

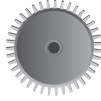


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**On Sales**

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## Care

It's a simple concept but few recognize it or actually apply it to sales or business in general: care. You have to care about your prospects. Care about your clients. Care to be interested. No, not the fake kind that comes across as awkwardness on the receiving end. I'm talking about the authentic kind. Actually be interested in your prospects and clients. Ask questions. Take some time to study their sites to clearly understand their companies and where they may need help and where you may fit in.

Too many salespeople clearly care about only one thing: their commission to fatten their pockets. The truth is, that is the longest and hardest route you could take. Instead, focus on genuinely caring about your prospects. There is a reason, purpose, or need that they are trying to handle or resolve, which is why they called you. Care to find out what that reason or purpose is. Understand it. Ask questions. Problem solve with them to help manage it. Get excited about them and their company and focus on helping them attain their goals faster. Be genuine and care. This is your fastest route to actually making a sale.

It's difficult to express this one factor in writing; all I can really tell you is that you have to care genuinely about prospects and clients enough to be truly interested in

them and focused on helping them. Care enough to have engaging dialog, even if it goes off track, leading to topics such as family, travel, or life—care to listen, care to be interested, and care to genuinely help. Believe me, it will come across to your prospects and they will love you for it. It will also make your job and your day that much more interesting. You want faster sales? This is the way. Care.

### **Pipeline Comes before Sales**

While discussing the importance of talented salespeople with my partner, the conversation turned to that critical element of the sales process that comes before sales and that most people neglect: developing sales opportunities.

If you head to a local bookstore today, you'll find many books on selling, sales technique, sales motivation, best practices, and so on, but you will rarely find a book about successful methods for developing strong interest from the correct audience to create the initial sales opportunity.

Having trained and competent salespeople is obviously vital for any company, but don't neglect the sales prospecting actions to fill their pipeline. You can have the greatest salesperson in the world working for you, but if you lack people to sell to, the salesperson is wasted. Focus a huge amount of your efforts on driving new prospective clients to your sales team so that they can work their magic and do what they should be doing: selling and closing new business. You can never have too much in the pipeline, so jam it full of new prospects.

## **Sales, Selling, and Getting Your People to Sell**

What role does sales play in your company? Have you recognized the fact that every person and every opportunity provides another angle to sell? Let me clarify. Sales is intertwined into every aspect of your company.

You need to sell your products and services to your target market. You then need to sell and keep selling your own people internally on the value of your company, on the task at hand, and on your new clients, which motivates them to get the job done and carry forward what was sold. You then need to get people in your company to sell to your clients, your prospective public, and other employees to constantly carry your company forward.

Although there are many posts and titles in any company, everyone has a role in selling. A smile to a new client walking through the door sells. A welcome e-mail to a new client sells. A follow-up call to a client sells. Everyone in the company plays a role in selling either to cultivate new business, to cater to and maintain current clients to ensure they are happy and are constantly sold on your company, or to keep the team focused and motivated. The executive team, managers, and the chief executive officer (CEO) alike all sell the people of the company on the goals, future, mission at hand, and their specific tasks to motivate people to get the job done. Sales is a vital and central part of your company and is by no means isolated to simply bringing in new business. It is, after all, simply earning someone else's agreement with your viewpoint.

Keep this closely in mind and review every aspect of your company if you want to stay competitive and grow your organization. Lose sight of this, and you will lose the game. Sales is a companywide sport. It takes a team approach, and everyone must be aware of the rules of the game.

### **Saying No and Walking Away**

There is a saying in business that goes like this: “Sometimes the best deal is the one you didn’t make.” In other words, it’s the deal you turned away or left on the table that saved you money, time, and your sanity in the long run. It’s always tempting to take on every single deal that comes your way in business due to the lure of possible profits related to it, but I would advise you to look closely at every deal to ensure that the prospect fits your criteria and that the deal will truly be profitable for you.

This may mean that if something doesn’t feel right about a deal, the prospect is being difficult at the outset, or it’s outside of your core competency, then you may need to get up and walk away from it for the sake of your company. It most likely will be for the best, saving you and your company huge amounts of wasted time and effort, not to mention money.

One of the most profitable angles in business is knowing who your target public (or audience) is and who is a desirable client to take on and who isn’t. If you can peg who isn’t, you will avoid 90 percent of all headaches for your company. The ability to spot problem children early is a vital tool toward a growing and profitable company. Sure,

you may end up leaving a few perfectly good deals on the table, but you don't need to worry about that. Focus on isolating the deals that don't fully align with your goals, purposes, and policies; I assure you that by doing so, you will ultimately be more profitable and much happier.

I have found that the very clients who fall just outside of our core public in one way or another try to actually sell us on taking them on when all of our instincts and observations are indicating that we shouldn't. Every time we have violated our policies and our instincts we have ended up unhappy about it later, so my advice is save yourself the headaches and weed out the possible problem clients early. Don't be reasonable about this. Be ruthless about it. There are absolute hordes of new business out there; why waste your time with the deadwood?

If you currently have problem clients who fall outside of your core public or don't qualify in one way or the other, do yourself a favor and resign them. Move them off the line and focus all of your best talent, time, and energy on your key clients to ensure they are happy and being serviced well. Take good care of your qualified clients and work to add more just like them. Do this, and you will see the overall morale of your company improve. At our agency, we try to take on clients who fit our target public exactly and have products or services we like. We also try to work only with people we like, and if a client is difficult or rude to our people, we simply resign the account and move onward and upward. Give it a try. It can be very liberating and empowering, and it will ultimately speed your expansion and success.

## The Art of the Follow-up

These days people are busy . . . busier than ever. This isn't to say they are more productive than ever, just busier. They are on iPhones, checking Facebook, downloading apps, juggling work tasks and projects, trying to keep their heads above the ocean of e-mails, handling personal problems, dealing with company problems, and the list goes on.

Call it dispersed or distracted or even disorganized, but whatever the case, your communication to these busy people is not impinging or getting a response. Before you get too discouraged, realize that these same daily distractions are diverting your message and causing chaos, which is part of the reason you are not getting a response.

Too often I see salespeople burn deals they are working on simply because they have "followed up," not received a response, and therefore assumed the deal to be cold or dead. Although this seems logical, it isn't. You must keep clearly in mind the ever-present reality that people are busy and easily distracted.

Your job is to be organized for yourself and your prospect, to follow up diligently over and over in order to stay on the prospect's radar, and to continue to interest the prospect until you have received a response and can move the deal forward.

You can follow up by phone, e-mail, LinkedIn messages or connection request, Skype, Facebook, Twitter, or anything else. Just focus on (politely) getting yourself in front of the prospect to remind him or her of your dialog until a commitment is made to devote some time and energy to whatever it is that you want to discuss or propose.



I apply this approach and consistently receive comments of appreciation for my diligent follow-up because, without it, the prospect would have forgotten and moved on to one of the zillion other tasks being juggled. I don't say this to toot my own horn but rather to point out that although it may sometimes seem like the prospect is not interested, the person may simply be too busy or distracted to respond. So always be diligent and follow up until your prospect is ready to discuss; this will dramatically improve your sales.

### **The Sales Team's Role**

Out of all of the actions your business development team or sales team should be working on, attempting to find new business and/or prospecting is not one of them—that is, not if you want to increase production and sales. Every person is different, including salespeople. They have different methods for going about things and how they manage, work, and produce. I haven't seen one salesperson who has a steady method of developing consistent new business. Salespeople need to focus on selling and closing new business, as well as on following up and catering to current clients who potentially will purchase again.

The vital daily and weekly tasks of a salesperson should include:

- Handling new prospects to sell
- Making phone calls or scheduling meetings
- Traveling to meetings
- Following up with prospects or clients

- E-mailing or writing letters to prospects
- Creating and sending proposals
- Closing deals

Prospecting to develop new potential clients should be done either by a separate unit within your company that supports sales or by an agency. It's unproductive to have your sales team spend their time trying to find and develop new prospective clients with methods that may or may not work, because it results in lost sales opportunities with the people in their current pipeline. The truth is, most salespeople are not very good at it and don't really like it anyway.

By using internal resources to maintain a very full pipeline or hiring an agency to do so, you will improve productivity and cut out wasted efforts for your team. Focus on filling their pipeline with qualified new prospective business and keeping it full so that they can spend their time selling and closing new business. It will make your salespeople happy, and you'll ultimately be happy as well since this will certainly increase your profits.

## **The Tough Part of Sales**

Making your company's products or services known to the correct target public to gain interest and reach has traditionally been the most difficult part of sales. How do your prospective clients find out about your company? How do you make the initial contact or the initial introduction to cultivate interest?

Times have changed. The things that used to work—going to companies door to door to get an appointment or

cold-calling a specific prospect to try to get 2 minutes of their time—are not as effective as they once were. New rules of business etiquette have interrupted these strategies. People are busy and don't want to be interrupted by uninvited visitors or random phone calls.

We have experienced over and over that the name of the game is relationships and making smart introductions to the right people. The online world and, more specifically, new media have created an avenue to replace old systems of making introductions and building relationships with new ways that are generally acceptable in this day and age.

You don't have to e-mail blast 1,000 people to hope for a response rate of 1 to 2 percent; you need to make only one connection—one introduction to the right person with the right message to penetrate and gain interest and reach.

The methods of reaching out to prospective clients and making your company a known quantity as well as sparking interest have changed. Successfully adopted and used correctly, they will dramatically change your sales as well. Again I refer you back to the new media equivalent of the Golden Rule: send only the exact type of communication that you yourself, as a busy executive, would like to receive. Always remember, there is another “you” on the receiving end of every communication.

## **Asking**

Since our agency is completely focused on business development, relationships, and ultimately sales, we end

up studying and discussing the topic frequently. This then brings up the topic of asking and its importance in sales.

You can do virtually everything exactly “right” in a sales cycle, but if you don’t ask, you won’t close. It’s that simple. It’s so ridiculously simple that it’s one of those things that it seems everyone should know, do, and apply, but most don’t. I’ve had plenty of people attempt to sell me products or services and never ask me, which invariably results in me not buying. I’m sure you have as well.

Think it over. On your last sales cycle, did you clearly ask for the sale? If so, how many times? If not, why not? People seem to hesitate when it comes time to ask for the sale. It seems to be an awkward moment for all involved, but if you practice it enough and do it enough, it becomes second nature. Many sales cycles seem to go very well—the prospect is interested, you have a great discussion, the person needs or wants what you are selling—and yet the deal doesn’t close. You follow up and still the deal doesn’t close. Perhaps the follow-up goes something like this: “Hi, did you get my proposal I sent over? . . . Great . . . well . . . I was just following up with you . . . mmmm hmmm . . . Okay . . . any questions? . . . Great . . . Okay, I will follow up next week . . .” If you don’t ask, you won’t close. It’s that simple.

Ask as many times as it takes to close the deal. If you ask once and the answer is something like, “We still need to look at . . .,” no problem. Don’t take it personally; handle that point and then . . . you guessed it . . . ask again. Ask and ask and ask until it’s done while handling

any objections and concerns along the way. Don't back off. The client has an interest and wants to buy the product. In fact, you do your prospect a favor by asking and closing the deal. People are not very good at selling and closing themselves. A skilled salesperson who is an expert at selling, asking, and closing business is actually a pleasure to deal with. It's the ones who drag their feet, are hesitant, and can't control the cycle that cause the awkwardness associated with the sale.

Here is what I want you to do: for any deal you are working on, try asking for the sale this week. Just ask your prospect. Come right out and say, "Listen, I want you to get started on this strategy this week. Let's start on this today." Or say something similar to directly ask for the sale. Trust me, this will change your sales for the better for you and your prospects. They want to be asked, so ask them!

## Long Sales Pitches

Here's the deal. If it takes a long time to pitch, then in the words of Ben Affleck's character in *Good Will Hunting*, "Ya suspect."

Whether it's a long e-mail or sales letter, Web page, or video pitch, if it's too long, you're leaving money on the table. In other words, your deletion rate or rejection rate is very high. Keep it short, punchy, and sweet. Focus your message and don't waste people's time. Get to the point and concentrate on impact. You're absolutely kidding yourself if you think people will read an e-mail that's a page in content.

If it's an e-mail, keep it to a few lines with a link to where you want people to go or entice them to reach out to you for more information. If it's a video, keep it under 2 minutes. People will look at the time frame of the video and generally won't even watch it if it's much longer than 3 minutes; conversely, we have found that less than 2 minutes is powerful.

People are busy. People naturally resist sales, not to mention lengthy pitches that take up their precious time. Again, think about the kind of pitch you yourself would be willing to sit through. Sales is a strategy sport. Be brief. Cut to the point and focus on your audience's needs or wants in a short punchy way and your response rate will go way up.

### **If They Were Sold, It Would Be Done**

Every salesperson at some point has gotten caught up in the moment and excitement of a sale, and every salesperson has also learned the painful lesson that it's not done until it's done.

So many times salespeople trick themselves into saying and believing that the deal is done. "They're sold!" says the confident salesperson. Are they? If they were sold, it would be done. Contract signed. Paperwork in the door and money in hand. Has the check cleared your account? That's sold. That's done.

If a prospect is completely and utterly sold on your offering, he or she will close immediately. If the prospect doesn't close (as in done, done, done), there is something

lingering—some thought, some reservation, or doubt that must be handled to conclude the cycle and actually make the sale. Believe me, if the prospect has not signed, it's because he or she is not fully sold. Figure out what is stopping the person from signing now, handle it, sell all the way through, and then close the deal . . . today.

### **Decide for Them**

In sales, there comes a point when you have to ask for the close in some form or fashion. This can be a somewhat awkward moment for many people. Some make common mistakes at this point and experience regret immediately after hanging up the phone or leaving the meeting, often thinking, “Oh, dammit, I should have said [insert brilliant line here].” Yes, it's happened to all of us. You get to the point of closing a deal right then and there and you ask the client to make a tough decision: “Would you like to do this or that?”

You're making your sales life harder than it needs to be. Here is what I want you to do: make the decision for your prospect. Tell, rather than ask. There's a tactful and smooth way to do this, and it works. Rather than saying, “Do you want to pay by check or corporate card?” say, “We will bill this to your corporate card and e-mail the receipt. What are the card details?” Make the decisions for your prospects so that they don't have to. Believe me, you save the prospects' time as well as your own. The prospects prefer it this way as well—fewer decisions, less hassle, fewer things to think about.

Give it a try. For any situation that may require you to ask for a decision, instead make the decision on behalf of the prospect to handle it right then and there. You will find that this speeds up the sales cycle and improves the overall close percentages, not to mention reduces work and effort for you and the prospect.

### **Hold Your Position**

In sales, you can frequently be knocked off your position by your prospect, which can lead to no sale. What I mean by this is that sometimes the prospect will push you on a negotiation point that you attempt to handle and cater to, only to realize that this didn't close the sale.

Bending over backward and trying to cater to every request from the prospect will not close the sale. You must have the ability to hold your position and stay true to what you sell and what you can or cannot do. Use tactful communication to steer the conversation where you want it to go, and then handle objections rather than just buckling to them. It's okay to say "no." In fact, it can be an incredible negotiating and sales tool to simply say, "I'm sorry, but we can't make that work. But here is how we can address this . . ." Or simply walk away from the deal if you can't handle the concern. As strange as it may sound, you would be amazed at how walking away from a deal can be a powerful tool to actually closing the sale. Many prospects will reach back even stronger after you have walked away from the negotiating table. In other words, they are now more interested and begin to pursue



the deal greater because, for some reason or other, that's how human nature works.

The key point here is to stay strong on your position. For example, if the price of an item is \$1,000 and the prospect wants it for \$900, you can simply say, "We can't do it for that price, but the truth is, the market price for this is \$2,000 so you are already getting the best possible rate. And because you're dealing with us, we will provide a best practices guide at the end to assist you with this, which will help you dramatically improve sales from this service . . . "

With the preceding example, you hold your position while selling to the prospect and conclude the deal with a value add. Be smart about how to handle each situation and keep in mind that buckling under pressure from the prospect's demands will not help you make a sale. You're better off holding your position and using tactful communication to steer the deal toward the desired outcome.

### **Time to Cut the PR and Hit Them Straight**

There's a point in the sales cycle when the sales pitch, song and dance, and public relations (PR) need to end and you need to come right out and hit the prospect straight. Let's say, for example, that you are selling to a prospect and you have done the dance. You have fully sold him on the product or service. You have answered his questions. There really isn't anything else to do except ask him for money. Many times, it's awkward for everyone. But, if you're good, it doesn't have to be. This is

where many salespeople fail and leave deals hanging, sometimes resulting in a lost deal. They continue on too long with the sales pitch or dance around the close, making comments such as, “Hi, John, just checking in to see if anything is needed.” It’s just constant PR with no end in sight and it doesn’t help anyone. At that point, you should come right out with a clear comment or statement that will conclude the deal such as, “John, we have talked about the service and everything is exactly what you need right now, so let’s get started. Here is what I need you to do . . . ” This makes it 100 percent crystal clear that you are now selling and closing the deal. Take charge of it and walk it through till it’s a done deal. If the prospect is still dragging his feet, address it: “John, this is the right move, so what do we need to do to take the time out of this and get this rolling now?” Be as direct as possible without the PR hype and without trying to walk on eggshells. Don’t dance around the issue. Be direct and straight and make it very clear with your question that your goal is to close the deal. I see a lot of salespeople really mess this one up by never actually getting up the confidence to be straight with the prospect. It’s key to drop all sales talk or PR and simply ask for the order in the most direct fashion possible. The prospect in many cases actually needs you to do this. Prospects won’t close themselves, you know. You have to do it, and in order to do it, you need to hit them straight, be direct, and come out and say exactly what you want to say in order to close the deal. Trust me: this won’t blow the sale; this will close it.

## **Taking Money Is Good for Them**

In sales, it's easy to back off from the prospect when it comes time to collect the money because it feels awkward. People do very strange things when it comes time for them to hand over the money. They may drag their feet or come up with every reason in the book why they can't do it right now. I don't know why this is, but from what I have observed, people are a little crazy on the subject of money. You can't pay any attention to this. Don't get distracted by the foot dragging, excuses, objections, and so on. Know and be confident that they got to this point because they are interested and want to buy the product or service. They just need to be handled and guided in a direct and firm manner through the process of exchanging the money so that they can get what they want and you can collect the money to close the deal. But know this: taking money from prospects is actually good for them. Once you have taken the money, here is what happens:

1. They are immediately relieved and happy that they have made a decision and now have the product or service you sold them. For example, say you are selling an \$800 Apple iPad but the person is in the middle of an argument with herself ("Should I? Shouldn't I?") and begins making up all sorts of reasons why next week would be better for her or why she should think about it first. You push through this and close the deal. I can guarantee you that the second you have closed and handed her the new iPad, she will be so excited to

use it that she'll probably open the box and start playing with it on the chairs outside your store. Believe me: she won't for 1 second think about the \$800 she spent. In fact, she will be happy she spent it and will probably brag to her friends that she got the "more expensive one." It's human nature. So work toward the finish line and get prospects to turn over the cash; they'll thank you for it.

2. They will immediately go into a sort of emergency mode realizing that they just spent the money and now will need to go and replenish their funds or pay off a bill to cover it. This is actually a good problem for them. People are driven by necessity. When you close a sale and take the money from the prospect, that person will now start to work toward handling that "problem" and by doing so will typically create more than the amount needed. In other words, if you closed a \$5,000 deal with a prospect, he will go into emergency mode to replace the funds or cover the funds and therefore go and hustle to make it back. People are not very good at estimating the amount of effort they need to exert, so there's a pretty good chance they will overshoot what is needed and ultimately make more than what you closed them for—maybe \$10,000 instead of \$5,000 in this example. You'd be surprised how many times I have seen this happen. It's one of those unexplainable phenomena. Again, it's human nature.

So do your prospects a favor and push them through that awkward moment of having to take the money from

them and just keep focused on the close. It's good for them. They need to spend the money because they must need or want the product or service you have. Otherwise, you wouldn't be at that stage. They require a boost of necessity to fuel their production to kick things into high gear. This is better than any motivational seminar you could send them to. And those speakers charge a fortune, so don't feel bad taking funds from your prospects—feel good about it. They will too. The product or service you are selling them has real value. The sale itself is a recognition of that, for you and for the customer.

### **It's Your Consideration or Theirs**

There are only two things stopping any sale—I promise you that. Let's start by defining what a consideration is:

Careful thought, typically over a period of time.

So, that's all we have—a thought that moves things forward or stops things. We all know the power of the mind and thoughts. Now let's apply that same power to sales. The things to handle then are the thoughts from the prospect or the salesperson. Let's start with the salesperson. The salesperson can have thoughts that act as barriers to the sale; for example, a salesperson may think, "The price is too much for the prospect." This salesperson won't be able to close the deal. She doesn't have the confidence to pick up the phone and ask for the deal. She feels she is pestering the prospect. She doesn't want to

fail, so she never tries. There are a million such thoughts that can cross the salesperson's mind, each one capable of actually stopping the sale, so you have to know with 100 percent certainty that to get the salesperson to boost sales, you have to start by managing her thoughts. From there, all other sales training, techniques, and methods can work. But without handling the negative thoughts, nothing else will work.

Then, on to the prospect. You need to handle the prospect's thoughts in order to close the deal. But first, what thoughts is he or she having? You need to become an expert at finding out what the prospect's thoughts are, and you do this by getting him or her to voice those thoughts. In other words, you need to ask questions that will get him or her talking and the questions need to be directed at getting him or her to communicate the item that is stopping the decision. This is the way to close the deal. You need to get the prospect to communicate with you so that you can ask questions to tactfully work out what thought is holding back the close. Ask questions. Get the other person talking. By engaging in dialog and asking the right questions, the prospect will eventually tell you what's causing the barrier for the sale, which then opens the door to a quick and effective handling and a closed sale in the door.

The very first thing to handle, though, is not the prospects but the salespeople. You need to ensure that they don't have thoughts that are hindering the sale. Once you can ensure they aren't talking themselves out of sales, then you can work on the prospects' thoughts.

Ultimately, just know that it's only their consideration or yours that is the barrier that is stopping the sale. Mind over matter is never truer than in sales.

### **Sales Is a Game of Intention**

Sales is a game of intention. At Richter, we apply intention in everything we do, including selling. It's ranked above everything else, even technique. Intention will get the deal done even when technique is out. You have to intend for the prospect to buy. You have to believe in the product or service so firmly and know that it will help the client's company so completely that your confidence that the prospect will buy comes across on the phone or in person.

We sell from the viewpoint that we work for our clients' companies. In other words, it's as if we are internally working at their companies and we are strongly recommending that they get this product or service because we believe it will improve the company. We deliver the sales communication with that intention.

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines *intend* as:

to have (a course of action) as one's purpose or objective; plan  
design or destine (someone or something) for a particular purpose or end

And *intention* is defined as:

a thing intended; an aim or plan

So, you must have intention for the prospect to buy. When you're hit with objections or considerations from the prospect, you can take them lightly, laugh them off, and say, "Joan, the reason I am pushing this a little is because I know it will work. I know what we do works, and once we get past the part where you're buying, you will too. I want you to buy and be a client of ours so we can help expand your company. I'm very confident in what we do, and I know we will have a huge impact on your sales. That's the reason and that's why I want you to get started today."

Care about prospects and their companies as if they were your own. Sell as if you are selling something you truly believe in and believe your clients need to invest in. Have intention and drive the sale to completion, with that intention channeled through all possible stops and barriers until the sale is done. People buy on intention, and it will outperform any technique, method, or smooth talking all day long. Intention comes from the gut and the heart, not the head. Sell with full intention, and your numbers will soar.

### **Considerations Bog Sales**

If you have ever experienced a sale that seems to come to a slow halt and moves into waiting mode, it's likely due to a consideration that has not been handled by the sales rep. In other words, the prospect has a concern that your product or service won't handle the company's problem or has some other concern about it that he or she isn't telling you.



You need to find out what those concerns or considerations are so that you can address them. The second you can get the prospect to tell you what they are, you can then move to sell and close the deal, but up until that point, it's basically dead in the water.

Once handled, the cycle can go from something that was quickly becoming a future cycle or possibly a killed cycle, to one that happens now. It's a massive time-saver.

A great way to handle this is to e-mail the prospect and ask him or her point-blank, "Is there any consideration or concern you have that I haven't gone over that would prevent you from moving forward. Let me know so I can help." Then once you have gotten the feedback, handle it with whatever is needed: a case study, a client testimonial, a video that really sells the product, a phone call to walk the prospect through the process—whatever it may be that will handle the consideration. The point here is that you need to know what's stopping the person from moving forward first. From there you can handle it. But don't attempt to handle something when you don't know what it is that you're trying to handle.

### **Order Taker versus Salesperson**

Sales is a funny game. In my opinion there are two kinds of people in sales: order takers and salespeople. An order taker is someone who waits for prospects to walk through the door, calls them, e-mails them, and then simply defines what they sell and handles the order for prospects as needed—that is, he or she essentially makes the sale

only when prospects sell themselves. A salesperson is someone who actively works the deal; handles prospects' concerns, objections, and considerations; and makes the deal happen. A salesperson makes sales happen. An order taker simply facilitates a sale.

Being an order taker is easy. Being a salesperson is challenging; it takes discipline, skill, confidence, and control to make deals happen. Salespeople are rare. Order takers are abundant. Make a conscious choice to be a salesperson and then really decide in your own mind to become a *pro*. Study everything and work your deals to make them happen. Focus on the steps that need to be executed next and then go execute them. Write down the considerations, objections, or concerns; come up with a solution; and call the prospect to handle them. MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. Conclude deals and push cycles to a done status. Salespeople control cycles to cause the outcome they want, and they push each step forward until it's done. Don't use the word *wait*; that's for order takers.

If you want to win in sales, be a salesperson not an order taker.

## Two Comments on Sales

Here are two points that are critical for sales:

1. *Fresh Lineup*: Always, always, always make a fresh lineup the night before. A lineup is composed of the active sales prospects you're working, including the associated revenue (the dollar amount), company name, prospect

name, and next steps needed to close the deal. Review your overall lineup for the week and then write in a notepad the prospects that you intend to close deals with the following day. When you get to work, you can simply open your notepad and begin. Don't do anything else outside of working that lineup to sell and close them. Once done, work the rest of your lineup for the week or handle new prospects. Even if you have a lineup for the entire week, you need a new fresh lineup for each and every day that details what deals will be closed that day, and it needs to be created the night before so you're prepared and ready for each day. This action alone will drive sales like crazy. Make it a habit.

2. *Hustle after Affluence*: Never get relaxed after an affluent week or day. When you have a big week or day, you need to throw things into high gear rather than becoming complacent. Stay hungry. You were successful because you worked your tail off the week or day prior. Keep that same level of action to make it happen again. If you let things slide, you hurt yourself and the group, so be committed and disciplined and avoid becoming lax. Push yourself to *always* beat your personal best. Never be content. Never be satisfied. Maintain this attitude, and you will really flourish.

### **Additional Sales Tips**

A few points brought up at a sales meeting were so on point that I was compelled to write them down to study, know, and apply:

1. Don't spend too much time on small deals. If the deal isn't closing and the prospect seems to be dragging his or her feet, be as upfront or outspoken as you can. For example, call the prospect and say, "I can understand why you may be taking your time to decide on this, but I wanted to stress that this service may just be the element in your sales strategy that helps loosen things up to create some new income that allows you to expand. And this price is not going to cause the company any harm, so let's move forward on this." This is just an example, but the point is, hit them between the eyes and work to close the deal right there. Your time is valuable and can't be wasted on small deals that take a long time to close. Focus on being fast and to the point on the smaller ones; then work to close the larger deals.
2. Focus on the *next steps*. In other words, name the immediate next step in the sequence of actions to take for each deal. Don't just say, "Well, I need to call them or e-mail them." That's a given. We know that. But what do you need to *do*? What action will you take when you call the prospect? Does the prospect need a proposal? Do you need to handle his or her consideration about *x*? Focus on the next step, clearly name what it is, and execute it.
3. Be proactive and send a proposal to every prospect. Don't wait for a prospect to ask you for one. If you have an idea what level of service or product you need to sell to that company, proactively create the proposal and send it with an e-mail that reads, "John,

I sent a proposal for the [product or service], which is what I recommend we do. If you're ready to get started, simply sign it and send it back and we will get the process rolling. Thanks!" Every prospect in your pipeline needs to have a proposal. If they don't, get them one today.

## How to Fill Your Day

Being in sales, you need to run yourself. In other words, you need to manage yourself. You need to be disciplined and keep yourself on track daily and push yourself to attain higher levels. A sales manager can help with this, but the truth is, the best salespeople run themselves hard and push themselves to hit new highs.

Here is a list of things you should be filling your day with in order to be productive and attain sales consistently:

*Sending Follow-up E-mails:* Review your sales lineup every day (not just hot prospects but all of your prospects) and send follow up e-mails. Make them smart. Make sure they communicate to prospects. Don't send some bland follow-up message. Do this daily.

*Making Phone Calls:* Call everyone on your sales lineup to work the deal forward. You are trying to push the deal to the next step in order to close it. Again, be smart. Figure out what to say. Call everyone you can think of. Review all prospects: hot, cold, warm—it doesn't matter. Just stay on

the phone with people. Have conversations. You should spend 80 percent of your time on the phone. Figure out how to keep yourself on the phone. Do this, and you will have a lot of sales and be consistent.

*Booking Appointments:* If a prospect cannot speak now, book an appointment, set it on your calendar, and send the person a calendar invite. The more overall appointments you have, the more opportunities you will have to be on the phone to close sales.

*Daily Planning:* Either the night before or first thing in the morning, make a plan that names the targets for that day and clearly names the lineup for sales. Be prepared. A big part of sales is being organized and clearly naming the targets for the day. Make a clear plan and focus on executing it daily.

*Prospecting:* If you are not in the middle of an immediate cycle, spend time daily prospecting. Go online, find companies that may be a fit, and e-mail or call them. Or look through old prospects or past client lists and reach out to those you haven't spoken to in a while. Do this daily, and you will be inundated with business.

*Learning about Your Prospects:* Take some time to study up on the active prospects you are working. Go to their sites and see what they do. Then you can get a few ideas for what they need and what to sell to them.

*Studying:* Read sales books or sales material to get better at your craft. If you're not doing this, you'll

be left behind in skill and competence. The best salespeople study all the time to learn everything they can to help refine what they do or remind them what works. You can never know it all, so don't pretend you do. Be smart and continue to read and educate yourself to get better at sales.

It's easy to get lazy in sales and wait for things to come to you or fall in your lap, but the truth is, sales happen because you make them happen. That's how it works. So nail these points, and you will have consistent numbers week in and week out. Remember, in sales, you can create whatever you want incomewise; the only barrier to attaining your goals is you.

### **Causative Sales**

Through hard-won experience, we have found a few key operating bases for sales. Sales is a game, much like a sport, which means you have to play to win and play from a competitive advantage. As long as you are absolutely sold on what you are selling and you are sold on the idea that the prospect actually needs it and will benefit from it, then you can apply the following points aggressively to win more sales.

Here are the ways to apply speed and control to increase the number of deals closed:

1. *Never deal with "vias."* In other words, don't let a middle person on the sales cycle sell for you. Sometimes you are dealing with someone in the sale who is

not powerful enough to make a decision and must go to his or her senior, boss, or CEO. Don't let this occur. If you are selling to a via (middle person), control the cycle to set up a phone call or meeting where you attend when the via takes the proposal to his or her boss or the person responsible for making a decision. This will give you an opportunity to sell the deal right there, handle objections, and close the deal. If you allow the via to sell for you, there is a pretty good chance the deal will be lost. Don't sell through vias; sell with them to the decision maker to control the cycle and make sure it is clearly sold, duplicated, and closed. Selling through vias is sloppy.

2. *Never allow a multitopic meeting with your proposal to be "one" of the topics to discuss.* If the prospect says, "We are going to have a multitopic meeting to discuss the proposal and make a decision," divert the cycle to suggest an A-to-B phone call or meeting specifically about the proposal to save them time and you time by keeping everyone on the same topic and able to address the points and answer all of the questions, objections, and so on, in one call or meeting. This is a much more effective and desirable method. Justify this with the prospect by saying something along the lines of, "Meetings tend to deviate from the main goal when there are a lot of topics. And it's pretty common for questions to come up, which means we will need to meet or have a call anyway, adding time for both of us. We have found that it's best to simply have a call dedicated to the one topic of the proposal. That way



we can explain everything in a fraction of the time.” The bottom line here is to stick to your internal sales flowchart and keep the deal on track and in your control.

3. *Never believe a prospect who says “next week.”* There is no next week, ever. “Next week” is a procrastination move and stall tactic used by many prospects. In business, time is of the essence. Time is your enemy, and speed is your friend. Make the cycle urgent and control and steer the cycle to ensure that whatever needs to happen, it happens this week. Your goal is to make a good deal today because next week, or tomorrow for that matter, never comes. If a prospect suggests next week, ask what happens next week and then propose an idea like, “Tell you what, our CEO is in town this week, and I’d like to get him to weigh in on this cycle. Can we have a call first thing Thursday morning with you and anyone who needs to be on the call to answer any and all questions in one fell swoop?” Make the cycle urgent and put the control back in your court to get the cycle completed. This alone will close more deals simply by taking the time out of the cycle.

Figure out how to control your sales cycles and apply speed to get deals done, and I assure you the preceding three points will help you close more deals, faster.

