a deal.”
- “If you throw in a little something I’m sure I can get your proposal signed.”
- “It’s a really close decision between your company and another company we’re reviewing.”

Next, you have to determine which added value will carry the most weight and have the most value to your prospect. Throwing in one of your add-on products won’t mean much if they don’t have a need for it. By the time you get to the close, you need to be familiar enough with your prospect to choose the added value they need the most. Your conversation should go like this:

“Spencer, you have told me it’s a tossup between us and <competitor>. You have also told me you felt you could really use a few more days of professional services. If I could get you those additional days, and I don’t know for sure that I can, will we get your business?”

Added value is one more tool you need to have in your holster. Prepare yourself so you know when or if to use it and what kind of added value to offer.

Sales Homework – List all the added value you have at your disposal.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps to only use added value when necessary. But don’t discourage it at the cost of losing the sale. Let them know what they can offer on their own.
Day 162 – Stall: Irrelevant questions.

Sometimes prospects will ask you questions just to get you thinking they’re interested in your product. Sometimes they’ll ask you questions they think will discourage you or get you to disqualify yourself. Don’t fall for it. Learn to spot it and how to respond to this stall.

If your prospects ask questions like:

- “How much does your company spend in research and development (R&D)?”
- “What training courses do you put your employees through?”
- “What’s your company’s turnover rate?”
- “What charities does your company give to?”

These are all fair questions for your prospects to ask. They deserve the answers if you are planning on entering a long-term business relationship. The problem is when and why these questions are asked. If you’re at a point in the customer’s buying cycle when you have just requested a commitment from your prospect to take action, take the next step or place their order, and any of these questions pop up, they’re probably stalling. You need to discover why. First acknowledge and thank them for the question; “Jeri, thank you for asking that question. It’s a good one.” Then, ask them any of the following questions:

- “Why is that important to you?”
- “Will my response have an impact on your purchasing decision?”
- “Our company’s <prospect stall question> is X. What is yours?”

Remember, if a prospect is stalling you cannot let them stall you out. Hit the questions head on and get to the real issue behind them.

Sales Homework – List three other questions you can ask after receiving a stalling question.

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

Sales Managers – If you can coach this strategy so the proper responses come naturally to your sales reps, you will have elevated your team.
Day 163 – Now they owe you.

Prospects are human too. They have the same emotions and feelings as sales people. One of those emotions is guilt. Guilt is a really negative emotion. I recommend keeping it out of your life as much as possible. However, it does have a place in certain sales strategies.

Let’s say, at the request of your prospect, you and your support team agreed to deliver some pre-sales work for your prospect at no charge. No contractual strings attached. You and your team have decided to take a calculated risk and you have shown good faith. But something happens on the way to the order. Your prospect goes silent or they tell you they still need to think it through.

This is the time to bring on the full, “don’t do this to your mother” guilt. This type of guilt, while probably not as effective as your mother’s, still needs to be delivered and delivered professionally. I had a situation just like this. The CEO told us if we could just deliver a proof of concept (POC) so she could show her customers, then she would buy. We spent at least 15 hours of work developing the proof of concept with her team. After we finished the POC, the CEO went silent. My sales rep couldn’t get her on the phone and she wouldn’t respond to email. We checked with her support team and they told us the demo to their customer went well and everyone related to the project agreed they should move ahead and invest in our solution.

Finally, I wrote an email to the CEO. In the email I told her we felt betrayed. I told her I didn’t think it was personal or malicious on her part, but that we felt we had been used. When you tell most people you feel they used you for their gain, it does not make them feel good. I also told her if I did not hear from her within 72 hours we would destroy all the work we did for them and if they eventually did buy, they would have to recreate what we did on their own. I received an email within six minutes of sending mine. In the email she told it was never their intention to mislead us. They were not that kind of company. She signed the order that day. I cannot be certain if it was the guilt or the threat of destroying the work that got her to close, but I do know the emotional tug on her sensibilities as a good human being running an ethical company, didn’t hurt.

Sales Homework – Think of any times you delivered something for a prospect, without a real commitment on their end, and they did not follow through with an order. Let it sting a little more. Then vow to never let that happen again.

Sales Managers – Walk through this lesson several times and role play with your sales reps. If this approach is not delivered professionally it can damage future opportunities. However, if delivered professionally and correctly, it can close deals that amateurs could not.
Day 164 – Getting referrals.

Your easiest sales will come from prospects that learn about you from your current happy customers. This is called getting referrals. You can sit around and hope your customers pass around the good news about you or you can ask those customers for referrals. I prefer to ask. It brings the best results.

Before you can ask for a referral you must be sure:

- Your customer is indeed very happy.
- You’ve established a good enough rapport that they trust you not to abuse the courtesy they are about to extend to you.

Once you are comfortable you have covered the above, validate it with your customer and then proceed. “Megan, I want to make sure you have been completely satisfied with our product, follow up service and with me.” If they say yes, follow on with; “Do you have any colleagues, friends or contacts you can refer to me?” Short and simple. If they say let me think about it or reply with no, thank them for the consideration and move on. While your customers may be happy to help you, it’s not their job. If they say yes, ask; “Would it be okay if I contact them and let them know you referred me?” If they say yes, you say “Great. I have my notepad ready to take down their names and numbers.” If they say they will contact them for you, again thank them for the consideration and move on. If you don’t hear from anyone, it’s okay to check back in a few weeks to see if your customer had time to contact the referrals.

This is not a complicated process, which is why it amazes so many sales people do not ask for referrals. Quite frankly, if you do deliver a superior product and service from which your customer has really seen the benefits, they may start to doubt your professionalism or belief in your product, if you don’t ask for referrals.

Remember, self-praise is no recommendation. Go get those referrals.

Sales Homework – List five customers you are going to ask for referrals this week.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Referral sales are gravy sales. They’re delivered to you on a silver platter with the hardest part of the job already done; removal of fear about making a bad decision. Some sales reps are too timid to ask for referrals. Insist upon it being a part of their sales maturation process and reward the behavior.
Day 165 – Debriefing a deal.

Notice how I used the word “deal” instead of “sale” in this lesson. It’s a good practice to debrief both the wins and the losses. You can learn from both. Plus, the questions are very much in the same vein:

- What did we do right?
- What did we do wrong?
- How will we adjust?
- Do we know the exact reasons they bought?
- Do we know the exact reasons why they didn’t buy?
- Was the final approver and signer involved? When did they get involved?
- Did we ask all of our prepared qualifying questions?
- How many closing questions did we ask?
- How many voicemails did we leave?
- How many phone conversations did we have?
- How many face-to-face or online meetings did we have?

The debriefing looks for patterns. If you find patterns then making strategic, directed adjustments should have a swift and positive impact. If you keep track of these items and review them after each deal, you’re starting to enter the big leagues.

Sales Homework – List four more debriefing questions that relate to your product. If you want to be a Major League Player, you’ll start using them.

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________

Sales Managers – Doing this exercise takes time. There’s no hiding it. And some of the bullets are kind of “duh” questions. But, going through them is time well spent. You need to be continually trying to find your perfect prospect. Once you understand who that is, what they respond to and then focus your laser on them, you’ll find yourself with many more qualified prospects with whom you should be spending your time.
Day 166 – The “Hail Mary” Pass

If you watch American football, you’re familiar with this term. It was coined when Roger Staubach of the Dallas Cowboys threw a game-winning touchdown December 28, 1975 in the NFC Divisional Playoff Game. It happens when one team is desperately behind in the game and time is running out. There’s so little time left on the clock that the offense, led by the quarterback, usually has only one play left or they go home in defeat; it’s the Hail Mary Pass. The Hail Mary is thrown from whatever position the offense is in on the field, and the team prays that someone on their team comes down with the ball in the end zone and wins the game with no time left on the clock.

Sometimes you will have to throw a Hail Mary Pass in sales. You have used up all of the research, knowledge, training and strategy that you know, and you still can’t score a deal. Sometimes you have nothing to lose and only one last shot at winning the deal. Football teams regularly practice the Hail Mary. When everything’s on the line, you don’t want this be your first attempt.

You actually have more of an advantage in sales than your gridiron counterparts. Every sales deal is slightly different and has different players. So, you can, and should, have multiple Hail Mary options. In football, the quarterback usually just heaves the ball to the end zone. You, on the other hand, have several “last plays” to consider. An important note of caution: Football teams come back to play each other again at some point in the future. So, the loser gets another chance. You too may have another chance to come back and sell to the same prospect that chose the competition. Make sure there are no hard feelings after the game. While it is painful, send a thank you note anyway. It’s bad enough to lose a deal now, but DO NOT lose a lucrative future opportunity.

Sales Homework – List at least four Hail Mary plays you can run that pertain to your product.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________

Sales Managers – Don’t leave yourself having to scramble at the end of the game. Draw up each play and every possible scenario, before the starting whistle.
Day 167 – Using Calling Scripts

Most salespeople say they don’t want or need a calling script. I think they say that as a matter of pride or ego. The salesperson, who wants to be number one and/or earn the most money, will take and use all the help they can find. Ego has no place in this quest. Let me explain the reasoning behind using calling scripts.

Using sales scripts helps assure:

• You sound like you know what you’re talking about.
• You don’t forget important points.
• You deliver a consistent message for your company.

If you say the reason you don’t like using scripts is because you don’t sound “natural,” you either haven’t practiced the script enough or you do not understand its purpose. I don’t think you need to go through the script word for word; once it becomes familiar, the essence will come easily. Practice your script 25 times out loud. Then put it away and go through it from memory. You will probably deliver it mostly correct, with your “fill-ins” helping you sound more “natural.”

There are a couple key elements that need to be in place for the script to work:

• **It must be well written.** This should be done by someone who not only knows your product’s features and benefits but knows how to write a sales script. I consider the sales script a financial document because of the revenue it can bring and, as such, needs to be handled by a pro.
• **It has to be written to accomplish a specific goal.** Not all calling scripts are cold call scripts. They can be follow-up call scripts, prospect research scripts, referral scripts, etc.
• **It must be succinct.** They cannot ramble. Once you get about eight seconds into the script, you better have their attention or the call will scream amateur sales rep and you will lose their interest.
• **It must be proven.** The sales script is a continually evolving document that has to be based on feedback of what’s working and what’s not.

A well thought-out and well delivered sales script helps you move through calls quicker, enables you to qualify quicker and makes you sound professional. That’s the power of the script. Don’t consider it a beginner’s crutch. Top sales reps know and understand the script’s value.

**Sales Homework** – Practice your three most used scripts out loud 25 times each this week and record yourself. You will hear your own improvement and it will be a motivator.

**Sales Managers** – If you have control over the script writing at your company, exercise it. You certainly have control over sales reps that should be using those scripts.
Day 168 – Don’t let ‘em hear you sweat.

The worst time to try to close a sale is when you really need it. The desperation bleeds through your voice and your prospect will hear and feel it. Nobody, except opportunists, likes dealing with people who are desperate. While you obviously should never let yourself get into this position, this lesson will help you get out and stay out of desperation mode.

Every sales call is a brand new sales call. The last call is done. Yesterday’s gone. It’s time to reset. Before you pick up the phone for any call remember the following:

- Your prospects and customers do not care what problems you’re having. They have enough problems of their own.
- When you call them, they’re busy listening to WIIFM radio. (What’s In It For Me) This is nothing personal. We all listen to that station. So, when you make the call to your prospects and customers, transmit on the WIIFM frequency if you want to be heard.
- Smile. Force it, if you have to.
- Treat the person you are calling like they are the first call you’re making after closing the biggest deal of your life. Close your eyes and feel it before you pick up the phone.

Following the suggestions above will help get you out of “I really have to have this one” mode. But you cannot let yourself get into this position from the start. And, so long as you have a good and reputable product and company, there is no reason you have to. When you are doing well and busting quota, prepare for the slower times by continually prospecting. If you are unsure how to allocate your time for daily prospecting go through the Day 150 – Prospecting, lesson.

If you are going to make a career of selling you have to accept the fact that you are never done. Succeeding today is not good enough unless you can honestly answer the following self-directed questions with the “right” answers:

- Who is going to buy from me tomorrow? Next week? Next month?
- How am I going to reach more qualified prospects?
- Do I have enough in my pipeline to make my yearly quota? Do I have enough to bust through it?

If your back’s against the wall keep fighting and fake it till you make it. Better yet; prepare, study, learn, practice and work your butt off. Maybe you’ll never end up there.

Sales Homework – Commit today to never back yourself into the desperate sales corner.

Sales Managers – It is part of your responsibility to make sure you have done everything you can to make sure your sales reps do not end up in desperation mode. If they do, don’t let your reps see you sweat. Stay calm, even-handed and help them turn it around.

Day 169 – Develop good business writing skills.
Writing is one of the most important skills you should try to master as a sales person. I can honestly say some of the letters and emails I have written to prospects to move a deal along or close it, have been worth millions of dollars.

We once put together a business plan to take over one of our competitor’s lines of business. They were a big company and that particular part of their business was not strategically beneficial to them. After deciding how we wanted to approach and structure the deal, I crafted a letter to the CEO. In that letter I explained how they would receive a royalty on all our sales to their existing customers for a period of time without having to invest anything. This would also free up existing internal resources at their company. I spent a long time writing that letter before I sent it. We got the deal which added $3 million in revenue to our company’s top line in the first year. A couple months later I was speaking with the CEO and asked him why he decided to go forward with the deal. He told me after reading my letter he thought he would be silly, and almost negligent, not to do the deal!

Words on paper or in electronic form can be very powerful. Their use requires more skill because you don’t have the advantage of intonation, volume, etc. that you do with verbal communication. So, you have to be careful. You don’t want someone thinking you are being sarcastic or funny when you are not. If you can squeeze it in, take a business writing course. You can find them at local community colleges. There are also plenty of online courses you can take. At the very least purchase Grammar Girl's 101 Words to Sound Smart. You can find it on Amazon. Grammar Girl also has a free newsletter at http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/

If you really want to set yourself apart from the average sales rep and increase your income, make sure your business writing skills are A+. You will be rewarded very well for the effort you make on this part of your professional sales development.

**Sales Homework** – Sign up for Grammar Girl’s newsletter this week and take the necessary steps to develop your business writing skills.

**Sales Managers** – If your sales reps are not using a template check each of their emails or letters being sent to clients. You need to proof them to make sure they don’t sound like they are being written by a third grader. Business professionals like to deal with like-minded people. Unfortunately, they will make the mental leap from unskilled writer to unskilled sales person.
**Day 170 – The Fear of financial loss.**

One of the most powerful motivating factors for a prospect in purchasing a product is the fear of financial loss. This is a fear that if you don’t buy the product, you’re going to lose money or not make as much money as you could if you *had* bought the product. This is a great prospect to have. Not only are these prospects very emotional buyers, it is easy to help them logically and financially justify their purchase.

You can uncover if you have a prospect with this motivation by asking, “What drove your interest in our product?” They may respond with:

- “We’ve been losing sales to the competition because we didn’t have something like your product.”
- “We need an additional revenue stream.”
- “We’re losing market share.”
- “It’s costing us more to do it ourselves.”
- “It’s not in our core competency.”
- “Our output or production is suffering.”

Your job then becomes to simply walk them through the process. If they need help with the numbers, put together an ROI showing what your product costs, how they make their investment back and how they start to profit from their purchase. If they’re losing market share to competitors, you won’t have too much work to do. The key is to make sure you are working with the CEO and/or the financial buyer. That’s the person that’s driving this deal. They will “get it” when you present the numbers.

**Sales Homework** – List three additional questions you can ask a prospect to uncover if they have a fear of financial loss.

1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

**Sales Managers** – Your main job in this type of deal is to make sure the numbers are right and make sense for your prospect. If you try to fool a CFO or you make math errors, your deal will be in serious jeopardy.
Day 171 – The complex sale.

Complex sales come from complex problems. As such, these sales should be approached like any complex problem: break it down into small, manageable pieces. The pieces in most complex sales will include people, money, responsibilities and careers.

The people involved usually include:

- The evaluators.
- The influencers.
- The users who would be affected by the purchase.
- The financial buyer.
- The decision maker.
- The signer (who may also be one of the other people).

This type of sale is complex because you’re often dealing with several people who have different motivations, personalities, job responsibilities and career aspirations. This can get very complicated. Ever hear the term, herding cats?

Never forget that it’s still people who buy. Not corporations or committees. The areas to break down first in trying to understand the people issues include:

- Who has any real impact in the decision?
- What is their motivation?
- Who can override whom?
- What do they stand to lose or gain from the purchase?

Next, learn what the competition is up to. Especially when the stakes are high, never underestimate them. Once you understand these components and have a basic plan, it’s time to bring in the big guns. For large, complex sales you want as much help and exposure as possible. Never forget that it’s okay to win a sale by yourself, but you don’t want to lose it by yourself. At no time is this truer than in large, high stakes, complex sales.

Sales Homework – If you’re in a complex sale, get to know all the people involved along with their motivations. Start with the decision maker.

Sales Managers – Don’t let your sales reps go at these deals alone. The bigger the deal, the more involved you need to be. Don’t take it over, but ask questions making sure all the points above are covered.

Note: This is a much more “complex” topic than this lesson allows, but it will help start your thought process. To learn more, check out Rick Page and www.complexsale.com.
Day 172 – Not so fast.

You’ve done a good job turning around your prospect and they said, “Okay send me a new proposal.” Or, maybe after three unreturned phone calls, you finally get your prospect on the line and she says, “Sure, send me a quote.” You might not want to send it right away. I know that sounds counterintuitive but, in these particular cases, you want to make sure there is still a strong need or desire on your prospect’s side for your product. You cannot and should not try selling to someone who is not buying.

A business transaction, aka buying and selling, is a two-way street. Even though it seems that your deal may be completely done, if there is trouble at the closing, it can stall things and create more problems than if they had surfaced earlier. So, you want to make sure going into the close, your prospect is as committed and engaged as they have been at any time during their buying cycle.

One way to gauge this need is to tend to other prospects and customers for a day or two. The worst I have ever seen happen, if they are committed, is your prospect will call up and ask where you’ve been. The real problem is if they asked you for a proposal (or anything else), you say you’ll deliver, you then go silent, but then they do not call you. Hmmm.

After a couple days of silence, you need to call your prospect. Tell them you have a question about the proposal. You are not lying to them. Your question is, why the heck have they not called you back wanting to know where their proposal was so you could make your quota. However, you are a professional and you do not say that. Clarify some aspect of your proposal with them. Then casually ask, “Lauren is there a problem with you signing and getting the proposal back to me today?” Time to close; or close again.

In a perfect world you want all your prospects dying to buy from you. Welcome to reality. The best you can do is find out who is further along in their buying cycle and prioritize your time with those people. The farther along they are the more committed they will be. Just keep testing that commitment.

Sales Homework – Read this lesson a couple more times. It’s an important concept that you need to totally absorb. You’re only as good as you’re your knowledge of your customer and their business.

Sales Managers – This is an advanced concept that takes coaching and a watchful eye. Your job is to mold professionals.

This is a simple strategy that’s a very effective way to make a large purchase seem very reasonable. Let’ say your selling software that covers 1,000 users for a total of $30,000. In your proposal put in a line that states; “This proposal gives you access for 1,000 users at only $30 per user.” This cost-per-user may seem obvious but there is something about putting it in writing that reinforces that measly $30 in their mind.

This strategy can also work to help justify the cost of a product over a period of time. This is sometimes referred to as a Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) analysis. An example; if you sell a product that can be made available to more than the initial group of users or customers over an extended period of time, such as a distribution system, you want to let your prospect know that while it may seem like a lot of money on the front end, their total cost of ownership is quite low. In this example, let’s say the system costs $100,000 and your prospect has an initial 100 users or customers who are going to use it. Each of these 100 users is going to pay them $500 per year (either as an internal company transfer of funds or as a customer). By the end of the second year, even if they don’t add any more users, their TCO is down to $0.00. If they add anyone above the initial 100 users, your prospect will be making money!

While your numbers will be unique to your product, the idea behind this lesson is for you to start thinking like a psychological financial analyst. You have to combine a couple skills for the, “reduce-to-the-ridiculous,” to work well. Step back from your price, open your thinking, and come up with different ways to present financial ownership of your product to your prospects.

Sales Homework – On your next proposal, learn enough about your prospect so you can put together a meaningful reduce-to-the-ridiculous proposal. Your small number will turn into a big commission.

Sales Managers – Go through your sales reps’ proposals. Look for the proposals that would benefit from a financially creative approach.
Day 174 – Stop using stupid leading questions.

While many of today’s sales techniques and approaches are the same as they were a hundred years ago, some have had to change. For example; let’s say you’re selling a quality assurance training program and you ask your prospect this question; “Tina, would having less returns increase your profits?” If Tina doesn’t laugh at you to your face, she’s laughing at you in her mind. Some other questions that scream amateur include:

- “Are you interested in saving time and money?”
- “Is increased productivity important to you?”
- “Would your manufacturing process benefit from less stoppages?”
- “Do errors cause problems for you?”
- “Could you use more customers?”

The real problem, if you decided to keep using these types of questions without putting them into context, is you lower your professional status in the mind of your prospect. This training course is full of lessons to help you elevate your game to professional; to Trusted Advisor. You can wipe out all that training by just asking a stupid leading question out of context.

Prepare your questions before calling your prospects. They need to be thoughtful questions that help you understand your prospect’s needs and wants. Note – I am not saying you cannot reiterate what they are telling you with question that has a, “duh,”answer. If Tina says to you, “I’m glad you called Ruth. Your product looks like it could help us improve our quality.” Now Ruth can respond with, “So you’re telling me the errors on your assembly line are a problem for you right now?” You’re asking the same question but it’s in a different context. Even if Tina didn’t begin with an easy statement for Ruth to respond to, Ruth could have asked an opening question prepared like: “Tina, most of our customers who were looking to improve the quality of their product coming off their assembly line found they reduced errors 82% with our Great-o-Matic product. Are errors on your assembly line causing problems for you?” Same question, different context.

Sales Homework – List four more stupid leading questions you shouldn’t use. Turn around their context. And your professionalism.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Get your sales reps’ questions for your product written out and practiced ahead of time. Cut out the stupid ones.
Day 175 – Like what they have and they’ll like what you have.

I was visiting a new prospect’s office once when he asked me if I wanted a tour of their computer facilities, including a new state-of-the-art computer room they had just put together. Of course I said I’d love to. The truth is I really like taking tours, seeing how customers use what we sell and experiencing new things. As we started the tour, I could tell my prospect was very proud of what he was showing me. He was saying things like, “It was my idea to put in this…” and “We haven’t had a single problem with that….” I just kept saying, “Wow, very nice” and “This is very cool.” I really did mean it. I was sincere. He had done an excellent job putting together a lights-out computer facility that required very little human interaction. While I was on the tour I was also taking mental notes how our product would fit into this environment and the benefits he would see.

By the end of the tour he was beaming. And very receptive to the presentation I gave on our product. He immediately saw the benefits and how our product could help make his “showcase” even better. We had an order shortly thereafter. Succeeding in this situation requires to you to combine a number of your sales skills:

- Listening.
- Being polite.
- Asking good questions.
- Empathizing.
- Showing interest in other people’s interests.
- Relating the benefits of your product to the prospect’s needs.

A word of caution: Do not fake sincerity. People see through that.

You can never get into trouble showing interest in something that is important to someone else. Usually you make a friend. And people like to buy from people they call friends.

Sales Homework – Become a constant learner. This will help you develop a strong sense of curiosity, which will help you become a sincere listener. And an even better sales person.

Sales Managers – Coach your reps to develop good listening and empathizing skills. Use training materials to help you.
I like going to restaurants with prospects. It gives me a chance to get to know them outside of the office setting. It also gives them a chance to know me. You can tell a lot about someone based on how they conduct themselves in a restaurant. I pay particular attention as to how they treat the wait staff.

I went to lunch recently with a prospect. When the waiter came to our table he stood there quietly and patiently until we were ready to hear from him. He then started giving his presentation. Before he finished, the person I was with started talking to me about the deal we were working on. I found myself trying to look and listen to him and the waiter at the same time. The waiter was smarter and more courteous than my prospect and stopped talking until my prospect had finished.

You can’t do anything about the way your prospects conduct themselves. But you do have control over your behavior.

- Be courteous to others in a public setting.
- Use good table manners in a restaurant.
- Be polite.
- Never talk down to the wait staff or any of the help.

First off, these rules are all just common courtesy. Second, why would you want to jeopardize a sale that is important enough for you to take a client to a restaurant, by acting badly. It’s just dumb. Your mother probably had the best advice for you; mind your manners.

Sales Homework – Just please remember this lesson next time you take a prospect or customer out for a meal or to a public event.

Sales Managers – Don’t let your sales reps blow a sale just because they don’t act well in public. If this is something they can’t, or won’t fix, it’s time for them to find a new career. Maybe as a waiter in a restaurant...?
Day 177 – How’s Your Character?

I love the saying, “your character is what shows when you don’t think anybody’s looking.” People like doing business with honest and ethical sales people; people of good character. I have had business and sales relationships with clients last more than 20 years. That’s something I’m very proud of. If you have good character in sales it means:

- You never lie to a prospect or customer.
- You never mislead a prospect or customer.
- You never withhold information from a prospect or customer that may give them more favorable pricing or terms, which are extended to everyone else.
- You don’t brag about your accomplishments.
- You help other sales reps when you can.
- You admit it when you are wrong.
- You don’t blame others when it’s your fault.
- You don’t blame others when it’s not your fault. You work on solutions now and figure out how not to let it happen again afterward.
- You take personal responsibility for your actions.
- You don’t bad mouth the competition.
- You don’t bad mouth other members of your sales team.
- You don’t bad mouth your sales manager.

You cannot be one type of person and another type of sales person. Embodying the list of character attributes above will serve you equally as well outside your sales role.

Sales Homework – List four other attributes that demonstrate you have good character.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________

Sales Managers – Build a team of sales professionals with high character and you will have a solid, loyal and long-term customer base.
**Day 178 – Objection: It’s not in the budget. Part 1: The initial call.**

This is an interesting objection because it can mean a different thing at different times during your prospect’s buying cycle. For instance, if you’re on your introductory call and your prospect throws up this objection, it’s far more likely there really is no money in the budget. This isn’t always the case, but it’s more likely. If you are farther along in their buying cycle, say after a demo or a presentation, it is more likely this objection is a stall or a smoke screen covering up a different issue. Let’s first look at when this objection shows up during the initial call.

Your suspect answers the phone and you say, “Hello, this is <your name> with <your company>. The reason for my call is we specialize in <your main benefit> and have helped several companies in <their industry, city, etc.> really <save money, grow exponentially, reduce overhead, etc.>. May I ask you a few questions to see if this something you could take advantage of?” Response: “We have no money in our budget for that kind of product.” After this response, you must determine if it was said to get rid of you or they really don’t have any money. So, empathize with their objection and ask the following: “I’m really sorry to hear that Stephen. Why is that?” Their answer should tip you off how truthful their response is.

If they say things like:

- “We’re in bankruptcy.”
- “All expenditures are frozen.”
- “They’re doing away with my department.”
- “Everyone here just took a pay cut.”

Then, politely thank them for their time and move on.

If they say things like:

- “We have other projects going on right now.”
- “I think this year’s budget is spent.”
- “I actually never get anything approved.”
- “We have to plan way ahead to get things like your product into our budget.”

With these responses there are still ways to get them engaged to see if they are a fit and have a need for your product. Then, we can work on getting our product into the “budget.”

Here are few questions you can ask if you get any of the second set of responses:

- “Have you ever evaluated a <your type of product> before?”
- “How does your company go through its budgeting process?”
- “How are products like ours approved at <their company>?”

Once you get answers to your questions, you’re ready to help your new prospect proceed through their buying cycle, determine if they need to be called back at a future date, or are simply not a prospect.

**Sales Homework** – Print out this lesson and put it up in front of you so you are ready to respond to the; “It’s not in the budget”, objection.

**Sales Managers** – Coach your sales reps to not be discouraged easily with this objection.
Day 179 – Objection: It’s not in the budget.

Part 2: Later in the buying cycle.

If you’re past the initial stages and farther along in your prospects buying cycle, let’s say after a demo or a presentation, it’s more likely this objection is a stall or a smoke screen covering up a different issue. Your job is to uncover what that real concern is and address it.

If you have already gone through much this course, you’ve learned and you’re probably thinking, “I would have found out a lot earlier in the buying cycle if they had money.” This is usually true. There are, however, a couple points to remember:

- There is a difference between having money and having budget.
- Prospects aren’t always forthcoming.

So, you’ve just finished a spectacular demo, your prospect loved it and you ask, “When can we move ahead and make you a happy customer, Lisa?” To which Lisa replies, “This looks really great. Unfortunately, it’s not in the budget for this year.” At this point please resist all temptation to scream into the phone. Take a deep breath and as calmly and as innocently-shocked-sounding as possible say, “Oh. I thought you had told me this project was funded.” (Or approved, or allocated, or whatever Lisa said that told you she had the money to purchase.)

One of a few possible things can happen here. Lisa can:

1. Hang up on you. (Relax, not likely.)
2. Tell you, you must have misunderstood her. Don’t argue. You’ll lose the war. Simply apologize and say, “How do we get it into the budget?”
3. Tell you her company had a change in priorities, budget reallocation, new owner, accounting error, or any number of things. In this case say, “I am really sorry to hear that. How do we get it into the budget?” If your Lisa says she can’t, ask one or more of these final questions:

- “Can you allocate money from another department?”
- “Is there another department that can share the cost?”
- “Have you calculated how much <money, time, productivity, etc.> you will lose by not moving ahead?”

I realize that none of these options are very good. But sometimes you find yourself in a bad situation and you need to make the best of it. Your goal in this case is to get your product funded.

Sales Homework – List three more questions you can ask to uncover ways to “help” your prospect find the budget and the money.

1. _______________________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Sometimes we all get blindsided. Just make sure you keep your focus on helping your sales rep learn how to find the funds for your product.
**Day 180 – Objection: It costs too much to switch.**

Change doesn’t come easy for most people. You have to encourage them and help them through it. When someone is telling you it costs too much to switch to your product, what they’re often telling you is they are not comfortable with change. Cost is relative to value.

They may be correct that at first pass; it may cost more to switch. You need to really go through the numbers before approaching your prospect with the reasons for switching to your product. Make sure you understand:

- Will it cost them more every month?
- Is it a one-time purchase versus a monthly recurring purchase?
- Do they pay one lump sum and then pay either monthly or annual product maintenance?
- When will they have to replace the current product?
- Is the product on a lease? Is there a buyout option?
- Is the product financed?
- If applicable, how does the company depreciate your type of product?
- Is renting an option? Rent-to-own?
- What is the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)?

After getting this objection, you have to have the financial facts. As stated above, money may not be the real issue. But people believe they buy on logic. They use logic to back up their decision, but in truth they usually buy based on their emotional comfort.

Armed with your financial facts, you’re now ready to address their issue. This is an excellent place to use the feel, felt, found sales technique. “I know how you feel, Paul. Most of our customers who switched to Sales Getters felt the same way at first. But what they found, after they did the analysis and made the switch, they actually saved money through <whatever your product delivers - lower maintenance costs, TCO, higher productivity, etc.>. Note: You must have solid proof to back up your claims.

There is good chance Paul will come back with another excuse/objection:

- “I don’t have time.”
- “We don’t have the resources.”
- “You’re not an approved vendor.”

Whatever the new objection is, use your objection-handling skills to deal with it. And, more importantly, use empathy to help them feel comfortable switching.

**Sales Homework** – List three additional ways you can respond after doing your financial homework to counter; “It costs too much to switch.”

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Coach your sales reps to be financially astute. This skill will help them get to the real issue when it comes to cost, with their prospects.
Day 181 – Why should I buy from you?

Jeb Blount wrote an excellent sales book called, People Buy You. Yes, the topic can fill an entire book. If you don’t believe that people buy from people they like and trust, then look to Wall Street where some of the highest paid sales people in the world make their living.

Wall Street sales people (call them brokers, consultants or whatever you want, they’re still sales people) make a handsome living helping people and organizations invest their money. While the investment vehicles may be extremely complicated, the relationship is not. Their customers trust them. The managers of the top Wall Street sales people do everything they can to hang on to those top producers. They do this because they know; people buy from people they like and trust. If these top-paid sales people go to another firm, there is a very good chance their customers will follow them to their new employer.

So, when your prospect asks you, “Why should I buy from you?” what they’re really asking you is, “Why should I trust you?” And they are entitled to know the answer before they hand over their money. We handle this question/objection like all other objections; we acknowledge, cushion and respond with a question. Then we reassure them.

“Laura, that’s a very good question and you’re absolutely entitled to know the answer. I actually have a lot of reasons why you should trust Sales Getters. May I ask you first why you ask?” This is an important question for several reasons:

- It helps you direct and focus your answer.
- They may tell you about a negative experience they had with another vendor which will help you in your answer.
- They may feel with your asking this question, they might be questioning your integrity and they will just say never mind. If this does happen, you should still go ahead and answer the question.

You continue; “Laura, our customers buy from me and our company, because we don’t let them down. We do what we say we are going to do. We never lie or mislead a customer and we work day and night to make sure you get the most value out of our product, on which, you have spent your precious money.”

Sales Homework – Follow the formula above and either memorize the answer given or write your own. Practice it enough times so that I can wake you up at 3:00 AM, ask you why should I buy from you, and get your convincing answer. Even with your eyes closed.

Sales Managers – Take my answer to this objection, or one you and your team craft, and make it your mantra. Learn it. Practice it. Live it.
**Day 182 – What’s our goal for the call?**

I have been on sales calls with my sales reps and after getting into the car to leave for the appointment or before picking up the phone, I will ask, “What’s our goal for the call?” If it’s the first time they’ve been on a call with me, I’m sorry to report I have gotten a lot of, “Uh, I guess to get the order.” Or, “I don’t know. What do you think?” This only happens once.

Every meeting, conference call or any phone call needs a goal. Not every call is a closing call. Each call does, however, need a goal that can be accomplished. Some goals are finding out:

- Who the decision maker(s) is.
- If they have budget or money to purchase your product.
- How do products like yours get purchased in their organization?
- What the real issues are in purchasing your product and why there seems to be a long quiet time in between meetings?
- When they are going to make their decision?
- How are they going to use your product?

If you set out on your call with a specific goal, you have a much better chance of accomplishing something versus just “winging it.” Winging it is for amateurs. Ahead of the meeting or call, write down what you want to have as a result. Be specific and list your goals in order of importance. To help keep your customer’s buying cycle moving forward, and along with having your goal-accomplishment questions checked off, make sure you pin down the following before ending the call:

- Who is going to do what?
- When will it be done?
- When do we meet again to verify the above and move to the next step?

Forewarned is forearmed. Next time your sales manager asks you, “What are the goals for the call?” be ready.

**Sales Homework** – List three additional questions/goals you can have for a sales call.

1. ___________________________________________________________

2. ___________________________________________________________

3. ___________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Make sure you ask your sales reps this question before every meeting, conference call or phone call. Only listen to, “Uh, I don’t know” one time. Then, send them to this lesson.
Day 183 – It’s always election time.

I believe if there are two people that make up a company, there will be politics. When it comes to selling higher-priced or more strategic products, you will have to work with multiple people, or groups of people, to get your product sold. You will have to be a skillful politician.

Like anything else; if you want to be rich, study rich people. If you want to be an Olympic weight lifter, study the best weight lifters you can find. To be a skillful politician, study politicians – and politics. I’m fortunate because I like politics. It’s the politicians who usually rub me the wrong way. You’re playing on the other team’s turf in sales, so you better be able to play the game – their way.

People who have worked in large corporate environments understand politics on the corporate level and, if they have been there any length of time, they’re pretty darn good at it. So, you need to understand how the politics work at their company.

- Who reports to whom?
- Which department controls the budget for your product?
- Whose department head signs?
- Does the CEO need to sign?
- Where are the power struggles and personality conflicts?

Once you have this information, you need to use it wisely so you do not offend anyone, while focusing on the real authority to get your deal through. I cannot give you exact advice you on this, as every political situation is unique. My suggestion is to work on the three bullets above to first try to understand the political landscape within the account. Then sell to them as you would any other prospect. If you do get someone who wants to be overly political, it will be seen for what it is by the group and should not have that much impact on your sale. Above all, DO NOT get involved in their politics. Be your own skillful politician and support (or appear to) everyone. If you do get backed into a corner and have to choose sides, always go with the decision maker. Seems obvious but let’s make sure that’s understood.

At the end of the day, if you are yourself and you prepare, practice and deliver sales excellence, you will get more than your share of deals; regardless of politics. And if doesn’t work out, you can always take your new-found skills and run for office!

Sales Homework – List three additional questions you need answers to in order to understand the politics of one of your accounts. (Repeat for each account.)

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – This is an excellent place for you to coach account management from experience.
Day 184 – Money talk strategy: Part 1: The best defense is an offense...when it comes to price.

Money talk strategy: Part 1 and Part 2 look at both sides of the, “when to discuss money with your prospect,” debate. These are very simple, short lessons, but ones that can save you a ton of time...which equals your money. A note: I am not including retail in these examples, as pricing can have multiple purposes in retail. These lessons typically apply to products that require more than one call to close business.

There has always been a debate in sales about when to talk about money. On one side, I have sales people who tell me they will not talk money until their prospect has seen and believes in the value of their product. I have other sales reps who tell me they put money out on the table right away so that the prospect can disqualify themselves. I come out somewhere in the middle because I don’t think “one size fits all” works in this scenario. For instance; say you have a prospect you have been speaking with for a while, and they won’t deal directly with the money question. They kind of dance around it – “Don’t worry about money Louie. Show me that what you have works for me, first.” At this point, you need to bring out the price list just to make sure you aren’t wasting your time. You can say something similar to:

“Liz, we have been speaking for a while now and I want to show you the courtesy of making our price list available to you.” How nice of me. “As you can see we have <explain your pricing mode>.” After you have gone through your pricing structure say, “As you can see Liz our pricing starts at <price>. Is there at least this amount in your budget for <your product>?”

Accelerate the inevitable.

Sales Homework – List two other instances when you would choose to bring out the price list early.

1. _____________________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – When you review your sales reps’ deals, beware of these kinds of prospects. They can be time and money grabbers.
Day 185 – Money talk strategy: Part 2: Let’s talk money later.

This side of the debate supports holding back your pricing. This is most often appropriate when you are selling a more expensive product. The concept behind holding back your pricing before your prospect sees and believes in the value of your product, is to get them emotionally engaged. Then, when they hear the pricing, they don’t go into sticker shock and will feel they are getting value equal to what you are asking them to pay. I am okay with this approach - to a point. If you keep dancing around the price, your prospect will start to think you’re hiding something. That will lower the trust in you. Sooner or later you have to tell your prospect the price. The key is knowing when.

Let’s assume temporarily holding back your price is the approach you choose. During the first or second call your prospect says, “What you have told me so far sounds great, Louie. How much is it?” The response; “Whitney, we have several ways to configure this product for you. Let’s first make sure it’s what you need. It doesn’t matter what it costs if it’s not right for you.” This response accomplishes a couple things:

- It conveys that buying your product isn’t like buying a garbage bags. Your product has a lot of value and can be configured and delivered to suit exactly what your prospect needs.
- You are building and elevating the level of trust, as you are not going to waste their time by going through the pricing before you both agree that your product will indeed work well for them.

As you continue asking questions, drilling for more information and presenting your product, the correct time to reveal pricing will become apparent. At that point, you will be in a better position to present and, more importantly, position your pricing.

Sales Homework – Evaluate your product and determine if the sale is better served by holding back the pricing – for a while. If so, either memorize mine or write your own response to the question, “How much is it?”

Sales Managers – Coaching your sales reps through this process will help them learn a critical element to building trust with their prospects and move them closer toward Trusted Advisor status.
Day 186 – Never lose it alone.

I believe in the expression: **It’s okay to win a deal by yourself, but never lose one alone.** This is especially true with deals that have a large amount of money at stake.

Some deals are just too important to go it alone. You can file this lesson under the “better to be safe” folder. When the fruits of your prospecting bloom and you find yourself with a really big sale opportunity, you obviously want to do every possible thing you can to win the deal. As soon as you find out the value, or potential value, of your quota-buster deal, bring it to your sales manager. I know this sounds obvious, but I have had sales reps who really wanted to deliver a “great surprise” to management by landing the big one all by themselves. This is a big mistake and can be a job-ending move. Don’t worry about not getting the credit. Everyone knows who found the deal and the commissions are still the same. (Or should be.)

In sales you need to check your ego at the door. When all is said and done, as a sales person, what matters most is how much money you get to take home – all loyalty to your employer aside. For big deals (and most other deals) it doesn’t matter if you ask the closing questions, your sales manager asks the closing questions or even if your CEO ask the closing questions - or any other question during the customer’s buying cycle for that matter. The money you receive is all the same color and can be spent the exact same way.

So, just consider this lesson a word of warning. While you can, and should, excel as an individual sales person, there are times to let your management play a very active part in your success.

**Sales Homework** – Easy homework today: Just follow the above advice.

**Sales Managers** – You need to have this frank discussion with your sales reps. You don’t want the 11th hour siren going off when there is a lot of money on the line.
Day 187 – Never ass-u-me anything.

Oldest riddle in the world: Do you know what happens when you “assume?” You make an ass of u and me. In sales, this can cost you.

It’s natural to make assumptions. You’ve gotten results from previous or several similar situations, so you assume things will end up the same way again. Or, your prospect tells you something and you assume you know what they meant. For example; your prospect says, “Mark, everything is looking good. You should have an order very soon.” The amateur sales person runs away gleefully pondering how to spend that upcoming commission check. A week goes by. Two weeks. A month has come and gone and there is no order. Starting to get concerned, Mark calls his prospect: “Lenn, you told me a few weeks ago I would have an order very soon. Is there a problem?” Lenn responds “No problem here Mark. ‘Very soon’ in this company means within six months.”

In my opinion, 90% of business problems occur from miscommunication. You say one thing and the other person hears something else. You think of something you feel is important and you assume everyone else is a mind reader. You have to nail down every single detail of your sale, either in writing (preferably) or with a verbal confirmation.

In our example above it would have been prudent for Mark to respond to Lenn’s assertion that Mark would have an order very soon with, “Lenn, very soon means different things at different companies. What does very soon mean at <their company>?“”

Sales Homework – List three accounts you can look at right now where you may be ass-u-me-ing something. And don’t assume there isn’t one.

1.  
2.  
3.  

Sales Managers – Coaching your sales reps to nail down details is essential if you want to sleep well at night. Question even the smallest nuances of the deal.
Day 188 – Closing: Warm up your audience.

You think you are ready to close the deal. Your prospect, who actually is the CEO or decision maker, told you 10 days ago to call her today and she should be able move ahead with a purchase. So, you dutifully mark your calendar and at the exact time she requested a call, you make it. “Hi Sawyer, this is Spencer with who-knows-what.com. You asked me to call you today. Are you ready to place your order?” Sawyer responds; “Well Spencer, your project has turned from a need-to-have to a nice-to-have.” Spencer’s thinking, “What!!! You were ready to go 10 days ago. You told me you loved our product. You told me to call you back. I have been thinking about this for 10 days!”

The problem is that Sawyer has not been thinking about this for 10 days. She has had 10 days of everything else to deal with in her job and in her life. Customers have a world outside of yours. For Spencer to think otherwise is a mistake. However, it is a mistake that can be corrected.

Most customers live in the “now” when it comes to your product before they buy and live with it. Most of their interactions about your product, as it relates to its benefits and future use, are top-of-mind when you are speaking with them. After you hang up, it’s on to the next task.

When calling to close a sale, you need to start by reframing the benefits they will receive from your product. You need to start all over again. If they don’t have time to go through it with you, schedule another time. It is that important. I call what Spencer did “cold closing.” It has about the same success rate as cold calling. Not great.

After getting through the small talk, Spencer should have preceded his closing question with something like, “I was thinking about your project Sawyer and I had a few more ideas how we could make this even more successful for you.” Or, “Sawyer, before we get started, I have to tell you about one of our new customers who has been doing incredible business since selecting us.”

If you have ever been to a live TV show or a comedy act, they usually have a very funny comedian who comes out pre-show and gets the audience laughing, cheering and excited. So when the main attraction comes on, the audience is in a great, receptive frame of mind. Think of this phase of your customer’s buying cycle as “The warm up act.”

Sales Homework – Before making the closing call list two potential topics you can use to get ‘em warmed up.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Unfortunately, I have seen even seasoned veterans make this mistake. Make sure your sales reps are always thinking about their warm up act before calling to close.
Day 189 – Just send me the information.

When you’re prospecting you may get someone who, after listening to your presentation says “Just send me the information.” Nine out of 10 times they’re just blowing you off. It’s an easy way to get rid of a “pesky” sales person. If they are not a good prospect, you don’t want to spend your time on them. Here are some ways to verify they really are interested.

After the person tells you to just send the information you say, “Steve, I would be glad to. As you may know our product has a ton of great features and benefits which can be overwhelming. I don’t want to just dump all that on you. Can you tell me exactly which features in <your product> would be most valuable for me to send?” Now Steve can start to show his cards if he is indeed trying to get rid of you by saying, “Just send everything.” At this point just send an email with your contact information and a link to your web site or information. You should already have this email template prepared so it should not take you more than a few minutes to get it out. And who knows, maybe Steve will find something that really grabs him on your web site. But don’t hold your breath.

You may get lucky and Steve will respond to your last question with “Send me information on <some features of your product>.” You respond with, “That sounds great, Steve. I will get that to you right away. Before I do, let’s set a date we can go over the information.” Now you’re at decision time. Set a date and send the prospect and yourself an electronic reminder. If he won’t set a time with you, or says he is too busy politely say, “Steve, thank you for your time. I will send you the information.” Then simply send him the same email suggested above.

Your time is too valuable to waste with someone who is not interested enough to spend a few minutes going over something they told you is of value to them.

Sales Homework – Write the email you will use when you get people who lead you down a path to nowhere.

Sales Managers – Keep emphasizing to your sales reps that their time is their money – and yours.
Day 190 – Same is lame.

I first heard this phrase at a marketing conference. But it applies to sales people, as well. If your prospects are decision-makers they probably talk to a lot of people. They spend a lot of time in-and-out of meetings and maybe even meeting with their own customers. So, you have to do something to stand out and separate yourself from the competition.

Maybe you can be the sales rep who:

- Always shows up with chocolate or cookies.
- Remembers their birthday.
- Sends the Meeting Follow Up document.
- Always has a good story to tell.
- Wears clothes that are professional and tasteful, but that stand out.
- Sends something of business value with each email.
- Compliments them to their boss.
- Works at night or on the weekend to get them an important proposal.
- Tells them the truth even when it jeopardizes the sale.

If you get known for any of the above, or more, your customers will tell others your name and your business will accelerate.

Sales Homework – List five things about you that will make you a memorable sales person; a professional salesperson your customer is happy to buy from again and refer to others.

1. _______________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________
4. _______________________________________________________
5. _______________________________________________________ 

Sales Managers – This topic is a great for brainstorming with the sales team. You’ll probably be amazed at the suggestions. What makes you stand out as a professional sales manager?
**Day 191 – Chase them until they catch you.**

Don’t believe that you are the only person involved in your sale who needs to close the deal. There is a reason certain prospects keep taking your call. They actually *need* what you’re selling. Don’t underestimate that fact. You may believe it’s all on your shoulders to get everything in place to ensure the order comes your way. And up to a certain point it is. But with the really hot prospects, the prospects that need what you’re selling to the point where they come to work that day and it is their number one action item, they NEED you. Your prospect may be:

- Getting pressure from their boss or management to implement your product.
- Buying your product as part of a strategic initiative that has a deadline.
- Needing experience with your product to advance their career.
- Facing deadline pressures of using their budget money or losing the money.
- On a special project from the CEO.

You need to continually work toward helping them move their buying cycle forward. However, you need to pay close attention to your prospect’s actions. Are they:

- Returning your calls promptly?
- There and on time for every meeting?
- Turning around any required legal documents quickly?
- Accepting the price as quoted without asking for a discount?
- Introducing you to all the necessary people to get your proposal through their process?

At its best, selling is a two-way street. And it should be. If you are selling something that has value to your prospect, and that prospect believes the value of your product contributes to their success, for whatever reason, chase them as much as you need to. But in the end, let them catch you.

**Sales Homework** – List four more possible reasons your prospect will need to purchase your product and how to help them make it their mission to do so.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  

**Sales Managers** – This is an excellent place to coach your sales reps to understand and believe in the value and importance of their product.
Day 192 – Train like a pro.

No sales rep ever lost a deal or an account for out-hustling the competition. It’s important in all aspects of business to work hard and give it your all. But in sales, it’s essential. Your competition doesn’t care about your mortgage. They don’t care about your kids’ college education, your car payment or your dinner tonight. They are playing to win because in sales, there is no money for 2nd place. The sale only rewards the winner. The sooner you accept this fact, the sooner you can get into the winning mindset. And that is where you need to live.

I was driving home from work listening to an Atlanta sports radio show on a Monday after an Atlanta Falcons win the day before. They were interviewing a Falcons player who had an excellent game. It really struck me what he said: “I believe in my heart, that if I’m not out there practicing and preparing every day for Sunday, then my competition just got a day up on me.” Adopt this mindset and you will have an excellent game.

Every day, give it all you’ve got and watch the results. Learn, practice, deliver. Every day. Aside from going through all the training lessons in this course, here are few more things that will get you on top and keep you there:

- Under promise and over deliver.
- Do what you what you said you would do.
- Show up early.
- Be prepared.
- Stay late.
- Send thank you notes.
- Continually train to improve your skills.
- Continually ensure your support and customer service departments are helping when your customer needs them.
- Continually let your customer know the status of their order and anything else you need to keep track of to make sure your customer stays happy.
- If it’s not working, adjust.
- Always tell the truth.
- Always be thinking of new ways to bring in and close new business.
- Be yourself.

Sales Homework – List four more things you do that show you’re leaving it all on the field.

1. _____________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________

Sales Managers – If you can get all the members of your sales team to give it their all, you’ll have your group on fire and the sales will show it. Continually coach and reward all the attributes above, plus the attributes your sales reps provide in their homework. Then, as a sales manager, you are leaving it all on the field.
Day 193 – LinkedIn and Twitter

There are tons of books written about LinkedIn and Twitter and how to use these remarkable tools effectively. That’s not the purpose of this lesson. My message to you here is to get involved. Don’t just join LinkedIn and Twitter; become a part of them. There are lots of great social media sites. But these two social media resources offer you an excellent opportunity to provide value to others with your knowledge. In return, you will receive:

- New knowledge
- New business contacts
- New sales prospects
- New customers.
- New friends.

The internet, and its ability to refine our world, is making it so incredibly easy to refine information that’s of interest and relevant to us. Embrace it.

LinkedIn has groups and Twitter has hash tags (#). Both allow you to communicate and exchange ideas with people with whom you have a common interest. You will be amazed what you can get out of this. It is, however, like most other things; you will get out of it what you put in. Another LinkedIn feature, if you can afford it, is the LinkedIn Sales prospector. It allows you to more easily connect to people. A word of caution: When you do make a connection request, make it a personal one. DO NOT use LinkedIn’s generic request. You will look like you really don’t care to take the time to get to know that person. Remember, you’re building relationships.

As I was writing this book I needed ideas. I needed to see how others viewed the sales world compared to me. Was there anything I was forgetting to teach? LinkedIn Groups and Twitter helped me tremendously. So, I contribute content and I accept content.

Sales Homework – My guess is that if you’re going through this course, you already have LinkedIn and Twitter accounts. If not, put this book down and create accounts now. If you do have accounts, get active in them. You don’t have to, and you should not, live in these groups on the internet. Your time is much too valuable. These are tools for the professional sales person. So commit to getting involved for a certain amount of time each day. It’s good for business. Your business.

Sales Managers – Make sure your marketing department is on top of the corporate LinkedIn and Twitter accounts. These resources can be a great source of leads.
**Day 194 – Like or alike? Whatever works.**

Some people like to buy from women. Some people like to buy from men. It’s not sexist. It’s just a fact. I learned this from working with the same woman in our sales group, for many years. It actually happened by accident. I was working with a male prospect and I just couldn’t get anywhere. She suggested she should give the guy a try. I agreed and she closed the sale. We tried it in reverse with me taking over one of her tough female prospects, which also ended with a sale.

After these first experiments, we started trading any prospect with which one of us could not get anywhere, regardless of the gender. Aside from the gender issue, some people simply tended to buy from sales people with personality type A, while others tended to buy from sales people with personality type B. I always believed that connecting with people and building rapport was a “chemistry” issue. I just didn’t realize how much it could impact my sales.

If your sales management will allow it, I suggest setting up your own prospect trading system. It takes checking your ego at the door, but it can really boost your income. Here are few keys to making it work:

- It needs to be fair. Nothing is perfect but you have to make an attempt to trade a prospect with “prospects.”
- If you know, they should have as close to as possible, equal values in sales revenue potential.
- Set a time limit before you give back the prospect or pass them along to another sales rep.

You may be concerned that customers will protest to being “passed around.” The strategy above should not be done with customers, unless there are extenuating circumstances or the customer asks for a new sales rep. Customers need and appreciate the consistency of having the same sales rep for variety of reasons. But prospects are different. They are future customers just looking for their preference.

**Sales Homework** – Set up your own prospect trading program with all the rules.

**Sales Managers** – I strongly suggest you implement this program, or one like it. Aside from the sales it can bring, the program enhances performance: the sales reps tend to give their total effort with a prospect before giving them up to another sales person.
Day 195 – Writing right.

Writing is one of the most important skills you should master as a sales person. Some people are more natural at writing than others. However, everyone can learn to write well enough to enhance their career. Emails to prospects and customers can have just as much effect on your sale as verbal communication. I have a group of emails that I have written, which I can absolutely trace back to winning deals where the email was more effective than a phone call, or even a face-to-face communication would have been.

There are tons of ways to learn how to be a better business writer. Here are few things that can get you started:

- Write about what you know or are passionate about. It does not have to be business.
- Focus. I am not good at focusing for very long so I understand how difficult it can be. However, focus is essential to getting your copy out correctly.
- Be diligent. This is similar to focus but diligence is carrying on with intent. When you are diligent about your work and focus when you are engaged, you will have a much greater chance of success in business writing – or anything else.

Sales Homework – This week choose what method, materials, etc., you are going to use to help you become a better business writer. A good place to start is GrammarGirl.com. The English language is pretty complex. She helps sort it out.

Sales Managers – You want to be able to trust the emails and letters your sales reps send out. Help them follow through on this. If your writing skills could be better, follow the same advice.
Day 196 – Don’t be an errand boy (or girl).

A prospect says to his sales rep: “Linda, would you see if you can get me two more weeks on our evaluation?” The sales rep responds, “Okay Olin” and runs off to management to see if she can get her prospect two more weeks to use her product for free.

Notice anything missing from that encounter? Linda didn’t ask for any commitment from Olin. The commitment could have been, “If I can get the two weeks for you Olin, and I am not certain I can, will you place your order?” It also could have been a different response from Linda because Olin may have been at a different place in his buying cycle. “Sure Olin. If I can get the two weeks for you, will we be able to have that meeting with the CEO we spoke about?” It doesn’t matter where in the buying cycle the request comes in or how seemingly insignificant it is. What matters is that your prospect is sending you on an errand. And that’s okay. You are there to serve. So long as it’s viewed as something one partner would do for the other partner, and that partner is willing to reciprocate.

You are a professional. A Sales Professional. If you treat others professionally you are entitled to reciprocal treatment. (If you don’t, all bets are off.) Don’t become an errand boy or girl. Hold yourself in high esteem.

Business happens when it is preceded by Like and Trust. Shortly thereafter, comes Partnership. Your prospect, who has now become your customer, doesn’t mind being a reference for you or giving a testimonial when he is happy. Partnerships are two way streets. But the partnership really starts before the purchase. It starts when Olin asks Linda for two more weeks on the evaluation. It starts when Olin gives something to Linda in return.

Sales Homework – Be prepared for, and get excited, when a prospect asks you for a “favor.” It lets you start to build that partnership. A word of caution: while you want learn this technique as something you can use all the time, don’t use it all the time. You should not sound like a robot that responds to commands the same way each time. Mix it up a little. Enough so your prospect understands how you build professional relationships.

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps to get this under their belts. It brings results. Role play until you feel comfortable it’s being used in the correct amounts, at the correct times and with the correct intent.
Day 197 – Ask questions like a lawyer.

Lawyers are trained to only ask questions to which they know the answers, or which will uncover information that will lead to additional questions. This question sequence continues until the lawyer gets as much pertinent information out of their “prospect” as possible and then goes for the close. As a sales professional you need to understand this concept and use it. The good news for you is that you don’t have to pay for law school to put it to work.

When lawyers are questioning a person on the witness stand, they are either holding a yellow pad with their prepared questions or have it located at a convenient spot on their table in the courtroom. I’m sure they have the standard who, what, when, where, why and how questions. But these questions just get the ball rolling. And the lawyer usually believes she knows the answers to those questions. The real progress comes when the lawyer starts drilling down below those questions:

**It starts:**
- Lawyer - “Mr. Mitchell, why did you have this gun in your possession?”
- Sales Professional – “Mr. Mitchell, why are you using your current supplier?”

- Lawyer - “Mr. Mitchell, where were you on the evening of August 15th?”
- Sales Professional – “Mr. Mitchell, where are all the locations you use this product?”

**We start drilling:**
- Lawyer - “Mr. Mitchell, what use would you have for a gun at your deceased girlfriend’s house?” Beads of sweat are starting to appear on Mr. Mitchell’s forehead.
- Sales Professional – “Mr. Mitchell, Sales Getters services customers in many of the same locations, where you are currently not being served. Would you like to see how we can expand your coverage and increase your sales?” Your prospect is also getting beads of “buying sweat.”

**We close:**
- Lawyer - “Mr. Mitchell, your gun, with your fingerprints on it, was found at your deceased girlfriend’s house and you expect us to believe you do not know why?” At this point Mr. Mitchell probably yells out “You can’t handle the truth!” and confesses. Case closed.
- Sales Professional – “Mr. Mitchell, since your goal is to grow revenue and expand sales coverage and current supplier cannot offer that to you, why don’t you hire Sales Getters to get the job done for you?” Your prospect confesses that this would be the best solution for him. Sale closed.

**Sales Homework –**

1. Make sure all your basic questions are written out and are readily available.
2. Make sure you have several additional questions ready based on the answers to the original questions.
3. Know where you want to lead your prospect and construct your questions with that in mind.

**Sales Managers** – Most of the lawyers that I know make a pretty good living. Coach your sales reps how to ask questions like a lawyer and watch your income grow too.
Day 198 – All customers are not the same.

It took me a while in my sales career to learn the phrase above and more importantly to understand it. As a young sales rep I was eager to have everyone like me. I would do the same amount of work for a three-figure deal as I would for a five-figure deal. How could I not treat everyone equally? Isn’t that just the right thing to do?

I was confusing the concepts of being a decent person to everyone, with showing preferential treatment to my higher value prospects and customers. These two ideas are mutually exclusive.

The preferential customer treatment concept usually goes hand-in-hand with the saying; no good deed goes unpunished. You try to be a good person. You bend over backward because you feel bad for the “little guy”. But the little guy, because they have so much invested with you, and so little money for their own support resources, usually demand too much of your time. When you try to cut them off, they are offended and upset.

As a sales professional, where and how you spend your time will usually equal how much money you earn. If you spend the bulk of your time with prospects who either don’t have a lot of money to spend or are “kicking the tires”, then you probably won’t be able to afford new tires when you need them. On the other hand, if you focus on high value prospects and make sure your high value customers are always well cared for, you won’t need new tires because you’ll be able to purchase new cars.

If there is any residual guilt on your part after reading this let me end it for you right now: You can be a nice and good person to everyone, while putting your best prospects and customers ahead of everyone else on your list of priorities. That’s the business world. That’s the world of success.

Sales Homework – Review your prospect and customer lists this week and make sure you are not spending your time and effort with the wrong people.

Sales Managers – Review these lists with your sales reps. Coach them on being smart business people in addition to being nice business people.
Day 199 – Your body language.

You might think this lesson is meant only for times when you are meeting face-to-face with a prospect. While body language is more apparent when it is in a live setting, your body language is a telltale sign of your attitude and confidence level while you are on the phone, as well.

When you meet face-to-face with someone, they are consciously and subconsciously sizing you up. What are you wearing? How do you shake hands? Do you make eye contact? People think they know just about everything about you before you even open your mouth. You want to make your first impression one where they like you and start to trust you. Here are few tips to get you started:

• Wear professional, clean clothing one half step above the person you are meeting. If you are unsure what to wear, call their main number and ask about their dress code.
• Use a breath mint or breath freshener before you walk into the office.
• Shake hands firmly, but don’t crush their hand. And make sure your hand is not sweaty.
• Make eye contact when you are shaking their hand.
• If you are sitting during the meeting, sit toward the edge of your chair like you are hanging on their every word.
• Make eye contact but don’t glare.

If you’re an inside sales rep your body language can be equally telling. I see sales reps slumped in their chair all day while they talk on the phone. The person you are calling can see and feel that energy through the phone. Here’s what you can do:

• Sit up straight when you are talking to a prospect or customer.
• If you can, walk around while you are having the conversation. It will give you energy.
• Smile when greeting the person on the other end. They can see it.
• Take breaks and walk around outside. It will give you a boost when you return which will come through on the other end of the phone.

Sales Homework – List three more body language moves you can do to make your first impression the right one.

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

Sales Managers – Pay attention to these physical attributes of your sales reps and coach them to make sure they are acting professional. If you don’t, your prospects will do it for you. And you can’t control that language.
**Day 200 – Empathy**

Empathy is the ability to mentally put yourself in another person’s tattered shoes and understand how difficult it might be to walk in them. It’s different than sympathy. Sympathy is you going out and buying the other person a new pair of shoes because you feel sorry for them. Empathy is one of the most important skills you can have as a professional sales person. It is also a skill that can be acquired which is good, because you probably cannot afford to buy everyone new shoes.

The first thing to help you in mastering empathy is to become a good listener. We have a lesson on listening in this course along with several references to being a good listener. If you have not gone through Day 105 – Listen to this, please do that now.

Welcome back. You see, if you listen well enough your prospects will tell you what you need to know to qualify them in or out, and how to sell to them. What they will also tell you, sometimes only in their body language, tone of voice or choice of words, are their underlying fears or cautions they have about making a purchase from you. I have seen directors, managers and purchasing agents lose their jobs for not making the right purchase which cost their company time and money; sometimes lots of both.

It’s sad, but in the corporate world the #1 priority of most workers is simply to keep their job. Even more depressing is that many buyers will purchase an inferior product or one that initially costs less because they think it will create less waves internally and help them keep their job. When I started my career, I remember the first time I heard the expression, “Nobody ever got fired for recommending IBM.”

That’s what empathy is all about. It’s understanding your prospect’s fears of making the wrong decision and addressing those fears. You may know they are completely wrong about your product’s features, benefits, total cost, etc. They may have a totally false impression of you. It really doesn’t matter what you know to be true. The only thing that matters is that your prospect believes it.

When these type of things start happening and they seem to slow your sale, it’s time for you to jump into their shoes to understand why. First, you probably have no idea what is going on in their personal life, never mind what their situation is at work. Steven Covey’s advice is the best – Seek to understand before being understood. If your prospect had a bad experience tell them you understand and that it will not happen with you. If they are grumpy or short with you one day, and that is out of character for them, let it slide and ask if there is anything you can do to help.

Empathy requires a more complete study than allotted here. However, if you only take away one thing from this lesson remember this: we are all human beings with our own desires, wants and fears. Try to understand your prospects’ and you will be on your way to earning coveted Trusted Advisor status. And many more commission checks.

**Sales Homework** – There are plenty of reference books and articles on developing empathy. Choose a few of them this week and start reading. I would start with the *7 Habits of Highly Successful People* by Stephen Covey.

**Sales Managers** – Your empathy skills are best used with your sales reps. If they aren’t performing up to their level of excellence, learn what’s behind it and help them fix it.

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Day 201 – Never let your guard down.

If you ever thought you had a deal in the bag and lost it, you know what I’m talking about. Nothing counts in sales until the check is in the bank. More than once, even after a purchase order has been placed, a thought-to-be a customer has sent an email saying, “Sorry for such late notice, but we have decided to go with another company. Thank you for your efforts.” When your competitors find out they’ve lost a deal, they don’t always just shrug their shoulders and walk away. Some keep fighting.

I’ve had customers tell me about phone calls they have received from our competitor after they lost the deal. “Patty, we want you to know that we really want your business and we are willing to pay for it. Yours is a strategic account for us so we are willing to go overboard to get your business and make you happy.” A smart customer who understands value and relationships usually sees this move for what it is; desperation. It also begs the question, “Where were you when we asked for your best price?”

However, money is money and if a customer sees two products as fairly comparable, they have been known to jump ship. Your selling doesn’t end when you are told you won the deal. Stay in close touch with all your contacts that helped get your deal pushed through.

Your existing customers are even more vulnerable to poachers. Your customer already sees the value in your product. They can talk intelligently about it and know what they like and what they would like to see improved. If you aren’t calling your customers at least every 30 days, you are vulnerable. Once again, call all your contacts there and make sure they are happy as well. When you call, don’t forget to continue delivering value about their industry, their competition, new seminars, etc. I have had outside research companies and our own sales support people conduct customer satisfaction surveys just to sniff out any competitors that may be trying to penetrate our accounts.

Two Lessons here:

1. A purchase order is a commitment to pay, but it’s typically not binding.
2. Customers are usually as loyal to you as you are attentive to them.

Never let your guard down.

Sales Homework – List all your customers and contacts you haven’t called in the last 30 days and call them. Now!

Sales Managers – Don’t be lulled to sleep by having existing customers or drawn into a false sense of security by a commitment to buy. Make sure your sales reps always keep selling and delivering value.
Day 202 – Things happen when you meet people.

With the internet, online meetings and social media, a lot of sales people say they’ll never have to meet face-to-face with another prospect or customer again. It is true that many products can be sold very easily via the web and email. Plus, inside sales departments are growing at more than twice the pace as outside sales departments. However, every sale is unique as is every buyer. Although not knowing the complete focus of your business, I’m confident in giving you this suggestion: Do not rule out meeting people face to face. I have closed six figure deals without ever seeing the decision maker or influencers. I have also closed deals that would not have ever closed had I not gotten in my car or jumped on an airplane and got my butt over to see my prospect. Never forget that regardless how your product is sold, people still believe they are buying from a person.

This advice is not only true for direct sales situations. You need to be meeting people at:

• Networking events and local Meetups. You can find Meetups at meetup.com.
• User group conferences.
• Trade shows.
• Chamber of Commerce meetings.

I have no hard evidence to back up the following claim, but I totally believe it to be true: I have closed more deals of higher value, that have a longer and larger lifetime value, and created a better customer relationships with the customers I have met face-to-face, than the with customers I have not.

Sales Homework – List three additional reasons why you need to meet someone to make things happen.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Bonus Homework – List three additional places you can meet customers-in-waiting.

Sales Managers – Coach your sales reps to meet as many people face-to-face. Things just happen when you meet people.
Day 203 – Objection: It’s not a priority now.

This is a very safe objection for your prospect to use. They’re used to dishing it out to lesser-trained sales reps. When most sales reps hear this objection, they think “I can’t tell them how to set their priorities.” That is true. You cannot set another company’s priorities. But you can position your product so they believe it’s in their best interest to make your product a high priority.

First you need to cushion your prospect’s objection so it doesn’t appear that you’re arguing with them and you really are listening to them. “I hear what you are saying Nazli. There are only so many things a company can work on at once.” The guard starts to lower.

You continue: “Can you tell me how priorities are set for purchasing products at <their company>?” Nazli responds with a Priority Rule – “We usually decide which product will (Nazli will probably list one of these):

a. Have the quickest return on investment (ROI).
b. Be the most strategic for us against the competition.
c. Help and impact most of our employees.
d. Help and impact most of our customers.
e. Cost the least.
f. Make us the most money.
g. Can be implemented the quickest.

There are many ways companies determine how to prioritize which product to purchase. You need to listen for these and be able to position your product so that it fits into one of those priorities.

You continue – “Nazli, if I can show how <your product> can <their priority rule> compared to what you have on the list now, would you be willing to move us up on the priority list?” How can Nazli say ‘no?’ It’s not logical for her after she just told you how they make up their priorities.

Now it’s up to you. You need to have your facts and figures straight to make sure your case against any of Nazli’s Priority Rules, stands up.

Sales Homework – List three more possible Priority Rules you might hear and build your case against each one.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – This requires a lot of work and preparation. But the, “It’s not a priority” is one of the most common objections faced by your sales people. If they can master this, they will beat out just about every other competitor facing the same objection. Take the time and coach them to get it right.
**Day 204 – Persistence**

Persistence is a topic that too often does not find its way into the sales training course. We tend to get too busy with product knowledge, prospecting, asking questions, presenting and closing sales. But without a high degree of sales persistence you will never achieve your goals; personal, professional or financial.

Steve Martin (not the comedian), in research for one of his excellent books on selling, did research on persistence. He found “Less than 10 percent of top salespeople were classified as having high levels of discouragement and being frequently overwhelmed with sadness. Conversely, 90 percent were categorized as experiencing infrequent or only occasional sadness.”

If you want to be in that top 90 percent, do not quit selling:

- Until your prospect’s check is in your competitor’s bank account. And then look for other opportunities in the account.
- Even after weeks or months of limited or no sales success. If you continually do the right things, with the right product, you will make sales. Guaranteed.
- When your prospect says, “Don’t call us for a while,” ask what will be different then.
- When they have thrown every objection and stall in the book at you. Visualize those objections and stalls as bullets bouncing off your chest.

Every single day you must work to separate yourself from the average sales person. Every day you have a new chance to succeed and be an excellent, professional salesperson. It isn’t easy. But when things aren’t going your way, you must persevere and make that next call. You must get back up and swing again and again and again. You must:

- Learn.
- Practice.
- Deliver over and over again. Every day.

To be a homerun hitter in sales you can never give up and feel sorry for yourself. Period. There is no crying in baseball and there is no crying in sales.

**Sales Homework** – List five professional selling activities you do persistently. If you can’t think of five, now is a great time to create them and put them into practice.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – Coach your team to persevere and have resilience. This is what coaching is all about – bringing out the best in every one of your players. If they’re down help them up. And then kick ‘em in the butt to get them going again.
Day 205 – Never make anyone feel stupid.

Even writing this sentence I can’t believe it needs to be said... but it does. I was sitting in a conference room once with a sales rep and six high value prospects. Our prospect Paul, who had organized the meeting and was spearheading the project said to his colleagues, “If we go ahead with their product, we can decide later if we just want to purchase it outright or partner so they get a royalty on every one we sell.” We never had, or planned on, working on a royalty arrangement with any of our customers. But our prospect didn’t know that. And it wasn’t his fault. Paul just made an assumption based on the way he had worked with other vendors. That didn’t stop my sales rep from blurting out, “We never do royalty agreements.”

I felt the money evaporating from my wallet. And I saw the look on Paul’s face go from surprise to embarrassment and straight to anger. Our rep had made Paul look bad (and stupid for not doing his homework) in front of his peers.

How would you feel if your boss called you into a meeting where the whole company was waiting and proceeded to tell everyone there how stupid you were for not dressing correctly at work? Based on the way you had been dressing, and the way everyone else dressed, you thought you were doing the right thing. What a jerk to do that to you.

When you are in a situation where a prospect or a customer says something that is not correct or just plain stupid, stay silent and nod your head. You will have plenty of time after the meeting to go over the options in private. Let’s say, in the example above, it’s a final meeting with Paul and you will not have another chance to make the decision maker(s) aware that what Paul is saying is not accurate. Simply say: “Those are a couple of options. Let me explain why our customers purchase outright rather than want a royalty agreement.” If your reasoning is sound, everyone will nod their head in agreement. Why would they want to do something different from what your other “successful” customers had done?

Situations obviously vary, but your approach and attitude should be the same.

Sales Homework – Please repeat these points to yourself and list three more:

- I never correct my prospects or customers in public.
- I keep my mouth shut when they say something incorrect or stupid.
- “It’s better to keep my mouth shut and be thought a fool, than to open it and leave no doubt.” – Abraham Lincoln

1. _____________________________________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________________________________

3. _____________________________________________________________________________

Sales Managers – When going through this lesson really emphasize how putting a customer down can be damaging to their income and yours.
Day 206 – Be curious.

Curiosity is a natural characteristic of top sales people. If you are naturally curious and are a sales person you have an advantage. If you are not a curious person by nature, you can and should develop that part of your personality. When you are curious, you show more interest in things...including your prospects.

- Why did they contact us?
- What’s this person’s role in the company?
- How much money can they allocate for my product?
- Will they move quickly?
- **What are my chances of getting the deal?**

That last bullet is what separates top sales people from the average. The top sales person wants to know very quickly if this account is where they should spend time. Their curiosity helps them “cut to the chase.”

A curious mind is an engaging mind and one that helps you build rapport.

“Patrick, you said you have only been on the job three months. What made you switch companies?”

“Gavin, I was really excited to see your construction company featured in the news. What were the key things you did that helped you be so successful?”

“Nicole, your book publishing company had a huge upturn this June and July. What is so different about summer in the book publishing business?”

Turn your innate curiosity toward your prospects and customers and watch your business relationships flourish. If you’re thinking, I really don’t care that much about their business, outside interests or their personal lives, then unfortunately your clients will not care that much about you. As the saying goes, it takes two to tango. Here are a few ideas to help cultivate the Curious George (or Georgette) in you:

- Get a hobby and really dive in. Learn as much as you can about whatever it is.
- Get together with people who have the same interest. Talking about your interests leads to new questions and ideas.
- Read books about things you have even the slightest interest. It can spark new ideas that will make you curious about related topics.

**Sales Homework** – List three more actions you can take this week to develop your curiosity. Curiously, it will help you build better business relationships!

1. _______________________________________________________________
2. _______________________________________________________________
3. _______________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – A lot of sales managers roll their eyes when their top sales people continually ask questions. So long as they are on target, do not discourage this behavior. There’s a rock star buried under those questions.
**Day 207 – Objection: “I want to make sure the team is comfortable with this decision.”**

This sentence may be an objection and may not be an objection, at the same time. In big companies and for products that are high priced or strategic to the company, decisions are often made by committee. If you are talking with a person on that committee they may indeed only get one vote. If that is the case, then it’s really not an objection but just another step in that customer’s buying cycle. If on the other hand you are dealing with the decision maker, then he’s stalling you. Either way, you will need to address this statement which may also come in the form of, “Let me run it past my team.”

This topic is rarely covered in sales training courses. It is, however, extremely important to learn how to deal with this situation. Many times you will need to muster a little courage having to confront the decision maker. But it is worth it. In a sales situation where there is a committee and everyone gets a vote, you need to get yourself in front of that committee and use the presentation skills outlined in this course. However, if you’re talking to the decision maker and you get this stalling technique you can respond with the following:

“Jan, you certainly want to make sure everyone is on board with this decision. But at the end of the day, leaders are here to do one thing better than anyone else; lead. That is what has made you successful. Changing the status quo by bringing in new products can create uncertainty. But it can also create excitement and motivation. My other customers faced similar situations with their teams and they found that once the team knew their leader was fully committed, they jumped in to make it successful. How about you and I lead on this one?”

When you’re faced with the “committee stall” you need to turn into Tony Robbins. You need to be the best motivational coach in the world. Leaders, even great ones, have their own personal doubts. They too need reassurance about their decisions and that you will be there with them every step of the way. You can do this!

**Sales Homework** – Write two of your own responses to this objection (the real one).

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________

**Sales Managers** – When your sales reps develop this skill they are truly on their way to being a professional salesperson. It may require some one-on-one coaching, but you can do it, too!
Day 208 – Objection: “We had a bad experience with your company.”

Hopefully, you’ll never hear these words. But sometimes bad things happen to good companies. Amazingly, if you can turn this type of prospect around, they will be your most loyal customer.

Buying your product is something your customer just wants to get through and then for the most part, forget about. They do not need to or want to worry; “Is my order coming on time?”, “Has my sales rep scheduled our installation?”, “Have you fixed the problems in your product?”

As Jack Welch says in his book, Jack, “It’s messy in the kitchen.” Sometimes the problems in your kitchen boil over into the dining room. And you, the waiter, lose the tip.

You cannot do anything about what happened previously. What you can do is make it better right now. It’s a multi-step approach. Start by apologizing. This will get you going in a good direction. It doesn’t matter whose fault it was or who caused the problem. “Trina, I’m really sorry about your previous experience.” Now, start to win them over by getting them to communicate and open up with you by asking, “If you don’t mind, can you please tell me exactly what happened?” When people feel they’ve been wronged, they want to tell someone about it. Listen intently and sincerely. Take notes.

After they have finished, ask any clarifying questions to make sure you have a complete understanding of what went wrong. You continue; “Trina, I’m going back to the office, speak with the people involved and make sure this never happens to you again.” If Trina is a decent person, and since you were willing to lend a shoulder to cry on, she will probably say, thank you. Now you can say, “While I am taking care of these issues can we talk about any current initiatives or requirements you have?”

This will work if:

- You go back to the office and take care of whatever it was that happened to Trina’s company and report back to her that the problem is fixed or being worked on.
- You listen and empathize like a professional.
- You work your hardest to make sure it never happens again or at least give Trina a heads up if there is going to be a problem.

Sales Homework – Practice the lines above or write your own. Hopefully, you will never have to use them.

Sales Managers – One of the questions I like to ask a sales candidate is, “How do you sell a product you don’t believe in?” The way they answer this question is a good indication of how they will handle the, “We had a bad experience with your company,” objection. It’s not an easy thing to answer. It requires a good, consultative approach. That requires a good, consultative sales manager.
Day 209 – They’ll believe if you believe.

I love watching the Home Shopping Network and QVC. The sales people on these shows are excellent. They know the product inside out, they always use a colorful adjective when describing the product, they paint a mental picture of how happy you will be when your new “what you never thought of buying” arrives and they have their questions absolutely and professionally prepared when someone calls on the “testimonial line.”

But what I think really sets these sales people apart, is their enthusiasm for the products they’re selling. You would think having the current product they’re selling was absolutely the best thing that ever happened to them. They are bursting with excitement about the product and sincerely selling it. And, they seem totally convinced it will be the best thing that ever happened to you when you buy it. People want to enjoy the buying process. They’re giving up their money and they want as much as they can get for it. And perhaps a little entertainment. The creators of these shows understand this concept and not only make it enjoyable for the buyer; they make it entertaining by making it exciting. They make it an event.

We can debate how sincere the presenters/sales people are, and how unfortunate it may be that some who cannot afford their products are “coaxed” into purchasing. But there is no doubt they get the viewer excited and engaged because we believe that they believe. We don’t want to be the out there on our own. We want someone who is totally behind their product and company and is willing to jump up and down about it.

Don’t be just another monotone voice on the other end of the phone. Create excitement, enthusiasm and trust with glorious adjectives and magnificent word pictures. Show them you believe and they will too.

Sales Homework – Get excited when you make your calls and presentations. Convey the type of belief in your product and company that makes your prospect wonder how they ever lived without you. Here’s a practice idea; get out your video camera and create your own make believe shopping network and see if you can match up to The TV Sales Stars.

Sales Managers – You will know if you done a good job coaching this skill if you have a sales rep that generates this kind of excitement and it starts to spread. By the way, isn’t this a tremendously effective and affordable sales training course? Why not order a few more copies right now!
Day 210 – This is your company too. Act like it.

I always try to emphasize to sales reps that while you think you are employed by a company, you’re really working for yourself. As a professional sales person, you’re building your own brand. You’re also building your own personal business. So you need your own business plan. It’s similar to the goal setting exercises in this course, but goal setting is just a part of your business plan. A good (sales) business plan includes the following topics and answers the questions:

- Business description – Who you are and what you sell?
- Your value proposition – Why should anyone buy from you?
- Industry analysis – How deep is your knowledge of the industry into which you sell.
- A list of the competition – How prepared are you for battle?
- Marketing strategies – How are people going to know you exist?
- SWOT analysis – What are your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.
- Financial results – What kind of sales numbers have you delivered?

Your business plan doesn’t have to be seen by anyone but you. This is your business. If you do have a mentor or someone you trust and who can coach you, by all means get their input. But this is your self-assessment and self-improvement document. It’s your roadmap to becoming a top earning Sales Professional. If you want the kind of success and great things that come along with being successful, go through this exercise. It takes dedication, time and thought. You will not complete it in one setting. As a matter of fact, it is a living document; meaning it’s constantly being fine-tuned and updated. Trends change, businesses change and you change. Keep it fresh.

If you don’t know where you are or where you’re going, you’ll stay there for a long time. Don’t let that happen to you. Take the Sales Professional’s route to the top.

Sales Homework – Build your personal business plan based on the bullets above.

Sales Managers – Sales managers are not exempt from having a personal business plan. Same homework for you.
Sales Management Training

This section of the *Sales Getters Sales Training Course* is dedicated to the Sales Manager. I have designed the lessons this section to take less time (although they are no less useful) and to be shorter than the sales rep training. You usually have homework in each of the sales reps’ lessons plus you also need to coordinate getting product training one day a week for your sales reps. This takes time. **Note: Your training is no less important than the sales rep training.** But the majority of your time needs to be spent with your sales team.

You will find many of the concepts that follow similar to the sales reps’ training. In many cases they are the exact same concepts. But these particular ideas are so important to your developing and managing a great sales team that they need to be reinforced, sometimes from a different angle; that of the sales manager. When you read something in this section that looks familiar don’t rush past it or cast it aside. It’s included for a reason; especially all of the “Disciplines” lessons.

You will always be walking a balance of training, encouraging, leading, motivating, and kicking your sales reps in the pants when you are the Sales Manager. I cannot be there with you for every situation, so I do my best to give you the guidelines that have worked for me. One of the keys for you is understanding that each of your sales reps is different. Each one responds differently to you and to external situations. This is not to say you don’t have rules that apply to everyone. It means each one of your sales reps has their own goals, dreams, motivations and fears. Get close to them and learn what those are for each one so you can help them. By helping them you are also helping yourself.

I think there are only two times a Sales Manager should be called “Manager:”

1. When they hire someone.
2. When they fire someone.

The rest of the time, the Sales Manager is really the sales team’s coach. Like any good coach, the Sales Manager’s main job is to get the best out of every one of their players/reps while moving the entire team forward. Keep this concept in mind as you go through the sales manager’s lessons. Being the coach isn’t an easy job. But as a smart man (my father) told me many years ago; “If it was easy, they’d hire any schmuck to do it.”

Enjoy your mini lessons and build a harmonious, well-trained, fiercely competitive and wildly successful sales team. Go get ’em coach!
Week 1 – 21 Disciplines You Need from Your Sales Reps: 1 of 21

Good attitudes.

If anyone on your sales team does not have a good attitude, you have problems from the very start. A good, positive, sincere attitude can be contagious. A bad attitude in the group won’t necessarily kill the group, but it is like driving with a flat tire. You can get there, but it will take longer and it’s ugly.

You can do a lot of things to help nurture a good attitude but it’s basically up to each individual to have a positive, upbeat outlook. Sales reps with positive, eager, go-get’em attitudes are ready to talk deals first thing in the morning and are always ready to learn more. They usually don’t need coaxing and just want to get going.

The rep with the bad attitude needs to be called out right away; in front of everyone. Note: Hardly ever should a manager discipline any direct report in front of others. Praise in Public. Punish in Private. However, this is one case I think it’s important to confront the rep in public and let them know they are affecting the whole group. Yours is a team effort and they are hurting the whole team. Their attitude affects the company’s success and others’ income.

After a “punishment” from their bad attitude, have a private conversation with that sales rep. Discuss why a negative attitude is unacceptable and contrary to what you are trying to accomplish. Then, go on and discuss the importance of a good, positive attitude. Most importantly, explain how a good attitude will work for them. Explain how this type of attitude will greatly increase their chances of growing their sales and their income. Bring it to a level they can understand.

Finally, dig in and try to find out what may be causing their negative attitude. Obviously, restrict your questions and adhere to any of your HR regulations. However, learn what you can and see if there if something you didn’t know about them that is affecting their attitude and hence, their performance. If they really want to improve, your sales rep will really appreciate your taking the extra steps to understand them so you can help them achieve their goals.

Sales Management Homework – Catch one of your sales reps doing something right. Point it out and praise it in public. It will be a boost for them and the team.
Week 2 – 2 of 21 Disciplines: Build a desire to learn and get better.

Sales reps, like other professionals, need the drive to become the best at their craft. With the web, eBooks, podcasts, email newsletters, etc., it is easy to find relevant, well-designed sales training. A lot of this training is free. I offer free training videos at https://sales-getters.com. They are summaries of some of the lessons in this course.

You can do your part by providing an environment that is abundant with tools and by pointing them to the above resources. The regularly scheduled training session is also a must. You may get resistance at first, but the reps who want to succeed will come to demand these learn-and-grow sessions. At our company we run sales training every business day at noon. We usually don’t go longer than 33 minutes and it really helps develop the attitude of growing and getting better.

Next to the content, it is consistency that’s at the heart of getting better. You probably know that it’s better for you to exercise or practice a musical instrument 30 minutes a day, rather than exercise or practice one day a week for three hours; or one day a month for 10 hours. You lose your focus. You lose it because you don’t use it. With consistent practice, a ritual if you will, learning becomes a habit. When you make sales training a habit, you’re always thinking like a salesperson. And when that happens, your income accelerates.

While the lessons only take a few minutes to read, the rest of your 33-minute training session should be used to apply each lesson to your product and/or any sale on which you are currently working. This typically works best with the sales manager leading the discussion and getting input from all the sales reps.

Sales Management Homework – Develop your own list of sales training resources that apply to your business and make them available to your team.
Week 3 – 3 of 21 Disciplines: Understand your customer’s business – Making a value call.

I might argue this point should be the #1 discipline. Before one of your sales reps makes a sales call, insist they make it a “value call.” A value call is one where the customer gets something of value (or perceived value) from the sales call. Negative value is wasting your prospects time by offering nothing. Don’t let that happen. Have your sales reps prepare themselves before they make the value call. This preparation is much easier these days. Most everything about your customer’s company (or their background if they are on the management team) can be found on their web site. This is where your reps should start. From there, they can use LinkedIn, Facebook, etc., to find out more about your prospect and your prospects’ business before making the value call.

It’s the average salesperson that wings it. If you want to be a top-notch sales manager it is the culmination of the “little things” that you instill and require in your sales team that will increase your sales and your income. Making a value call is one of those “little things.” As you review each of your sales reps’ deals on a weekly, bi-monthly or monthly basis (hint), quiz them on their accounts and the key players within those accounts.

- What has changed within their company?
- What press releases have they put out and what did they say?
- Have they gotten new customers? Any you know or would like to know?
- Did they release financial results?
- Are there new, strategic initiatives?
- Has your prospect been promoted?
- Has someone key to your success been hired?
- Do they know someone you know – or would like to know?
- Has your prospect been promoted?
- Have they won any awards?

Sales Management Homework – Make all these social media tools available to your sales reps and drill down on their accounts so they are prepared, and encourage, to make the value call.
Week 4 – 4 of 21 Disciplines:
Nurture a desire to be better than the competition.

No mistake about it, the top performing rep is the one who does not like to lose. You want reps that hate losing to the competition and don’t do well at all with coming in second place. You must instill the concept that “there is no money for second place in sales.” Until they embrace this concept, they will never have a sense of urgency that is required for being a top producing sales rep.

I believe most of a person’s competitive nature comes naturally. However, there things you can do to enhance that competitive spirit.

- Ring the bell! I love having a sales bell in the office. When a sales rep makes a sale they get to ring the bell. I know it sounds corny or even immature, but it works. Everyone wants to ring that bell. And they want to ring it loud. It is almost like yelling, hey, look at me. Your sales reps may work a bit harder and more competitively for the chance to make some noise in front of everyone.
- Loudly and publicly praise and glorify others’ success. Everyone wants to be acknowledged and praised in front of others. Send out emails and announce in team meetings, how well the sales rep who is closing more business, is doing. Envy can be a great motivator.
- Sales contests are great for developing internal competition. First, the prize needs to be something everyone wants. (You usually can’t go wrong with money, but there are lots of other prizes.) Make sure the rules are published, clear and not debatable. If you fudge something in a contest such as allowing an order to count five minutes after the contest ends, you will lose all credibility.

Side note: Winning and competitive attitudes are great to have from your sales reps, as long as they don’t point those fangs at their colleagues. Yes, you can and should have internal sales contests. However, efforts at winning the real prize must be directed at the prospect and the competition.

Sales Management Homework – As part of your group of sales contests make sure to include some that incorporate a reward for the most wins against the competition. This will help keep your sales reps outwardly focused. And go get a bell if you don’t have one. You’ll be amazed.
Week 5 – Disciplines: 5 of 21
Demand a guaranteed number of QUALITY calls.

Your reps need to be thinking about making quality calls rather than focusing on quantity. They should not want to leave the office until a certain number of quality calls have been made – meaning getting newly qualified prospects or reaching current prospects and moving them closer to a sale.

There has always been a big debate in sales communities about quantity versus quality in regards to the number of phone calls to be made. First, this issue needs to be broken down into two job functional areas:

1. Telemarketing or lead generation. These calls need to be quick and have questions prepared that are designed to qualify a suspect to be turned over to a sales rep based on positive results. For these types of cold calls I recommend no more than four or five questions be asked. If the suspect wants to continue the conversation, that’s a bonus. But this job really is more of a “throw as much mud at the wall” as you can type of call. The be better the questions, the better the sales tools, the better the list and the better the telemarketer, will determine how many calls they can make in a day.

2. Sales reps that can move a new prospect from warm to close, as qualified by the telemarketer. Your sales reps’ number of calls that can be made in a day, week or month, are usually determined by a few criteria:
   - Do they need to make presentations or give demos?
   - Do they write up their own proposals?
   - How many existing accounts do they have to manage on a daily basis?
   - Are they responsible for doing some of their own hunting?

For your sales reps, you will need to determine a fair and realistic number of calls to be made. You may need to have two or more sets of numbers, depending on your organization. I even use goal attainment from the previous month as a way of setting the number of calls required. (This is actually a very good motivator to make quota!)

I am both a numbers guy and a quality guy. If your reps practice, drill and rehearse and then add quantity, the sky’s the limit.

Sales Management Homework – Your sales reps should have to make a required number of calls. But make sure the number that counts is the number of quality calls. Your type of business and the metrics you pull from your sales automation system should guide you here. Just make sure you are keeping and using those metrics so you can make accurate, intelligent decisions and thus, effective plans.
Week 6 – Disciplines: 6 of 21 - Documentation for every call.

Sales reps come and go. You just don’t want them “going” with the knowledge of your prospects and customers notes, activities, contacts, meetings, etc., in their head never to be seen by your company again. Whatever CRM or sales automation system you use, you need to make sure your reps use it religiously. Every phone conversation, meeting, presentation, etc., needs to be documented in your system. Additionally, it’s a good idea to send a Meeting Follow Up document after a presentation, strategy call or demo. It should include who was present, what was discussed, and what the action items are for each party. Make sure those items gets put in the CRM system as well. There is format you can use in Day 97 – The meeting follow up document.

A lot of companies and sales managers take enforcing this documentation policy, lightly. I do not. If it is not done, and done religiously and accurately, it costs me time and money. I like both of those things. It also conveys an attitude from your sales rep that says, “I am really only here for me. I know what’s going on in the account. If the deal doesn’t close while I work here, then it doesn’t matter to me.” This Lone Ranger attitude should scare the heck out of you as the Sales Manager because it is symptomatic of deeper issues. If your sales rep is not documenting every call and everything about the account:

• What else are they not doing?
• What are they really telling your customer of which you are not aware?
• What else are they promising?
• Are they telling the other sales reps they don’t have to do it either?

The real pain is when that rep is gone and you are left having to put together all the missing pieces. Not only is this time (and thus money) consuming, it will also make you look bad to your customer if you have to call them to verify information.

I am being overly paranoid? Maybe. But I believe what Andy Grove, the former CEO of Intel, espoused as his motto and lived by: Only the paranoid survive.

Sales Management Homework – Require every one of your sales reps use your CRM system extensively and completely. I say, “If it isn’t in the CRM system, it never happened.”
You cannot be one kind of person and another kind of sales person. As a Sales Manager, you cannot tolerate (or afford) to have unethical sales people in your company. One thing that should get a sales rep fired on the spot is lying to, and/or misleading a customer or prospect. How your sales reps act with your clients is a reflection on you and your entire company. This rule should be posted and communicated to every rep (and employee) starting on their first day of employment.

There are really (at least) two sides to Trust in, Like – Trust – Buy. One side of Trust is your customers trusting you to help them get their orders processed, products installed, etc., in a timely, professional manner. The other part of Trust is the belief of your customer that you are honest and always tell them the truth. It’s that simple and straightforward. As the Sales Manager, or anyone else, you have no control what comes out of someone else’s mouth. What you do have control over are the consequences your sales reps will face for not telling the truth, stretching the truth, or withholding the truth. Yes, there is also deceit when there is lying by omission; which is withholding information you know might have negative consequences for you or customer. This is actually the more common form of sales lying. Some areas you see this is where a prospect or customer:

- Shipment gets delayed and is not told or given some other story.
- Is not made aware of a price decrease that has been announced.
- Is not told of new features or options in your product that would reduce their overall cost.

Like most business ethics, you need to take a step back and ask yourself, if you were on the other side of the table, would you want to know this information?

All the situations where your sales reps show a lack of integrity will reduce the Trust your prospect or customer has in you and your company. When there is no Trust, there is usually no Buy.

Sales Management Homework – Make sure the sales reps that work for you, work and live with integrity. You too. Post your policy where everyone can see it.
Focus on getting customers, not deals.

If you’re in a B2B business your growth will come from repeat business or recurring revenue from your existing customer base. You can make questionable promises to close a single deal but that’s not how you build a business. (Don’t forget, even if you don’t own the company or you are not the CEO, you need to approach the sales department like it is your business.) Your sales reps should know in advance how satisfied your customers will be one month, or one year, after their first purchase. They know this because they know what kind of company you are, how good your products and services are, and how good you are at standing behind everything you say and do.

Make sure your reps aren’t making promises your bank account or support team can’t keep. It starts with you letting your reps know your company can’t realistically do some things just to get the deal, if you cannot. And they need to know you are okay with that. It may mean smaller short term gains, but it translates into happier, longer-term customers and profits.

In my career I have had several long-term customers come back to me for additional purchases, because they knew what they would get: The truth and an honest transaction. Plus, they would often pay more because they Trusted me. They learned from their first order, that if there was ever a problem with their product or service, or an opportunity for me to offer them a lower price or better terms, that I would work to get what I could for them. It sometimes meant losing out on a particular deal because of budget constraints. But I always know, with these particular customers, that if they have a need for something I can sell to them, and they have the money, they will make their purchase with me. And that is exactly the kind of sales person and sales team you want to build.

Sales Management Homework – Coach your reps on building good, long-term business relationships. This is a great opportunity for you to lead from experience and by example.
Many reps will pad their forecast to make it look good to the boss. Obviously, this eventually fails. On the other side of the coin, which is equally as bad, is the sales rep that will not put a prospect into their sales forecast because they don’t want to commit and then disappoint. In their mind, if it is in the forecast then they are telling you the deal will happen.

Let your sales reps know it is called a forecast for a reason. If everything in the forecast was guaranteed to close it would be called something other than a forecast. It’s called a weather forecast because it’s the meteorologist’s best guess based on all the information they have from their scientific instruments. It’s the same thing for your sales reps. Let them know it is okay to make their best estimate of when, and for how much, the business in their pipeline will close based on what the prospect has committed to – the sales persons’ scientific instrument. This is a key point. If you move to more of a buy cycle versus a sales cycle, and base your forecast on actions and commitments the prospect has taken and made, then there is less room for your sales rep to put in an arbitrary number.

It’s really up to the sales manager to make sure the forecast is accurate and realistic; regardless if the news is good or not. You need to take the time and go through each of your sales reps’ Top 10 list of prospects and/or forecast once per week and distill the real number. A forecast should not be a surprise.

Sales Management Homework – An accurate forecast is a reflection on your ability to manage your business. The place to start is with your sales funnel. Make sure your sales funnel is set up with precise metrics for each stage of each deal.
You never see a major league baseball player skip batting practice on game day. And many of those players make millions of dollars. Professional golfers hit the practice range with a coach before the start of every tournament round. Professionals know they can never stop practicing and honing their game. Top sales professionals know this as well. That’s why they constantly practice and refine their sales skills so they’re ready to help move any sale along at a moment’s notice.

We hold a sales training session every business day at our company. We found that noon works best for us. Lunch is allowed. Usually no longer than 33 minutes. Monday through Thursday will typically be a lesson from this course and Friday will be something around product or industry training. We also sign up for other sales trainer’s webinars on different topics. Nobody knows everything. Many times we will review and brainstorm a deal one of the sales reps is working on. This is a really great practice to do for a few reasons:

- Lots of input gets people thinking in different ways.
- You can come up with new questions for the prospect.
- Newer reps learn from the more experienced reps.
- It can show where there are some areas of deficiency.

Another thing I found effective is having one of the senior reps deliver a sales training lesson on a topic with which they are familiar. Not only will the lesson have credibility because it is coming from someone who was in their shoes, but it also reinforces the material and concepts for the presenter.

Emphasize to your reps that being a Professional Salesperson is a lifelong endeavor. That to get to the top and stay is a continual practice. A key to mastering any skill is to learn, practice and deliver every day. Consistency is the cornerstone to building a winning sales team.

“Consistent practice brings mastery.” – George Leonard

Sales Management Homework – Do not skip a day of training during the week. It only takes 33 minutes.
Week 11 – Disciplines: 11 of 21 – Teach them to really listen.

Everybody talks about the importance of listening but few people ever hear anything. Most sales reps are so anxious to either get their pitch out or want to answer a question before it is finished being asked, that they never really “absorb” the question. A good rule to follow is for them to wait three seconds before answering, even if they know the answer. That at least gives the impression they’re listening. And they actually may think of another, and maybe better, response during the pause!

Listening well is a skill that can be learned. But for most sales people, it is very difficult because they have developed a habit of talking and not listening. Here’s an exercise you can try during one of your training sessions:

Have one of your reps try to sell your product to another rep. They get one sentence to introduce themselves and the company. The rest of the sale must be made with questions. The questions need to be built upon the answers given by the rep playing the part of the prospect. For it to work your “prospect” has to be interested in your product and not try to sabotage the exercise. This practice will not only work to strengthen your sales reps’ listening skills, it will also sharpen their questioning skills.

Listening and questioning really go hand-in-hand. How do you know what to ask if you haven’t hear what the other person is saying?

Sales Management Homework – You need to be listening to your reps and coaching them on improving their listening skills to help make them a Professional Salesperson. Listening to recording of your reps’ sales calls will also key you into how well they are listening to the person at other end of the line. Pay particular attention to cues that your rep is distracted such as paper shuffling or typing on the keyboard.

There are plenty of learning resources available to master the skill of listening. Research them and choose the ones you can incorporate into your sales training.
Week 12 – Disciplines: 12 of 21

Elevate reps to become a “Trusted Advisor.”

It takes a lot to earn the status of Trusted Advisor. You have reached the pinnacle of the sales profession when your customer gives you this title. It is a status you want all your sales reps working to achieve. Because this is so crucial, please go back and read the lesson, Day 5 - The Trusted Advisor, and follow the advice given so your sales reps can earn that badge of honor. Don’t get hung up in the term. It’s the actions of how your customers treat your sales reps that really matters.

Your attitude toward helping your reps achieve this status should be so ingrained in their heads that when a customer situation comes up they should be thinking, I know what <your name> would want me to do. I really don’t believe in nagging or babysitting sales reps. It is a waste of everyone’s time. However, the Trusted Advisor “concept” is one that needs to be repeated verbally and in writing, over and over again.

Work toward developing the attitude of, customers for life. They won’t all be customers for life, but if you treat them that way, more of them will be helping you pay your bills year after year. Once again, this has nothing to do with Trusted Advisor term. Like everything else in sales, it has everything to do with your attitude and your focus. Constant repetition and reinforcement will make this a habit. And one you never want to break.

Sales Management Homework – Having sales reps that are considered Trusted Advisors by their customers will earn you more money than any single thing they can do. During your training sessions coach your sales reps about how important it is to continually strive for this status level in sales along with the rewards that come to those that achieve it.
Week 13 – Disciplines: 13 of 21

Make sure they know your product cold.
(And how it warms up to the competition!)

Product and competitive knowledge just get you in the door. If your sales people cannot explain and demonstrate the benefits of your product and why it is superior to the competition, do not put them in front of a prospect. This is not to say they have to be perfect right out of the gate. Nobody is. But they do need to be able to get through the fundamentals of a demo and completely deliver a benefit-oriented presentation.

Set up times for your sales reps to deliver the presentation to you and their peers. I cannot think of a better time to use video. Having your reps watch themselves on video will uncover a lot things they are probably not aware of; nervous twitches, saying um a hundred times, etc. It will also uncover how well they know your product. Make sure to ask product feature questions and listen to make sure the reps to answer with a benefit-oriented reply. For example; “Our product does 300 megaflops a second and the reason that’s good for you is...”

When it comes to the competition in the presentation, there are couple things to keep in mind:

1. Make sure you know the benefits in your presentation are winners compared to the competition. You do not have to say, “… compared to XYZ company”. If you are in a competitive sale, your prospect will have the list of features for your competitor. Simply emphasize strongly your position in that area. It is a subtle way to put yourself ahead of the competition.
2. Do not directly bad mouth the competition. Even if they ask. Go over why you are the best choice for a particular feature, and their company as a whole. If your reps do back mouth the competition you may think it is effective, but your reps will come off as sleazy.

Sales Management Homework – Day one start your sales reps on mastering your product’s features, benefits, competitive advantages and where it fits in the market. Take the time to schedule product training into their week. You can also purchase easy to use, do-it-yourself, online quiz programs. They’re very inexpensive and are great for product knowledge assessment.
My first sales job out of college was an IT recruiter. I was very envious of the people I was recruiting because they were getting good job offers and being courted every day by people like me. I put them on an imaginary pedestal. So, I actually left my recruiting job for a position (at half the pay) to be a programmer. While the position ultimately gave me good background for my future B2B sales jobs and running my company, I realized there was nothing special about the people I was recruiting. Indeed, when I learned about the pressures of their job (and the day in and day out mundane tasks), I realized sales would be a much better, and rewarding career for me.

Too many sales people see themselves as less-than-equal compared to the decision maker to whom they are trying to sell. It can be for any number of reasons, but that attitude needs to be eliminated. Your sales reps need to convey to the buyer that they too are professionals and that their time is valuable. This attitude will transmit confidence which will translate into buyers’ confidence toward your sales reps.

It starts with you. Let your reps listen in on your calls to prospects and customers. Let them see that a sales professional demands as much respect and courtesy as anyone else, regardless of whether or not the sales person is trying to sell something. If indeed they are a well-qualified prospect, then it is your sales rep that should a little put off from a “more important” person as you are there trying to help them in a deficient area within their company.

Getting this attitude under their belts will solve issues in other areas as well. Gone will be the “am I bugging them?”, “they make a lot more money than me so who am I to tell them what to do?” attitude. Your reps will start to approach your prospects with confidence that comes from understanding that business is a two way street. No one side can accomplish the task without the other. One hand washes the other and together they get clean.

Sales Management Homework – Coach your sales reps to stand tall, be proud, be confident and be a Professional Salesperson.
Week 15 – Disciplines: 15 of 21
Teach them to draw…the line.

Business is a two-way street. You obviously want to sell as much of your product as possible. When your customer purchases your product they are, hopefully, purchasing it to fill a need within their company. At that point they probably need you as much as you need them. Everybody wins. That does not, however stop some customers from bullying and trying to take advantage of the situation; especially, with junior sales people.

Many customers will ask for as much as they can get. They want better pricing, more time to evaluate your product, better terms. The list goes on. Your reps need to be coached where to “draw the line.” Several considerations can go into customer concessions and ultimately you will settle on reasonable terms. However, your reps need to know when they are being taken advantage of and when they need to say “no.” And you need to stand behind them. If your reps believe they will “for sure lose the deal” if they don’t acquiesce, engage them in a one-on-one coaching session on confidence.

When you feel your sales reps are being taken advantage of, or you cannot get the prospect communicate or cooperate, it’s time to draw that line. Many times either I or my sales reps, when we reach that line have told the prospect, “I just don’t think we are the right company for you.” A lot of people will see this sentence a tactic or trick (or maybe stupid). It is not. If you reach your line in the sand, say it and mean it. It will get to the heart of the matter very quickly. Like any good negotiation, you need to be able to walk away. But if I had a count of every time I used this approach in my career, I would say the deal got worked out at least 75% of the time. Don’t forget, they need you too. This will uncover how much.

Sales Management Homework – I really dislike seeing a customer throw their weight around because they hold the keys to the money chest. Your sales reps need to be coached by you to demonstrate early in their customer’s buying cycle that there are limits to what you are willing to give for their business. There is a fine line between being obliging and drawing a firm line in the sand.
Nothing helps keep the peace better in a sales team than sales rules. These are sales rules that are followed regardless of the outcome. I don’t care if your rule states that if you don’t call a customer in 30 days you lose it and that account belongs to your top rep. Follow the rules for everyone. That’s what fair. Aside from keeping the peace, after everyone loses an account they thought was theirs, they will stay on top of the business without any coaching from you. Plus, when you do stick to the letter of the law, your sales reps will always consider you to be fair and you will have their respect.

It only takes one time. If you show any favoritism or bias toward one rep over another just once, as it relates to sales rules, you will probably never get that part of trust back from all your sales reps. Trust, just as with a customer, is earned over time but can be lost in an instant. If your sales reps believe you live by the rules you put in place, they will focus more on their job of selling rather than worrying about being cheated.

Here’s a tip: I usually suggest praising in public and punishing in private. This is an exception. Enforce or interpret the rules in front of the whole team. Let everyone know your group sells and lives by the rules.

Sales Management Homework – If your sales rules are not in place and posted, start writing. They definitely need to be in your Sales Playbook.
Week 17 – Disciplines: 17 of 21 - Demand punctuality.

I hate it when people are constantly late. It’s a real pet peeve of mine. I’m not sure why but it’s just part of my personality. Do you know if it’s part of your customers’ personalities? How can you expect your sales reps to accomplish their call objectives if they’re already behind when the meeting finally starts? High level people in business are extremely busy people. Their time, like yours, is precious. Your team needs to be mindful of that. Here are a few ideas:

• If your reps are visiting a customer or prospect, have them put that person’s phone number in their phone and have it queued up ready to be dialed in case there is bad traffic or something happens along the way.
• Make sure an agenda is put together and sent ahead of time.
• Have an agenda for your own meetings with starting and ending times. Demand punctuality for your meetings. I sometimes do not let a person who is late to the meeting, speak.

I was interviewing staffing firms do some hiring for our sales associates program. I request that our sales associates be in at 8:00am. One firm wanted to come to my office to introduce themselves and find out more about the position we were looking to fill. I agreed to meet with them and asked them to be at my office at 8:30 am. The sales rep wrote back to me and asked, “Because of traffic, can we make it 9:15 or 9:30?” Are you kidding me?! You want the business but are not willing to make the effort get up a little earlier (like the sales associates who you are looking to place) to make the sale. I wrote that back to the sale rep at the staffing firm and never heard from them again. While this isn’t exactly an example of demanding punctuality, I think the attitude is the same – show up when the customer needs you, and show up on time.

Being on time may seem like a small thing, but it sets the tone for how your company does business. Consciously or subconsciously, your customers will understand you have a team of professionals who show up (on time) every day, for every call and for every meeting. This discipline goes a long way toward building trust and continually moving the sale forward along by providing good account management.

Sales Management Homework – Demand punctuality and attention to time constraints, in and out of the office.
Week 18 – Disciplines: 18 of 21 - Create and refine a sales process.

It took me a long time to understand that most people in business need to be told what to do, and most people like consistency. Sales people are no different. Consistency is also the main ingredient in a sales process. A process is something you do over and over again, in a prescribed manner, expecting to get the same results. When you create a sales process you are selling with intent. You are making calls, asking questions, delivering presentations, closing business. You are doing all these things with a prescribed, repeatable and sustainable process.

Once you have consistency in your sales process, and in how you manage your team, it frees up your sales reps’ mind to focus on selling. They are not worrying about something new that is going to be thrown at them. As they focus and fall in line with the process and it starts delivering results, the success it brings will feed upon itself. Success breeds success.

As a sales manager, it is your responsibility to create the process for your team to follow. Use the Sales Playbook to document your process. The process of putting together a Sales Playbook is outlined in this course. If you do not have one, start putting yours together now. Include everything that happens from cold call to close. Keep refining it until your process runs like a finely tuned engine. Then watch your sales grow.

Sales Management Homework – Don’t hesitate building your sales process. It’s your roadmap to success. Your sales process should be documented and be part of your Sales Playbook. You can actually think of your Sales Playbook as a Sales Operations Manual. Like most good operations manuals it is about the process, not the person. Get the process in place and then fill it in with sales people.
Week 19 – Disciplines: 19 of 21 - Get testimonials.

Self-praise is no recommendation. Your sales people need to get in the habit of requesting customer testimonials. The best time to get them is right after a sale is closed and the customer is happily using your product. Or, as the great Tom Hopkins would say, “When they are happily involved with your product.” Many customers will say they are too busy to give a testimonial or are not sure what to say in a testimonial.

Share this tip with your sales reps: Tell the customer once they agree to provide a written testimonial have the rep offer to write it, and give the customer a chance to change or edit to their liking. Here’s some verbiage; “I know you are busy Molly. I think I know what you told me about your experience with our product and service. How about if I write it for you? You can edit the document any way you’d like, but this will get you started.” This approach seems bold, but I have never had anyone turn me down. If a customer wants to give your sales rep a testimonial, they will appreciate this time-saving approach.

Have each sales rep keep a file or notebook of the testimonials. Make sure they are part of every presentation and sales call. Prospects usually do not want to be the first one to purchase a product. There are early adopters, but they few and far between. Seeing, in writing, how much someone who came before them liked your company, goes a long way toward building trust.

Sales Management Homework – Incorporate a bonus or reward system for bringing in testimonials. They’re that important.
Week 20 – Disciplines: 20 of 21 - Follow through.

This discipline really goes hand-in-hand with punctuality. In sales, and in every other part of life, you’re only as good as your word. Your sales people have to do what they say they are going to do. Check on an order? Find someone in support to help their customer? Whatever it is, no matter how trivial it may seem, it is a BIG deal to your customer. Customers want…and do repeated business with…someone they can count on.

As the Sales Manager it is your responsibility to make sure your sales reps follow through on their commitments. The issue is, usually, how much time do you have to spend making sure this is happening. My advice, and my rule with my sales people is three strikes and you’re out. The third time I find out a sales rep did not follow through with a customer or prospect commitment, I release them. Anyone can forget one or two times. But with three times it is probably a habit that just won’t get broken; at least not by you.

There are not enough good customers to treat the one’s you have like an afterthought.

Sales Management Homework – If you have a sales rep that is struggling with follow-through, have a special one-on-one session to make clear how important this is to closing deals and keeping customers happy.
**Week 21 – Disciplines: 21 of 21**

**Help customers navigate through your company’s procedures.**

Most of us assume the world understands how we do business. They don’t. Your customers have a hard enough time keeping up with their own company’s policies and procedures. If you have a procedure for customers to contact your support department, access updated software, talk to your Accounts Receivables department, etc., your sales reps need to explain it early in the customer’s buying cycle. And don’t forget to put all these procedures in your Sales Playbook.

**Sales Management Homework** – Make sure you have all the items documented in order to make it easy for your customer to do business with you. A nicely prepared checklist works well.
**Week 22 – Teach the difference between busy and productive.**

I took over a position once where an existing sales rep was making over 100 calls a day. He was very busy. But at the end of the month he hardly made any sales to show for all those calls. And we had a customer buying cycle that was less than 30 days. So, I sat in the cubicle next to him for a few hours one day and listened to his calls. He wasn’t even close to saying the correct things to help the customer buy.

Measuring and counting the wrong things, especially number of calls, usually doesn’t get you the results you want. The attitude of, “sales is numbers game” can kill your sales results. Don’t get me wrong. I am a volume guy. However, I also believe applying that volume to saying and doing the “correct” things will bring you great results.

**Sales Managers** – Remember that call volume is great – if it’s tied to call excellence. Establish a realistic minimum number of calls. You will hear reps say “I thought you wanted quality.” Don’t fall for it. If you are delivering training on a regular basis to improve their skills, then your sales reps should stretch to make a lot of calls while delivering excellence on each one.
Week 23 – Lead by example.

Your team needs to know you are not only willing to go into battle with them; they need to know you have been there before. You cannot expect your sales team to do something you have never done or would not do yourself. Be sure you:

- Make cold calls with them.
- Show them how you approach prospecting.
- Give them the words you’ve used in the past which brought you business.
- Call one of your old customers and let them tell your reps why they bought from you.

You need to be your sales reps’ leader and have their respect. There is no better way to do that than leading by example.

Sales Management Homework – List five more things you can do to lead by example.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________
Week 24 – Grow your own.

I was having difficulty finding experienced sales people at one point and decided to try something new. While this idea I had is nothing new for the Fortune 500, it was a pretty big step for a company at our stage of growth.

I told our staffing agency to find me people with a four year college degree and a desire to make a lot of money. Our plan was to bring in these sales associates to learn our business, learn how to sell and then promote them into commission-carrying sales reps. While they start out at a small salary with bonuses for certain milestones, they could earn six figures like some of our other reps once they got through the 90 to 120 day program.

Aside from having more people on the phones, I am able to affect the way they sell. (They actually went through many of the lessons in this course long before it was published.) As they create opportunities for the commissioned reps, they learn everything that’s important to becoming a Professional Salesperson.

For you the sales manager, here is the real benefit: You will have a constant flow of talent coming up through your farm system, just like a major league baseball club. If for some reason you need to release a sales rep or they quit, you move one of your sales associates to the big show. And since they have been uncovering and turning over the leads for a few months, they are familiar with the accounts.

Like I said, my farm system concept may be nothing new to large companies. Then again, if you work in a large company and you do not use something like the farm system, you might find it very helpful. With the farm system and daily training on all aspects of selling, you can have a winning team for many years.

Sales Management Homework – Think about how you might use or modify the farm system concept.
Week 25 – The Sales Playbook: Why you need it.

If you've ever watched an American football game, you have probably seen the head coach pacing up and down the sideline with a laminated sheet(s) of paper in his hand. He is holding his team's Playbook. It has the list of all the offensive and defensive plays he can call for that game. The plays that make it into his playbook are the ones that will work best against the opposing team. Those plays give his team the best chance of victory. They are well thought out and practiced in advance of the game. When winning is on the line, time is running out, and everyone else is running around screaming, the coach can calmly and confidently pick the best play that he thinks will work against the competition.

If your company has a Sales Playbook, the salespeople should be using it and not deviating from it at all. If you do not have a Sales Playbook, you need to write one or have one written for you. Having a well-defined process is the key to consistency amongst your reps. Having it written in the form of a Sales Playbook sets it in stone. Creating and using a Sales Playbook increases your chances of victory.

Note: One of the biggest benefits to having a Sales Playbook is being able to on-board new sales reps quickly. This means you have to spend less time with new reps, and they will start producing quicker. The most frequent complaint sales reps have when starting a job is that nobody tells them how the company, and in particular, the sales department operates. Remove this hurdle and you free them to hit the ground running.

Sales Management Homework – A head football coach can make millions of dollars in a single year. Think it's an accident? Think the owners have nothing better to do with their money? Hardly. They hire professionals who know the value of study and preparation.

A Sales Playbook takes time to write. It is not something you do in one sitting. But it is required to have a top producing sales team. And it's required if you want to be a top-earning Sales Manager.
Week 26 – The Sales Playbook: What goes in it.

The Sales Playbook should contain all the job functions, responsibilities and sales practices your sales people are required to know in order to close business. These include:

1. Your company mission statement and core values.
2. Your sales team’s core values.
3. Telephone calling scripts – Cold, Warm and Hot.
4. Telephone voicemail scripts.
5. Qualifying questions.
6. Trial closes.
7. Closing questions.
8. Guidelines for face-to-face meetings.
9. A complete list of your company’s products or service benefits.
10. A list of responses to prospect objections.
11. Procedures on how to deliver demos and presentations.
12. Email templates that address all phases of the customers buying cycle.
13. The competition.

Sales Management Homework – Use my list as a starting point and customize your Sales Playbook around your company’s business.
Week 27 – The Sales Playbook: How to use it.

The way to use the Sales Playbook is to have it ready any time you need it. I cannot tell you how satisfying it is when a sales rep comes into your office and asks you a question that is answered in your company’s Sales Playbook. You will love saying the words, “Have you looked in the Sales Playbook?” Use the Sales Playbook when it is needed.

Here’s another tip – Videos are great tools to add to your Sales Playbook. This is especially good for presentations and demos. When you give your sales reps a visual and/or audio example of exactly what you expect and how you want your product or service presented, you leave nothing to chance. As a side note – keep the camera out and record your sales reps giving their presentations. Have them watch the video and critique their own performance. I also suggest doing this in a group setting so they learn to deliver under a bit of pressure.

As you can see, a Sales Playbook can and should become an open-ended, comprehensive, detailed document. Very important: The Sales Playbook is an active or kinesthetic document. That is; for the Sales Playbook to be really effective your sales reps (and you) need to practice what’s contained inside.

Sales Management Homework – If you haven’t started writing, get going!
Week 28 – Can’t we all just get along?

Top salespeople are driven. They are competitive. And they like to do things their own way. When you have more than one of these personalities on your team, you’re going to have conflicts. It’s part of the deal. Here are a few ideas to minimize the damage:

- Make sure your sales rules are written **and enforced**. When the playing field is level you will have a much cleaner game.
- Celebrate victories. It doesn’t have to be a big thing. It’s the recognition that counts.
- Demand people have respect for each other. Without that, it can all fall apart. You as well need to be a true leader and earn *their* respect.

Some days you may feel like you didn’t leave your kids at home. But if you have a good product to sell, building a team that focuses on winning rather than on each other is well worth it.

**Sales Management Homework** – You are in a leadership position. Make sure you act like a leader.
Week 29 – The Lone Ranger.

If you have a Lone Ranger on your team it can be disruptive; particularly if they have some success. There are usually two or three reasons sales people want to work in a vacuum.

1. They think they know better than anyone else.
2. They don’t want you to see how poorly they are doing and want to hide.
3. They cannot accept constructive criticism.

Many times your Lone Ranger is also your top sales person. That makes it even more important that you don’t let the sales rep that the other reps look up to, to run their own show. Regardless of who or why your sales rep needs this solo identity, you cannot allow it. You need a team mentality. In this case, you need to call out the behavior in public without calling out the person. My approach sounds like this:

“"We all have strengths and weaknesses. We all have areas where others on our team can offer something to everyone else. We need to draw on those strengths to make our team whole. I am not trying to stifle your individuality, creativity or competitiveness. But a .400 hitter in baseball cannot win the World Series, unless the whole team is on board. You still get the accolades (and commissions) when the whole team wins. I want you all to be .400 hitters and I want our team to win the World Series. No hard-charging off in your own direction. Let’s win together."

Sales Management Homework – Don’t ignore the Lone Ranger on your team. Be their Tonto and coach them so they don’t end up with arrows in their back.
Have you ever had a sales rep that just won’t listen to you? It can be very frustrating. You’re doing everything you can to help this rep, and they are basically ignoring you. Plus, it can be very deceitful. They nod their head as you’re explaining how you want things done, but they never follow through. I was asked by sales managers to include this lesson because it’s one of those areas where sales managers think they’re alone. I will tell you that you are not alone in having to deal with this issue. If this is your situation, my advice is:

1. Give them a face to face warning, with specific examples where they did not follow your instructions. Let them know they will be terminated from the company if it keeps happening. Follow up in writing what was discussed in the meeting.
2. Terminate them the next time it happens.

Letting this attitude slide can come back to haunt you when there is a lot on the line and they didn’t listen to your advice.

Sales Management Homework – Look for this problem in your team. If you have it, follow my advice above. It may be painful in the short term, but you will be much better off in the long run. And you will be sending a clear message to everyone else on the team.
Week 31 – Your team’s core values.

Every company needs core values. So does every successful sales team. Developing and displaying your sales team’s core values is a good element to put in place that will help unite your team. Everyone wants to feel they are part of something that is meaningful. Proudly displaying your sales team’s core values not only gives your sales reps that feeling of being part of a bigger picture, it makes them think twice before they step outside those values. The whole team is looking.

Here are a few suggestions to get you going on developing your sales team’s core values:

- We never lie or mislead a prospect or customer.
- We talk on the phone with a smile.
- We call leads as soon as they come in.
- We listen and ask questions before presenting.
- We provide value with every interaction.
- We know our product and our competition cold.
- We have practiced and know how to answer any objection.

Sales Management Homework – Bring this to your team and together develop your own list of core values.

1. ________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________
5. ________________________________________________
Week 32 – Using calling scripts.

If you’ve had your sales reps use calling scripts then you probably have heard them moan and groan. “I don’t sound natural.” “I sound like I’m reading from a script.” “People hang up on me when I read from a script.” All of that is true if they are not properly instructed how to use the calling script.

When a sales rep cold calls a prospect they have to sound confident, relaxed and knowledgeable. The way you sound knowledgeable is to know what you are talking about. With a calling script, knowledge comes from repetition. Don’t just give a sales rep a calling script and tell them to start calling people. They need to practice the script out loud until they don’t need it. This can take 10, 20, or 50 times. However many practices it takes, that’s how many times it needs to be done.

Once they can recite the calling script from memory for you exactly as it is written, tell them to recite the script in their own “style” without missing any of the key points. This is when the confident and relaxed parts of the call are developed. This is how the calling script will sound natural.

I’m a proponent of calling scripts. They insure consistency of message and require product knowledge. I am also a proponent of delivering them professionally.

Sales Management Homework – Nobody wants a call from a robot. If you use calling scripts try using the method above.
Week 33 – The write way.

Want to make your life easier? Start writing email templates for your sales reps and put them in your Sales Playbook. Write them for all parts of your sales activities.

- Introductory emails.
- Follow up’s to voice mails.
- Appointment getting emails.
- Thank you emails.
- Etc., etc.

Keep editing the emails until you get the best results for each one. Using email templates ensures consistency and a best practices approach to communicating with prospects and customers. Oh yeah, make sure your sales reps use them.

Sales Management Homework – Start writing and start earning.
Week 34 – I got your back.

Sometimes you need to do things for your sales reps that are more emotional than statistical or measurable. You may have a rep that is:

- Struggling to make their quota.
- Not developing accounts to full potential.
- Going through a sales dry spell.
- Reacting to a good, calculated risk that didn’t come out well.
- Dealing with tough personal issues.

If your sales rep is going through any of the above, or similar issues, and they are a good sales rep that you want on your team, step up and help. Let them know you are on their team and will help in any way you can. Sometimes bad things happen to good people, and good sales reps. You may also be getting pressure from upper management about your rep. You need to cover their back while they get back on track.

Of course there is a time limit to everything. I am not suggesting that you let this behavior continue indefinitely. Have a meeting with your sales rep. Empathetically listen to him or her, develop a plan and set a timeframe you can live with to see improved results. Above all, let ’em know you got their back.

Sales Management Homework – To do this task well takes good coaching skills. It also takes courage and a willingness to get involved and help someone that needs your help. It’s an awesome responsibility but it can bring awesome results.
Week 35 – Just the two of us.

Sales meetings and daily training sessions are great for discussing areas that affect the whole team. You also want to schedule a regular one-on-one meeting with each of your sales reps. I think they need to be weekly. Even if your sales rep is remote, you should carve out time when nothing else gets scheduled.

The one-on-one shouldn’t last more than 30 to 45 minutes. Topics I suggest discussing include:

- Current month forecast.
- 90 day or quarterly forecast.
- How they are performing against their goals.
- How they are performing against their quota.
- New account development.
- Existing account penetration.
- Professional development.
- Personal issues your sales rep wants to discuss.

One-on-one’s are a great way to get insight into what each of your sales reps is thinking. Do your best to make it a non-negotiable time each week for both of you.

Sales Management Homework – A great resource to learn how to run a one-on-one is, www.managers-tools.com. Mark Horstman and Mike Auzenne are co-founders of Manager Tools and have done a great job with the site. They also have a wealth of other manager-related professional development ideas. Check it out.
In the position of sales manager, you need to teach from personal experience while letting your sales reps discover the sales process on their own. It’s a very tricky thing to do. You cannot appear to be a know-it-all/done-it-all parent. You need to point things out while the rep continues their own discovery and development. Here are few ideas to help you:

- Make calls with your reps watching and listening to you and then have them make calls while you watch and listen to them.
- Write sample emails for your reps, which are not already in your Sales Playbook of template emails, and then have them practice writing some of their own.
- Role play as many scenarios as possible; especially before “big deal” calls.
- Before you tell them how to prospect, question, qualify, close, etc., ask them how they think it should be done. You will have plenty of time to instruct. But, by letting your sales rep go first, you will understand where they are in the level of knowledge. It also conveys a subtle message that you are there to listen and help them grow.

You want to be a role model for your sales reps. Not their assistant. Teach them how to fish.

**Sales Management Homework** – Don’t do for them what they should be doing for themselves.
Week 37 – Know the competition.

I really like watching American professional football. But what really frustrates me is when my team has a lead toward the end of the game and they start to play very cautiously. They start playing, “not to lose” versus keeping the pedal the metal to try and put the game out of reach. This is usually not a good strategy for the team for a lot of reasons:

- It takes you out of your rhythm.
- It leads to mistakes.
- It gives a message to your team that you might not be good enough to close the deal.
- It gives viewers like me high blood pressure.

If you sell a product into a market that already has a similar offering available there is going to be competition. Learn who they are and put together a competition folder for your Sales Playbook. Study the competition to find their strengths and weaknesses. Coach your sales reps on how to position your product’s strengths to win the deal. Then, teach your sales reps how to do the same as they come across any new competitors.

Too many companies obsess over the competition. I believe you need to know who the competition is and how to position your product to win. Always reacting to the competition is like playing, not to lose.

Sales Management Homework – Put together your competition folder.
Week 38 – Teach for beginners and professionals.

If you’ve ever been to preseason baseball or football training camp you saw something that all sales managers should see and understand. **The veterans go through all the basics just like the rookies.** There’s no skipping these steps for anyone. It’s because having these basics so deeply ingrained within that when it’s 4th and goal with five seconds left in the game, or it’s two outs with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 9th, there is no thinking. There is only reacting, guided by the constant training that has been done every day leading up to that moment. There are certain basics for every sport that needs to be reinforced and covered just to make sure everyone is dealing from a baseline of competency. It’s no different in sales.

As a sales manager you need to consistently teach the nuances of the game while drilling the basics. Don’t let your senior reps moan and groan so you let them out of training for the day. There is nothing in any of our games that doesn’t need a constant refresher. If nothing else, the seasoned reps can help train your junior people and lead by example. It’s actually a very good way to see which reps have leadership potential. To get maximum results sales training needs to be delivered on a consistent, regularly scheduled basis. Here is a tip if you feel you’re just repeating yourself during your training sessions: Apply any of the training lessons in this course, even the basic ones, to a current sales opportunity or problem. It will make the training more relevant.

**Sales Management Homework** – Get your team prepared so when it’s 4th and goal for you, there’s no thinking – just winning.
**Week 39 – You need to be positive too.**

Show up every day as the most positive person in the office. No excuses. If you’re a sales manager, it does not matter what happened today in your personal life. When you walk through the office door you need to leave it all behind. Act, if you have to. If you don’t, and you act grumpy or irritable, your team may think they did something wrong. Aside from just being negative and unpleasant to be around, your sales reps will not want to bother you. Then, unfortunately, they will shy away from bringing you issues and opportunities.

Part of your job is being the cheerleader in the office. Be Mr. or Ms. Positive. That doesn’t mean you’re always happy-go-lucky or always joking and laughing. It means:

- You always look for the positive in every situation.
- Greeting everyone in the company with a smile and a will-do attitude.
- Saying thank you when someone says or does something good to you.
- If you lose a deal, you spend a few minutes grieving and move on to the next deal. (Up to 30 minutes is allowed for big deals.)
- If you don’t have something nice to say about someone, don’t say anything at all.

**Sales Management Homework** – List three things you can do to be a more positive person in the office.

1. __________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________
**Week 40 – I never had to do a thing.**

Two of my sales reps came into my office with a bit of a dispute over which rep owned a particular account. I will spare you the details. I actually cut their “presentation” short and asked, “What do the sales rules say?” I was told this one was in a gray area. I said, “Okay, if you two cannot figure this out, I will. However, you will have to live with what I say regardless of how you interpret the rules. And that includes me giving the account to another rep.” They looked at me and each other with an expression of, “What did we start?” Within five minutes they had a solution worked out. I never said another word.

You need to be a sales manager. Not a baby sitter. If you’re doing your job correctly you do not have time to baby sit anyone. You need to develop a team that is very competitive, but built on friendly and fair competition. You want sales reps that can work individually and function well in a group. Here are a few things to help you:

- Have your sales rules written and very detailed. I went back after the meeting with my two reps and looked at how our sales rules applied to that situation. It could have been interpreted as a bit of a gray area so I put more details into that particular rule. Sales rules must be firm but flexible.
- If the issue is not a severe offense or a case where a company policy was broken, offer your sales reps the chance to work out their disagreement on their own. I say this with a note of caution. Sometimes a disagreement can get personal or ugly. Stay close to the reps as they work on the issue to make sure this does not happen.
- Reward the successful negotiation. Let the whole team know what happened and that you are glad you have a group of professionals that act like professionals. If you praise this behavior in public, you will see more of it.

Disagreements and personality clashes are going to happen. Your job is to create an environment that when a problem does arise, your team sees it as a slight distraction and gets back quickly to the job of making sales.

**Sales Management Homework** – No babysitting allowed.
Week 41 – Give them feedback. Immediately.

I worked for a manager once who never let me know if I was doing things right or wrong unless I asked or until it came time for my review – which I also had to demand. It was a very frustrating experience. During my review he would say things like, “Remember two months ago when you turned that account around? That was really good.” Uh, maybe I remember. Could you be a bit more nebulous please? Or, “It would have been good if you could have helped mentor some of the junior reps.” Well, it would have been good if you let me know, then!

**The most single import aspect of feedback is that it is given right away.** As soon as you observe something positive, negative or that needs an adjustment with your sales rep or team, gather your thoughts and have a meeting as soon as possible. Every minute, hour or day you delay, the effectiveness of your feedback diminishes.

When it is time to give feedback, start like this (in private):

“Graham, can I please give you some feedback on <issue>?” Deliver your feedback on what you observed and what you believe *should have* happened. Then ask, “How do you feel about that?” If your rep wants to improve and become a top selling rep, they will acknowledge the feedback and that will be the end of it. If they do not acknowledge that the feedback you’re giving is accurate or correct, then you need to ask why and dig deeper. After the meeting…and this is important…follow up with written notes.

Time usually works against the sale. Time always works against providing feedback.

**Sales Management Homework** – Make it a point to deliver feedback to your sales reps ASAP.
**Week 42 – Releasing a sales rep.**

When it’s time to release a sales rep, in most cases, it should not be a surprise. I say in most cases because the sales rep may have done something like lie to a prospect or customer, which should result in them getting fired on spot. If you have a sales rep who is not hitting the quota or goals you have set for them, and you’re considering releasing him or her, here is what I suggest:

1. Put them on a written performance improvement plan. This gives the sales rep a fair shot at making it and hopefully they will take turn things around and become a star. The performance improvement plan, at a minimum, should include:
   a. What the goals were for that sales rep and how the rep did against those goals.
   b. What the goals or quota are that the sales rep needs to meet before the next deadline.
   c. A plan to help them succeed with coaching, training and mentoring.
   d. You letting them know that if they do not meet the requirements you are laying out, they will be released from the company.

2. If they do not succeed through the performance improvement plan and you need to release them:
   a. Handle it the way you would want to be treated.
   b. Don’t go into a lot of detail. The performance improvement plan should have said what needed to be said about the process.
   c. Keep it short.
   d. Check with your Human Resources department for anything else to say or not to say.

Releasing a sales rep is never a fun or easy thing to do. I have always believed however, that when one door closes another door opens. Hopefully, you will end on good terms with your sales rep and they will walk through a better door for them. If you have done everything you can to help them succeed, that is the best you can do.

**Sales Management Homework** – Put together your own performance improvement plan template.
**Week 43 – Uncover what motivates each sales rep.**

If you tell your sales reps, whoever makes quota gets a new set of golf clubs; it will mean nothing to any of the sales reps who do not play golf. If you are trying to motivate someone with a reward, that person has to really want that reward.

I have learned that overwhelmingly, sales people like cash as a reward. So, I would always make cash the primary motivator. That said, there are a lot of fun and creative things you can use as rewards to get the best out of your team; dinners, trips, entertainment, sporting events, etc. There is a good book that can give you some ideas called, “1001 Ways to Reward Employees”, by Bob Nelson, Ph.D. Whatever you choose, make sure it is meaningful to the person competing for the reward. If you are in doubt what that reward might be, just ask. I guarantee they will tell you!

Tip – Try offering a reward in which your sales reps’ spouse or significant other gets to share the prize. Talk about motivation!

**Sales Management Homework** – Get Bob’s book. Then get specific and creative.
Week 44 – Catch them doing something right.

One day I was walking by one of my sales rep’s cubicle when I heard, “Rebecca, if I can get you an expedited installation, and I don’t know that I can, will we have your business?” Wow! Someone had put into practice what we had been learning. I stood there until my sales rep hung up. Then, I gathered all the sales people in the office around his cubicle and had that sales rep, who just delivered that great closing, describe the call he was just on and repeat the closing for the group. This may sound a little over the top, but that’s how you build a team of winners.

Praise the behaviors you want to see again. Praise them in public. And praise them enthusiastically. For the rep, nothing is more motivating than to be lifted up in front of their peers. Especially by their boss! It reinforces the behavior you want to see. It also motivates your other sales reps who want to be lifted up in public, as well. Keep your eyes and ears open constantly. Look and listen for your team doing something right.

Sales Management Homework – Sharpen your awareness of what’s going on in the daily activities of your sales reps so you are ready to catch them doing something right.
**Week 45 – Working with the numbers people.**

Everyone at your company has a job to do. It’s easy to lose sight of that on the last day of the month or quarter, when your customer said they would have their order in to your sales rep by the end of the day. It’s 5:05 PM and your accounting department wants to go home. Did I mention the order you’re waiting on throws your sales rep over quota and puts you into bonus commission territory?

All departments within a company are interdependent. You might not think you need the finance and accounting departments, but just try doing it yourself. And, of course, they wouldn’t have a job if you didn’t sell something. It’s about mutual respect and building up a “gratitude bank account” with each other.

Do nice things for people in all departments. If you stay at the company long enough, you’ll probably work with all departments to some extent. When the time comes that you do need them to stay late, you’ve got some appreciation built up and you can withdraw a little.

You need to be the one to nurture this relationship with the other department’s members more than your sales reps. Other than turning in invoices or similar simple tasks, you should probably be the contact between accounting, finance and your sales reps. When commissions are on the line, cool heads need to prevail. You need to be the manager.

**Sales Management Homework** – Go make a few gratitude deposits.
In *The Funnel Principle*, a book authored by Mark Sellers, you get a step by step approach to putting together and organizing your sales funnel. I highly recommend reading it and putting the BuyCycle Funnel™ principle into action. It should also be a part of your Sales Playbook.

My two big takeaways from the book are:

1. Prospects proceed through the funnel (their buying cycle) based on their actions and commitments, not where you think they are in your sales cycle.
2. Incorporate measurable milestones that, based on those prospect actions and commitments, move them through the funnel.

Below is a sanitized sample of a sales funnel I have used before.

**Sales Management Homework** – Start putting your sales funnel together.

The BuyCycle Funnel is a proprietary sales model created by Mark Sellers.
Week 47 – Keep your reps out of the support department.

If you’ve got a high performing sales rep, chances are they hover over all parts of the deal. They aren’t comfortable with other parts of the organization getting involved. It’s really a double edge sword for a top producer personality. On the one hand they want to have complete control over the sales process. On the other hand they know they need the support people to make sure the customer stays happy.

It’s very similar to the Entrepreneur’s dilemma – They want to grow a huge company, but they think they can do all the jobs in the young company better than anyone else. It may be true, but the company will never reach its full potential unless the entrepreneur surrounds himself with people smarter than him in different areas of the company.

You need to have a conversation with your sales reps and explain that they cannot reach their full earnings potential without giving up some control. They can make sure the other members of the team are following up and doing what needs to be done. However, your sales rep needs to let them do their jobs.

Sales Management Homework – It’s a double edge sword for you, too. You want to have that kind of initiative in a sales rep. But you also want that rep to just stick to selling, which goes contrary to that type of success-driven personality. You may need to run interference and be the one to monitor what’s going on in the account between your reps and your other departments. Whatever your involvement, make sure your team understands the importance of spending the bulk of their time in front of the customer. That’s how they will earn the most money.
Week 48 – Don’t write that email.

Most sales people will let you do as much as you are willing to do for them. Be careful. It’s natural to think, “I can just get it done faster.” Unfortunately, if you fall into this trap, you are being negligent in one of the most important parts of your job — teaching and coaching your sales reps to succeed on their own.

When we would be in a difficult or competitive situation, I used get sales reps asking me to write an email to a prospect or customer. What I told them was this; “You write it first, and then send it to me. I will add my two cents to it and send it back to you. You look it over and then send it to the prospect or customer.”

For a while they would grumble and walk out of my office. Now, they hardly ever come to me with this request. And their emails are looking pretty good!

Sales Management Homework – You are not doing anyone any favors by doing their homework. It’s time to stop.
Week 49 – Make your training sessions rock.

Going through a sales training lesson every day will increase your sales reps’ numbers by simply following the instructions in each lesson. But there is something else you want to get out of your daily sales training sessions. You want everyone to leave after those 33 minutes and run to get on the phone or off to a client site. You want them to leave those sessions smiling, laughing and most importantly, pumped up.

In addition to the daily lesson, try to include success stories from recent deals. Have your sales reps step forward and crow a little bit. This is good for them and it’s good to have your other reps hear about success. Recognize and praise all the victories.

A training company I worked for had a bell on the sales floor, which I like. However, when I first got to the company, the sales reps were only allowed to ring the bell if their sale was over a certain amount of money. I thought this was not a good idea and I changed this right away. So what if the sale was small?! The sales reps liked ringing the bell. It feels good.

Sales reps enjoy sales excitement and it may just stir up a little of their competitive juices. You want to encourage that behavior. The bell says, “Keep selling.”

Sales Management Homework – So, as you prepare for and approach your daily sales training session, think how you can make those sessions rock. List three things you can do to pump up your team.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________
Week 50 – Sometimes you gotta kick 'em in the pants.

You can’t always be Mr. Nice Guy. Pick up the players when they need it. And give them a kick in the butt when they need it. That’s what a good coach does. A good sales manager develops a close professional bond with each of their sales reps. You need to keep an eye on the ebb and flow of their production and their attitude. You have to let them know:

“Selling is a tough mental business. It’s not always easy to be 100% everyday. I say that’s virtually impossible. Everyone needs some slack. However, you need to be aware of when your rest time is over and when it’s time to get back in the game. Winning a marathon comes to those who stay in the race. So, relax when you are off work and bring your A Game when it’s time to work. You can do this. Let’s get going!”

Sales Management Homework – Write your own motivational pick 'em up speech.

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Week 51 – Correct the behavior, not the person.

I learned this lesson by parenting four children. They needed to understand that if they did something wrong and they were reprimanded for it, I still loved them. It was the particular behavior that was wrong, not them as a person. Sales people are no different.

When one of your sales reps makes a mistake or does something that needs correcting, make sure you target and phrase your feedback at the behavior, not at the sales rep.

Bad - “Bob, you were stupid for calling <customer> and asking for an order before warming them up with something of value.”

Good - “Bob when you called <customer> you just dove in and asked for an order. A better approach is to first warm them up with something of value to them and then ask for the order.”

The difference is where your feedback is directed. Always think about the behavior you want corrected or enhanced. If there is something you do need to address that is personality-based, save it for your one-on-one. Even then be careful. You are not there to be a therapist. For example; if you have a sales rep with a negative attitude, during your private sessions put it on your agenda to discuss their attitude. If they get your agenda ahead of time and see that item on the agenda, they may bring it up first and acknowledge it. Then they start the conversation. If they don’t bring it up you say, “Kay, I’m sensing some negativity in your attitude and I’m afraid it’s affecting the whole team. We need to put a plan in place to turn it into a positive attitude. What suggestions do you have?” By phrasing it this way, you separate the attitude from the person. This helps keep Kay from getting defensive. Plus, this phrasing also puts the ball in Kay’s court to create the solution.

Your job is to build a fiercely competitive, well-trained, winning sales team. It sometimes requires the best parenting skills you can muster.

Sales Management Homework – In the heat of battle, you can be tempted to say things you may regret. Remember, it’s not about them personally. Correct the behavior, not the person.
Week 52 – On the up-and-up.

I got my first job when I was 10 years old. It was summer of 1962. I worked at a hot dog stand preparing and serving hot dogs, fries, cokes, etc. Now, I know for a fact that I asked customers, when they only ordered a hot dog, “You want fries with that?” before I heard it anywhere else. I’m not taking anything away from McDonalds or saying that it wasn’t their business model that was the mother of upselling, which spawned a huge industry. I’m just saying.....

No sales training course would be complete without a lesson on upselling. I put this lesson in the sales managers section because this is a place where you can make your best margins and profits. Upselling has even become a word in the dictionary... and yet as of this writing... Word still won’t believe it’s a word and keeps putting a red line underneath it.

Just about every product has additional or associated products that can be added to the original purchase to increase the value of the sale. They key to making it work for you, is when and how to offer it. First, the original product (the hot dog) must be completely sold in the customer’s mind. When they have mentally committed, you can say something similar to the following:

“Most of our customers who bought <your product> also purchased <your added product> and got <benefit of added product>. Can we add that to your order?”

Although, at 10 years old I think I remember saying, “Aren’t you getting fries?!?” Everybody else gets ‘em and loves ‘em.” It’s more fun being a kid.

Sales Managers – Upsold products can be pure profit. Your customer has usually paid for the “cost of goods” with his primary purchase. Don’t let your sales reps forget the fries.

P.S. The hot dog stand’s name was Hershey’s Hot Dogs. It was on Dempster Street in Skokie, Illinois. If you lived in that area around that time and ate at Hershey’s, please send me a note on your experience. And how you liked the fries!