

# SALES AND SERVICE Excellence

THE MAGAZINE OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

MARCH 2011

**Faces of  
Intention**

**Reclaiming  
Resiliency**

**Seven Traits  
Of Top Sales Pros**

**Tom Hopkins  
Consultant**

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# Sales and Service Excellence

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SALES/TRAITS

## Seven Traits

*Of the top sales pros.*



by Tom Hopkins

**Y**OU NEED TO WORK AS HARD on yourself as you do on your job to achieve success. Make selling your hobby as well as your career. Develop the habit to *observe human interactions*—everyone is *selling something!* Note their demeanor and their words. How is the prospect responding to their style of delivery? Are they asking questions, spouting information, or giving orders? How might they have said or done something differently in order to succeed?

Tuning in to every encounter provides you with ideas for better selling. When you listen to the radio, pay attention to how each ad spot makes you feel. What words are being used? What emotions are being evoked? If you write down a Web address or phone number from an ad, think about why. Is it because you need that service—or does something in the ad appeal to you emotionally, logically, or rationally? Keep a notebook with you to jot down ideas on selling. Once a week, think about how to incorporate those ideas into your selling situations.

Here are my observations of *the seven traits of the top sales pros.*

**1. They are on a mission.** Top people work for something beyond the financial rewards. They have something to prove. Perhaps they're inspired by a success story of someone else. Or they find a mentor who sees something more in them than they see in themselves. Some are motivated because they were once told they were average and that ignites a spark in them to be different, to be more, to excel. Yet others work for



a greater cause and find the sales profession as a means to an end. They say, "I commit to learn more so I can serve more. Thus, I will earn more so I can build my financial net worth. Then, I will arrive as a Champion and give more." Having a sense of purpose keeps you going when the going gets tough. What's motivating you? If the

answer is "providing for my family," that's fine. But what do you get out of providing? Is it a sense of honor and achievement? Do you enjoy what you do—or just pay the bills? Do you find serving others rewarding beyond the financial aspects? Do you love what you sell? Always represent a product that you love and believe in. People buy from you based on your belief and conviction about the product.

**2. They are detail oriented.** They pay attention to details and operate like a business. Being disorganized is a huge obstacle to sales. Examine your desk, your briefcase, your files on your computer. Are they well organized? Can you locate pertinent product information and complete contact information on each client at the click of your mouse? Do you have organized files? Is your paperwork complete? Do you track your sales statistics or have someone you report to who does? Or are you a piler? Do you have stacks of industry magazines or new product brochures sitting around that you haven't gotten around to reviewing? Do you use a calendar for planning activities beyond meetings with clients and sales meetings? If you are not well organized, start today to handle details as they should be handled.

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3. **They are empathetic and focused on the potential client's needs.** Empathy is the capacity to understand another's feelings, to walk a mile in someone else's shoes—but not necessarily to get their blisters. It differs from sympathy in that when you are sympathetic to someone else's situation, you are physically and emotionally affected in a like manner. With empathy, you remain who you are, in your natural emotional state. You have the ability to understand their fears, needs, and concerns without experiencing them yourself. When you sell in an empathetic manner, you help your potential clients envision how they can get from *where they are* to *where they want to be* because of your product or service. You're not an outside force trying to act upon them. You see their challenges through their eyes and help them to see your solution through those same eyes. You help them answer the question, "What's in it for me?" Selling is not about *what you want to sell*. It's about *what they need to own*. You must attend to what they say and do, and to how they explain the situation. Listen to what their biggest frustration is. Show them how your product handles that need. Then go into other features and benefits in the order the client wants to hear them.

4. **They are goal oriented.**

They write down *who they want to be*, and *what they want to have and do* in the next 30, 60, and 90 days. They set annual sales goals, and goals for where the family will enjoy their next vacation, what they want as their next vehicle, how many clients they want to serve this year, and when they plan to retire. How do you achieve your goals? You break them down into manageable parts, put them on your "to do" list, and schedule time to fulfill them. Once you see that *activity* breeds *productivity*, you'll start achieving all the goals you set for yourself. Do certain activities regularly to generate new business: Identify new clients, cold-call leads, arrange and confirm meetings, prepare presentations, give presentations, close sales, send thank-you notes, make follow-up calls, service accounts, in-house paperwork/reporting, ask for referrals, receive referrals, send information (email, postal mail, or fax).

5. **They have a follow-up plan and keep communicating.** Communicate with each client *at least six times a year*. Set aside one morning next week to call clients. You don't need to sell them anything. Simply call and say, "John, this is Bob with Acme Products. I was thinking of you this morning and just wanted to check in to see if you're happy with the service we're providing. If you have any questions or concerns about (your product/service), please tell me." You could

deliver the message live if the client answers the phone, or leave the message on voice mail, and say: "I can be reached at (your phone number) weekdays between nine and noon if you need to talk." Mix up the types of contact you make. You might send an e-mail or a handwritten note, put some information in an envelope and drop it in the mail, or even fax a friendly message to your clients. Let them know you care to stay in touch and continue to educate them about your product with helpful information.

6. **They handle challenges promptly.** This includes returning calls as quickly as possible, researching the details of what caused the challenge and finding creative ideas for resolving them. No one wants to face an angry client. Yet delaying a response to their challenge will only create more challenges. Don't feel that you have to have a solution before you contact them. It's better to get back to them quickly to gather the details or just to *listen to them vent*. Once calmness and clarity reign, you can provide solutions. The better you are at resolving challenges, the more your business will grow—by referral.

7. **They present themselves with calm, humble, and competent demeanors at all times.** No one wants to buy from someone who's on an emotional, physical, or financial rollercoaster. It doesn't matter if you're at the top of your game

or at the bottom. No one outside of your inner circle should be able to tell if there are challenges in your life. You need to come across as positive, competent, and calm, reassuring your prospects that they are wise to be talking with you, wise to be considering ownership of your product, and wise to be making a decision today. When you make clients feel important and help them make wise decisions, they'll want to help you in return, hopefully by giving you referral business and buying from you again.

**If you are facing a sales slump, start your spring training.** Refocus on the basics of selling. Think about when you were new to sales. What did you do? You were likely laying the foundation by gaining product knowledge, talking with others who were doing better, attending meetings and training classes, and making tons of calls to potential new clients. Add some of those activities into your schedule. Look upon a sales slump as a rebuilding opportunity. The new skills you acquire to overcome a slump and the resilient attitude you develop will serve you well for the rest of your career. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Start your spring sales training.**



# Winners and Losers

What are the top 10 differences?



by Stuart Morley

**H**OW IS IT THAT SOME 100-year-old companies fail in this economic downturn while other younger companies like Apple, Facebook, Wal-Mart, and The Huffington Post grow? Likewise, many lesser-known, mid-sized companies have failed and others have thrived.

In this best—and worst—of times, many managers are reacting in fear, pulling back and struggling. There are **10 key differences** between thriving and floundering firms. Ask yourself:

**Are you sticking to your industry or crossing boundaries?** Struggling businesses try to copy the *big guys* in their industry and wondering why this does not work for them. Successful businesses seem to ignore the big guys and focus on current and prospective customers. They find opportunities at the overlap of two or more industries. They try to follow the example of companies like Cirque Du Soleil—combining elements of both the circus and the theatre in better venues than the average circus. **Are you looking for opportunities at the boundaries of your industry?**

**Are you focusing on economists or customers?** Embattled businesses watch and read about bad economic news trying to understand the mind of economists. Successful businesses also hear the bad news (it is everywhere), but they don't dwell on it—they watch and read about their customers and go to customer events, customer trade shows and customer seminars to better understand the mind of their customer. **Do you go to customer trade shows or events rather than events for your industry?**

**Are you focusing on price or value?** Some airline passengers pay 10 times the price of other passengers for the same flight. Service can be escalated based on value and delivered to some clients who would pay 10 times as much for the added value. Struggling businesses are stuck in commodity-type situations with little price flexibility. Successful businesses find ways to get price control and avoid competition because they articulate their value and use different ways to price their services. **How much control do you have over your pricing?**

**Are you talking to consultants and**

**industry leaders or to employees?** Many leaders devote much time to sitting on boards and committees, attending conferences, and talking to consultants and competitors—rather than talking to employees who are in daily contact with customers. The best businesses seldom send people to events in their industry. They spend more time reviewing employee surveys. **Have you recently asked employees about what customers are saying that could open the door to new products and services?**

**Are you preparing for best of times or the worst of times?** Struggling businesses cling to their existing products and services and focus on cutting costs to protect cash in the short term. These businesses assume things will only get worse. Successful businesses say they



are seeing more volatility and are having some of their best (and worst) months all in the same year; however, they focus on finding things that will help them in the good months and the bad months. They experiment with new product and service ideas. Most of their revenues today come from products and services they did not offer two years ago. **How much of your revenues and profits come from products and services you did not offer a few years ago?**

**Are you focusing on jobs or projects?** Dynamic companies have 80 percent of their employees spend more of their time on projects and only 20 percent doing routine work. Struggling businesses are caught up in traditional management hierarchies where employees are viewed as having routine job descriptions. Managers want employees to do the routine work faster, rather than find the next breakthrough opportunity. Successful businesses recognize and manage projects

carefully, since this is where they generate most of the new ideas and breakthroughs. **How much of your company is project-focused versus routine-focused?**

**Are you doing more or less?** We are so busy we tend to stick with existing methods because we seldom stop, reflect, research, and implement better methods. Struggling businesses add new work to employees' to-do lists. Successful businesses regularly find things to *stop* doing, so that employees can find free time to do new things. **What could you stop doing?**

**Are you standardizing or living at the edge of chaos?** Struggling businesses install new, complicated (computer-based) accounting, manufacturing, or supply chain systems—hoping this will solve all their problems. Such systems work well in situations where all the variables are known. Successful businesses avoid such systems because they are not in control of all the variables that impact their business. They use a range of smaller, flexible systems to track customers and trends rather than track employees and financial history. **Is your business complex or complicated?**

**Are you keeping your financials secret or sharing with employees?** In tough times, sharing the news, good and bad, with all employees, empowers them to act with confidence, as they know the whole story, and perform less like employees and more like entrepreneurial-minded, strategic partners. Hence, the success rate with the turnaround increases dramatically, especially when they also take time to celebrate successes, both big and small. **How much do you share and celebrate with employees?**

**Are you working long hours or taking more holidays?** Owners and managers in struggling firms seem to work longer hours in the vain hope that *doing more of the same* is the solution. Successful businesses focus on *doing things differently*. Their owners and managers work fewer hours and take more holidays (their best thinking is done away from the office). When times are tough, it is usually because customers are buying less. They seek answers to why customers are buying less directly from customers. **When last did you work fewer hours in the week or take an extra holiday?**

You can *thrive*, not just *survive*, in this “new normal” economy. You can turn the worst of times into the best of times by addressing these 10 questions. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Ask yourself these 10 questions.**

# Incentive Program

Attend to four key components.



by Jennifer Kallery

**S**UCCESSFUL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS engage and motivate people to achieve *shared goals*. Monitoring the program keeps it relevant. You need to evaluate, tailor, and manage an incentive program to drive participation and maximize efficiency, using *four key components*:

**1. Effective and targeted communications.** Ongoing communications that resonate with sales reps are effective in aligning your goals with theirs, resulting in *higher engagement and motivation*. Tailor messages to align with participant interests to capture their attention.

How do you know what will work? Design an *experiment*. Change factors and analyze *which options drive the best results*. Evaluate and revamp the type of communication tools, the frequency of messages, response rates, and the types of offers employees receive to learn *what will generate desired results*.

**2. Tracking key performance metrics—and adjusting the program.** This monitoring uses participation rates, engagement scoring, and progress against goals to evaluate your incentive program. Review *individual performance and objectives* before the program launch, and benchmark *participation and performance* during the program. Use *engagement scoring* to track activities relative to a goal. *Tailor messages* to individuals or groups to encourage program participation and improve performance. Engagement scoring is also a way to gauge when participants need *something extra* to get them to act.

*Reward issuance and redemption* is one performance metric that ties directly to individual goal achievement. Each segment (*veteran salespeople*, for instance) has a set of performance goals aligned with company objectives. The group is encouraged to meet or exceed expectations and earn rewards based on new performance. *Rewards should align with individual needs*. People will work harder to earn a reward that matches up with how they want to be recognized.

**3. Using non-cash rewards.** Cash rewards are typically less effective in engaging and motivating employees in performance improvement programs and create missed opportunities for you to build more meaningful relation-

ships with your sales team.

*Non-cash rewards are three times more powerful* than cash rewards (they require an investment of *4.1 cents per dollar of improved performance*, while cash rewards require an investment of *12 cents per dollar of improved performance*).

**4. Lowering program administration and management costs to fund rewards and communications that engage people.** Reliable technology and administration are essential, and yet, for any sales incentive program, most program costs should be directly invested in strong design, communications and rewards to drive behavior change. This component relies heavily on factors such as economies of scale, preferred supplier relationships, a single technology platform, an enterprise view and transparency. For example, an enterprise approach can expand a

sales incentive program to incorporate more people, while lowering costs and meeting broader objectives. Likewise, using automated systems frees funding for value-added analysis, creative communications and rewards. Support services (such as *call centers* or a *customer-centric Web site*) can help your participants find answers quickly and stay engaged with the program. Evaluate what's best, based on the needs of the organization and participants.

A well-managed *sales incentive program*, with attention to monitor and evaluate against your goals, leads to more productive employees, increased sales and desired business results. **SSE**

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**ACTION:** Assess your sales incentive program.

## MANAGEMENT/GREAT

# Great Workplace

Look for seven hallmarks.



by Norm Spitzig

**G**REAT WORKPLACES HAVE seven characteristics:

**1. Clear mission and purpose.** They know *who they are* and *what their core purpose is*. They have a concise *mission statement* that is enthusiastically embraced by all. They identify factors critical to long-term success (*things they must do exceptionally well*) and a vision for the future (*what we will be in 10 years*). They develop *detailed action plans*, and *assign responsibilities* to achieve the vision.

**2. Forward thinking, creative senior management and a caring, well-trained staff.** Everyone, from the CEO to new hires, is committed to doing *whatever it takes* to ensure *ongoing success*. They attract people from *myriad backgrounds* and with *diverse, complementary skills* to benefit all stakeholders. *Individuality* is valued, but *teamwork* remains foremost.

**3. Meaningful work.** Employees are encouraged to do what they deem *meaningful* to them. As Malcolm Gladwell notes, work is meaningful when it is sufficiently autonomous, appropriately complex, and has a perceived *direct relationship* between effort invested (*time on the job*) and return (*compensation*).

**4. Reasonable, understandable, and fairly and uniformly enforced rules.** Rules and policies are neither *capricious*

nor *arbitrary*. They are not written in arcane language or to *prevent employees from doing something*; rather, they set standards to help all employees maximize their potential. The rules and policies reflect the *core values and expectations* of employees and customers.

**5. Blending of tradition and innovation.** While employees devote much time to *innovation*—they also value *tradition and continuity*. Favorite products and services are *continually improved* to benefit all concerned. All are proud of the company's origins and heritage—its growth, positive reputation, quality products and services, mission, and vision.

**6. Open communication.** Great workplaces have regular, honest communication with all stakeholders. Staff and customers are encouraged to participate in the company mission, vision, policies, procedures, and major changes and convey their ideas to leaders. Managers *walk around* to communicate openly, minimize problems, and communicate opportunities.

**7. Fiscal responsibility.** Great workplaces are fiscally prudent. They have detailed, *multi-year business plans* that feature accurate income and expense projections, conservative cash flow estimates and projections, and sufficient funding for key functions and product and service innovations. *Sustainability* remains a high priority. **SSE**

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**ACTION:** Cultivate these seven hallmarks.



# Right Customers

Define who they are for you.



by John Cioffi

**W**E ALL NEED CUSTOMERS, and we all must serve them in some good way.

And most of the time, we try to get as many customers as we can—thinking that's the way to build the business. Yet, some customers may be bad for our health—and our company's health.

You can't serve all your potential customers adequately, let alone at a high level of service, even with a group of multi-skilled and multi-functional co-workers. So, focus on a *specific segment of the market, or a certain type of customer, and learn how to serve that market in an exemplary way.* Otherwise, your search for growth and year-over-year profit improvement can lead to *acquiring customers who impede success.*

You need to ask, *What defines the right customers for us?* The answer will vary—you can't just borrow a list of attributes with confidence. Create a *list of characteristics* that describe your *ideal, or nearly ideal, customers.* This exercise asks you to match your *vision and capabilities* with the *needs and wants of your potential customers.* Realize that some folks just shouldn't be your customers.

## Two Compelling Reasons

There are two *compelling reasons* why some folks shouldn't be your customers:

**1. Your company simply may not be equipped to serve some particular customers to their satisfaction.** Some businesses ignore their own inability to serve particular customers to their satisfaction. They continue to work hard, committing to new client engagements, and continuing to fall short in delighting the customer and in generating profitable return business.

Cultivating *the right customer* is good both for you and your customer. Be *happy* to let other firms serve those who are not the right customers for you (be *delighted* to have those customers terrorize your competitors). For example, a well-known discount clothing chain uses this phrase as its tag line: "An educated consumer is our best customer". This phrase is both flattering and discerning. When we shop there, we like to think that *we* are indeed an

*educated consumer.* On the other hand, the tag line and the stores themselves also tell us that *we'd better be educated,* because we won't get much service. This is a place for *bargain hunters who know what they want* and find it without the help of highly-trained customer-focused store personnel.

**2. Some customers make demands on your firm that are unreasonably onerous.** Some customers are undesirable because *they make unreasonable demands* upon your firm. These demands may be intentional or not, but the results are the same: you are unable to transact business to either satisfy the customer or to generate a reasonable profit.

Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines, stated that not all customers were number one. For example, if a customer was abusive to his employees, the people he counted on to build the business, he'd ask the customer to go elsewhere.

Often we define *the right customer* as *one who gives us lots of sales.* In most businesses, 80 percent of the sales come from 20 percent of the customers. This 80/20 Rule is often used to identify our major customers—ones that we refer to as our *good customers.*

The converse is that 80 percent of our customers may account for only 20 percent of sales. We might think of these folks as our *small customers* who are of less importance than *the big boys.*

This may not be true. For example, we might have a big client, accounting for a large proportion of our sales, who makes enough demands upon us that we actually lose money, or make very little, on their transactions.

Similarly, a too-small customer may not be a good one if the costs required to process a sale lead to low profitability (transaction costs are too high). Conversely, the *too-small* customer may be a good one if the small initial order leads to a long-term profitable relationship, or if we can determine how to lower transaction costs.

**These examples illustrate the value of defining the right customer.** The characteristics of the right customer are specific to your firm—you'll need

to think carefully about the attributes that you value in your customers.

For example, the discount clothing firm mentioned earlier might list these characteristics for their right customers: frequent clothes buyer; likes shopping for bargains (price is important); likes to browse/shop without a salesperson (confident of what they want); needs minimal alterations (fits the standard sizes); likes brand-name clothes (especially if inexpensive); unconcerned about store ambiance (why should I pay for marble floors?); and willing to return multiple times to find the right thing (it's like a treasure hunt).

The staffing implications for this retail clothier are fairly obvious. They don't need a team of old world tailors and gentlemanly sales people with decades of fine clothing experience. They need a competent tailor, some savvy purchasing managers to find those bargain clothes, and some fast-



working floor clerks and warehouse folks to keep the merchandise moving. This results in a decades-long business that satisfies a distinct segment of the market.

Now let's contrast those characteristics with a firm that supplies critical-function computer services to other businesses. The list of right customer characteristics might include: depends upon us for quick response to problems; appreciates our high-quality products and services; willing to pay premium prices (price is not an issue); wants guidance and consultation on services; appreciates our frequent maintenance visits; likes having a strong relationship with us; and loyal—unwilling to shop around if receiving good service.

This firm needs highly skilled technical people who can act as *trusted advocates* for customers, be customer-focused, and able to deliver complex solutions fast. They need to be skilled communicators and strong relationship builders. This results in a business that can charge premium fees and assemble a growing list of loyal customers.

Defining *your right customers* enables you to create the right *strategies* and *processes* to acquire and satisfy those customers. These include ways in which you identify and target those customers, and how you sell to them and operate to satisfy and delight them. **SSE**

John Cioffi is author of 6 Habits of Highly Successful Managers. Visit [www.sixhabits.com](http://www.sixhabits.com).

**ACTION: Identify your right customers.**

# Shared Service

Establish a partnership.



by Johnny D. Magwood

**I**N A KEY MEETING, THE STAFF Unit in charge of customer services, including two call centers, asked the heads of the line units a transforming question: "Are you my customer, or am I yours?" The discussion was fueled by the fact that many in-bound customer calls were triggered by the field actions of the line units.

This question is asked by many staff units struggling with their role and relationship in an era when *accountability for service* is often shared or ambiguous. Traditionally staff units take direction from revenue generators—the line. As organizations seek to become customer-centric, ownership of the customer becomes muddied. While, the real customer is the external customer, what about colleagues who depend on the efforts of staff units? **The solution is not to improve the internal service model, but to pursue a different one—the shared service model.**

This model comes with *service level agreements* (SLAs) that focus on the arithmetic of relationship rather than the interpersonal side, often becoming a document for "got you's." The sharing is usually one of "we perform a service for you that is funded out of your budget." It tends to be more of an *accounting practice* (not a *collaboration*).

Traditional service focuses on confident deference. While we know that *the customer is not always right*, the orientation is *we do whatever we can to delight our customers*. After all, we need them to come back, spend more, forgive more, and advocate more. Applying that perspective to *internal service* suggests a *one-down, dependent relationship* with the servee—not partnership.

**Partnership is a marriage of equals with common goals and values but different skills and talents.** Partnerships communicate through conversation. "Let us reason together as equals" takes priority over "What have you done for me lately." In traditional service, internal units prepare a report and present it to the line for review and approval. When was the last time you heard a sales team say, "Let's share our plan with HR and get their suggestions?" However, that practice (*lively discussion*) is the nature of true shared service.

*Shared service is a philosophy of interdependence and collaboration.* It is one of: "We need you; you need us. We are in this together. How can we help each other achieve our collective goals?" *Contribution to the union* is reciprocal. In solid partnerships, there is an attempt to *include and communicate*.

**Expectations in a SSP are negotiated openly and collectively.** In the traditional *internal service approach*, the line dictates expectations to staff units. Or, the role is designed with *expectations legislated in the description*. Effective partners ensure that *nothing is assumed*. Issues like trust, control and power are debated as a path to clarity. These covenants guide the relationship.

Traditional staff units often plead the merit or urgency of their position. The orientation is *servant pitching to the master*. All partners may sell each

other on an idea or point of view. But, the starting place is not that of a sales person but rather equal players examining the pros and cons of a position.

**Partnerships focus on their mutual purpose or vision.** Maintaining the relationship is as vital as *clarity of direction*. When hiccups occur, they engage in candid confrontation to get the relationship back on track. Feedback is seen as *nurturance* rather than *critique*; advice is valued as *supportive*, not *coercive*.

**How units work together is often transparent to customers.** It serves as a peephole into *how valued the customer is*. Organizations operating with a *shared service (partnership) philosophy* mitigate internal bickering and silos, resulting in employee pride and customer trust. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Create a service partnership.**

## SALES/PROFESSIONAL

# Professional

It's spelled with 5 Ps.



by Jim Bain

**T**HE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN successful people and others is *not* talent—it's the guts to move forward, to take intelligent risks, to try, to work hard to become a true professional.

How can you move to the top of your profession? The difference between first and second place or success and failure is incredibly small. Hence, small improvements can make a huge difference. Focus on these five Ps:

- **Purpose.** Seek, and recognize, opportunities to serve others. You need to *contribute to something greater than yourself*. Your job is about providing a product or service to other people for their benefit. Your joy and success will come when you know that you have helped someone else out. You achieve goals as a result of serving others.

- **Preparation.** Be the best you can be! Read more. Learn something new each day. Listen, you might learn something. Keep an open mind. The time to prepare is before your opportunity comes. Once that opportunity has presented itself, it's too late to prepare.

- **People.** Surround yourself with *good people*. Your performance and reputation are often determined by the people with whom you align your life.



Bosses, co-workers, mentors, coaches, teammates, and friends all impact your success. Choose those people wisely, and be *fiercely loyal* to them. Show them you care about them by asking them about them! Listen to them. Care about them, and they'll care about you.

- **Priorities.** Focus on the fundamentals, and the results will take care of themselves. Start each day with a simple list of what you plan to achieve—today. Do things that contribute to your purpose and goals. If you don't have time to do it right, what makes you think that you have time to do it

over? Learn to adapt to change. Maintain a controlled sense of urgency. Being prompt, being reliable, and contributing to your team will ensure your success.

- **Persistence.** Maintain a *positive mental attitude*. Your attitude is a choice you make each day. Choose to be positive. Don't get bogged down in negative thinking. The *past* is just that—*passed*. The *future* is always a *question mark*. What, specifically, can you do today to continue toward your Purpose?

**Professional** is spelled with 5 Ps—*Purpose, Preparation, People, Priorities, and Persistence*. So, focus on your purpose; prepare yourself to take advantage of opportunities; make wise choices in the people with whom you associate; never lose sight of your priorities; and be persistent. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Be a true professional in your work.**

# Worn Out at Work

Purge behaviors that drain energy.



by Jon Gordon

AFTER TWO LONG, EXHAUSTING years of recession, you're tired, depleted, and finished with *business as usual*. You blame your fatigue on *increased responsibilities* and *long hours*. But you might be wrong. Working hard—when done with a good attitude in the right culture—can be invigorating. What's wearing you out might not be the work but the negativity of the people, their constant complaining, and the *pessimistic culture*.

You may work with *drainers* who suck the life and energy right out of you and poison the culture.

Here are my **top 12 draining behaviors**—and tips for *nourishing the culture*:

**1. The Energy Vampire attack.** Don't let *negativity* become your *go-to response*. There's nothing more draining than a boss or coworker who is *constantly negative*. These *energy vampires* are never happy or supportive, constantly naysaying ideas that aren't their own (you might as well give up before you start).

- *Respond constructively when someone offers an idea.* Even if you know more about a project, have more experience, or think that suggestions are off the mark, hear them out with an open mind. Insist that everyone practice *positivity*. An encouraging, optimistic attitude keeps creative juices flowing.

**2. The out-of-control complain train.** Whining has *catastrophic consequences*: One person's complaint resonates with someone else, who adds grievances, which prompts another to throw in her two (negative) cents. Soon, *everyone* is complaining, and any work that gets done is marred by a bad attitude.

- *Push for solutions.* Ask complainers how they would make things better. Or, ban complaints altogether to create and sustain a positive culture. Each complaint represents a chance to *turn a negative into a positive* and *turn employees from problem-sharers to problem-solvers*.

**3. The vicious voicemail (or email).** Don't leave critical or harsh messages on voicemail or send them by email. These critiques seem more vehement and condemnatory than they are. And they can last forever. Your words could come back to haunt you, and to remind your coworker of his shortcomings.

- *Suck it up and conduct the tough talks in person.* If you need to have a stern talk with someone, or talk through a conflict or problem, do it in person if possible. Ensure that your words and tone aren't misinterpreted. By talking about ways to improve, you can end the conversation on a positive note.

**4. The loaded Monday morning inbox.** Don't overwhelm your team with emails that dish out *dozens of to-dos*. Seeing an inbox of 57 new messages is draining.

- *Boil down and bundle communication.* Flag any urgent emails so that your teammates know which tasks to tackle first—and include some details so that 1) you won't forget them, and 2) recipients can get started. Combine tasks and questions into one document.

**5. The Busy Bee Bamboozle.** Don't confuse *activity* with *progress*. You might be busy but seldom get anything done.

- *Set goals and hold yourself and your employees accountable for results.* These results should be ones that *matter* and be visible and valuable to your team. Have a day-to-day plan to stay on track. Clear goals are easier to achieve.

**6. The low performer look-away.** Don't let sub-par work slide. Low performers drag down the rest of the team, create resentment, and generate more work for everyone. If you allow them to linger, your best employees will leave.

- *Institute a zero-tolerance policy for low performers.* Hold your team accountable for meeting goals and standards. If one person consistently misses the bar, take swift action. *Let your performers know that you value their hard work* and won't let others do less and get away with it.

**7. The Unclear Communiqué.** Don't assume people have all the information they need, or know what is important. Hasty conclusions resulting from poor communication lead to serious mistakes.

- *Ensure that the right people are in the know.* Copy the right people on emails, promptly return voicemails, and clarify directions and expectations. And if you say you're going to do something, *do it*.

**8. The disorganization drag-down.** Constant *disorganization* drains coworkers if they always have to cover your

tracks. Not being able to find a report for the third meeting in a row sets a bad example, and depletes others of energy.

- *Keep up with your tasks and responsibilities.* Think of better systems and processes. And when you *do* drop the ball, communicate—if you are humble and honest, people will be sympathetic and may help you keep things organized!

**9. The hasty plate clear-off.** Don't sacrifice quality on the altar of expediency. Moving through assignments quickly to get them off your plate can mean that you're piling work on someone else. When you rush, you're more likely to make mistakes and be sloppy.

- *Take the time you need to do a job right.* Do your best work the first time. Pay attention to details, check your work, and follow the proper guidelines. Your coworkers would rather have a project *done right* than *ahead of schedule*.

**10. The Chronic Deadline Dodge.**

Don't allow unmet deadlines to throw everything and everyone off-track. It's not always easy to meet deadlines, and sometimes it's impossible—but those times *for you and your team* should be few and far between.

- *Set reasonable, clear deadlines for everyone (and hold them accountable).* Set reasonable deadlines that you can

meet consistently to avoid setting folks up for failure.

**11. The unattainable atta-boy (or atta-girl)!** When responsibilities give you *to-do tunnel vision* and cause you to skimp on commendations, employees get discouraged—especially if you then ask about another goal that's gone unmet or push more work at them.

- *Express appreciation and admiration.* Leadership is not so much about *what you do*—as *what you inspire, encourage, empower, and coach others to do*. If people know *you can be pleased* and *goals can be reached*, they'll work toward them.

**12. The Blame Game.** Don't point fingers at others to take the heat off of yourself. If people think you don't shoulder your share of the blame or criticism, they'll shut down toward you.

- *Accept responsibility for your actions gracefully and humbly.* Owning up to mistakes and learning from them facilitate working together successfully.

A little acknowledgment can create a brighter, more productive, and more energized team and culture. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Purge behaviors that drain energy.**



# How We Can Start this dialogue.



by Bradley Ann Morgan

**W**E ONCE WORKED WITH A timber ecological group whose original mission was to reverse deforestation and create a hospitable environment for species forced out by 80 years of farming and 20 years of intense real estate development. Their CEO told us, "I thought we had a chance to make a difference. I was excited and ready to get to work. Yet, when I talked with my team about this venture, I only heard *why we can't*, not *how we can*."

You may have been in this situation. When the conversation comes to *creative problem solving*, the initial response is of *all the reasons why you can't achieve success*. The conversation turns from confronting a possibly thrilling endeavor to immediate doom. **How can you transcend this situation?**

Often when people are faced with challenges that prompt them to grow, they fall back into familiar patterns or safe behaviors. The first emotional response to far-reaching vision statements or solving global issues is fear. How can you present a colossal idea, tapping the *aliveness* in colleagues? Consider using these as possibilities:

- **Use simple language to state what the benefits will be in achieving the goal.** Each person decodes language use from their internal library, using generation, culture, gender, and experience to interpret the implied meaning. If your colleagues are not of the same generation and culture, they will wonder, what was the point of this?

- **Don't hold back your emotional connectedness to the vision, the project, or the venture.** People become energized by the vital force you present and what you will risk to realize your efforts in the final success. *Emotional intensity fuels campaigns for justice.*

- **Release your team from using conventional problem solving tools or rules.** Ask them to liberate their thinking without the fear of ridicule. Often innocent statements of the problem puts folks into a creative space where no flawless solutions are presented, but a combination of thought could be the steps to achievement.

- **Remove fear by requesting that participants walk into unknown territory.**

They may experience elation, pain, or confusion as they become sensitive to colleague's innovative expressions.

- **To help colleagues tap their innovative forces and become self-directed, find a place that facilitates multi-tasking** so that participants can observe, respond, scrutinize, and record their depictions of potential solutions.

When you want problem-solving sessions to begin with *how we can*, ask:

- **What is the new mission, project, or tight spot we're in?** Who are the recipients and how will the benefits change their condition or lives? What do we risk by getting into this venture?

- **How can you reframe any pain in the process of innovation** so that all understand that *excellence in achievement is difficult, but not impossible?*

- **How can you overturn one big objection to success, the fear of dis-**

**appointment?** Remember: *the first proof of concept may not be the final solution.*

- **Are colleagues committed to generate a new solution together?** What will be the guidelines of conflict resolution when one person pushes their one idea?

- **What exercise can your colleagues engage in for curiosity and courage,** igniting the idea of *what if, why not, or what can we create with what we have?*

- **What resources will you need,** such as departmental advocates to spread the mission or individuals to recruit employees for additional labor power?

- **How will you measure progress?** What will be the checks and balances on our activities so that we catch miscalculations in time to recover? **SSE**

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**ACTION: Start a dialogue of How We Can.**

## SALES/PROSPERITY

# Get What You Want

By using what you already have.



by Jack Nadel

**I**N THIS AGE OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT and financial distress, you need to know that your problems can best be solved by your own efforts. You have greater capabilities than you think you have, and many of these can be translated into cash in the marketplace.

**I invite you to rethink your skill set.** By taking ownership of your situation and by applying your skills to your needs, **you can turn your knowledge and strengths into a new revenue stream.**

If you have been downsized or forced into career transition, you can take control of your financial fate—and *use what you have to get what you want*. You can learn to sell, negotiate, make a product, service customers, and overcome setbacks.

I grew up in New York City's Lower East Side, a poor child of the Depression, but my business success parallels the American dream. I've learned that *self-motivation is the key to success for achieving powerful results.*

**You can cultivate power from within that becomes a part of who you are.** You no longer depend on outside forces to give you a better standard of living. Regardless of the economic news, the action of government, or the natural forces that oppose you, you



can build within yourself the capability to survive, prosper, and feel good.

**Since the rules keep changing, you need to constantly reinvent yourself.** The march of technology has rendered many old ways obsolete, *but core principles of doing business haven't changed.*

If you put your strengths into practice, success is in your grasp. You can retool your mind so that all the knowledge and skills residing in you can be put to work. *You are then reawakened to what is already inside you.* **Prosperity starts with a certain mindset and belief.**

You need to reboot your thinking by cultivating an opportunistic, entrepreneurial mind-frame and see the rich opportunities around you, act on your ideas, monetize relationships, and see your circumstances in a positive light. **Deals are like busses—there is always one behind the one you just missed.**

Now may be the best time to change jobs, shift careers, or launch a business. *I see opportunity regardless of the times, perhaps because of them.*

**Your problems can best be solved by your own efforts.** Translate your great capabilities into cash at the marketplace. You can carve new directions for yourself, working within your capabilities, and then *stretching beyond expectations.*

**You need a fresh mindset to succeed.** You must be open to believe *these ideas can work for you* and then absorb them so they become part of your fabric. **SSE**

Jack Nadel is founder of Jack Nadel Intl. and author of *Use What You Have To Get What You Want* (JNJ Publishing). Visit [www.ideasthatmeanbusiness.com](http://www.ideasthatmeanbusiness.com).

**ACTION: Use what you have; get what you want.**

# Training for Results

*Customers are not always right.*



by Joe Fontana

**T**HE OLD ADAGE—*THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT*—is considered by many to be *the golden rule of business*. Some think the term originated by Chicago department store legend Marshall Field, his employee Harry Gordon Selfridge, who founded Selfridges in London, or French hotelier Cesar Ritz who said, “The customer is never wrong.”

What does it mean to say *the customer is always right*? The concept behind the motto is that it’s in a company’s best interest to make customer satisfaction the top priority. Moreover, the phrase insinuates that when a customer is dissatisfied with the service or product a company provides—even if the complaint is valid or unreasonable—the company must remedy the situation.

*This notion is flawed: the customer is not always right.* Sometimes, they are just plain wrong, but by adopting *the customer is always right* motto, management is essentially telling its employees that *they are wrong*.

*Appeasing an unhappy customer, however, doesn’t have to mean choosing sides* over a loyal employee, or casting doubt over his or her actions. Just because *the customer is always right* does not mean *employees are always wrong*. In fact, siding with customers who are clearly out of line can lead to poorer service over time because it results in unhappy employees who feel undervalued. Eventually, they stop caring about service. Then, sincere, outstanding service becomes almost impossible.

*No employee should have to deal with abrasive or rude customer behavior.* Consider the case of Steven Slater, the JetBlue flight attendant who quit his job—after an altercation with an unruly passenger—by deploying the plane’s emergency evacuation chute and sliding down. Slater, a 20-year veteran, became an instant folk hero. His behavior, however, embarrassed the airline, tarnishing JetBlue’s reputation, and hinted at the discord in employee-management relations.

## Three-Part Solution

The three-part solution is to: 1) *support employees (put them first)*; 2) *proper-*

*ly train and empower them*; and 3) *teach them the art of recovery to remedy problems*.

**1. Put employees first.** Employees are happier, more loyal, and more likely to provide superior customer service when they feel supported and appreciated. Some say that JetBlue management failed to provide proper training for employees in handling disrespectful passengers, or neglected to show support to even its most loyal employees. Reportedly, Slater had been dealing with serious personal issues, including the impending death of his mother. Apparently JetBlue offered counseling for employees after the incident, yet there’s no indication that such support was available before.

**2. Empower employees.** The mindset of employees—and managers—when dealing with customer dissatisfaction is critical to ensure resolution. Minimizing the negative is not the only goal. Train employees that complaint handling is essentially a positive—the seeds of innovation. When a customer expresses dissatisfaction, he or she is showing company leaders where there is room for improvement. Positioned correctly, *customer complaints can motivate and spur innovation*. They provide a vital link between the *customer experience* and *business process improvement programs* that support *root cause* identification and resolution. Owners of the processes that cause customer issues should be notified of occurrences to prompt reexamination of the process design.

**3. Teach the art of recovery.** In teaching employees to value customer feedback, you are teaching them *The Art of Recovery*—a positive process that leads to higher customer satisfaction, greater customer retention, more loyal employees and customers, and positive word of mouth. Proper *recovery* is a learned behavior, and there is no better way to learn than by doing, like pilots log many hours of flight time before flying a jetliner or heart surgeons invest years in residency before performing open-heart surgery.

In addition to *hands-on simulations*, I use *Doubt-based Learning* to pique

the curiosity of participants by introducing—and encouraging—skepticism, rather than acceptance of conventional wisdom. Through novel learning concepts using a multi-dimensional approach and real-world immersion, the student is dispatched on a voyage that produces results that have a real impact on the job/in the market.

This technique teaches employees how to remove the wrongs perceived by customers, remain positive and enthusiastic, and eliminate guilt.

The roles of managers and employees become better defined. Managers learn how to better relate to employees, who then learn how to better relate to customers and feel better connected to the organization. Managers receive the tools they need to motivate their employees, and ultimately empower them so they feel a greater responsibility for the company’s success.

## Culture of Excellence

When you apply this three-part solution, not only are employees developing critical skills, they are also being inspired and motivated, and feeling valued as people. The time of *training for the sake of training* is over. It is time to usher in a new era of *training for the sake of results*. Start creating teams

of dedicated service specialists who are passionate about changing the way the company brands connect to consumers. When you train and retain long-term, dedicated and capable service employees, you can then drive your sales and success to new heights.

Again, *appeasing an unhappy customer* does not have to include *choosing sides* over a loyal employee, or casting doubt over his or her actions. The happy medium is to empower employees to remedy problems with customers. By teaching them *the art of recovery* through hands-on simulations, they can remove the wrongs perceived by customers, remain positive and enthusiastic accept greater responsibility for the company’s success. Customer-facing service providers not only develop critical skills, they are inspired, motivated, and feel valued as employees, helping to create a culture of innovation, continuous learning, and service excellence. SSE

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**ACTION:** Create a culture of service excellence.

## Tough Conversations

You can say what needs to be said.



by JoAn Majors

ONE REQUEST THAT GIVES you chills, sweats, even nausea, is this: "I'd like to see you in my office." Often both the one hearing and the one giving the news feel the discomfort and dread the moment. Sadly, this is how most people learn to deliver a tough conversation.

I find that starting with the right question and attitude can change everything about the encounter and outcome. **Four guidelines** enable you—whether you are timid or brutally honest—to offer unpleasant information while showing integrity and empathy.

**1. Ask permission to coach.** Starting with a question—and waiting for the answer—enables the other party to listen and participate at their rate of speed, and to choose to engage in the conversation. When you have an issue with a team member and need the person to listen and participate in actions that follow, *you must engage them in the process*. First, find something to compliment her on; then ask her for permission to coach: "Susan, you are a top sales rep. Do I have your permission to coach you in another area?" Susan will most likely say *yes*, and it gives you the freedom to discuss her tardy behavior. She is now involved—it is a *symbiotic relationship, not a reprimand*.

**2. Ask permission to be honest.** If Susan wants to address an issue or challenge with you as her manager, you want to maintain a good working relationship. Timing is important, and you don't want to make her look bad or foolish, so be discrete. Step into her office or schedule a time to go over her concerns. You might say, "Susan, do I have permission to be honest with you?" *Don't fill in the silence; wait for response*. Susan will respond with less concern about the outcome because you have been respectful in your request.

**3. Leave out limiting terms** when speaking to people about their habits, behaviors, or personal life. If you are discussing a sensitive area, you want people to like you so you tend to use words like *we, little, sort of, kind of*. Suppose Mr. Like-me manager says, "Susan, *we* have a *little* problem with your tardiness." Then Susan might think, if "*we*" have the problem, and it

is "*little*," don't call me! How about this, "Susan, there is a problem with your tardiness; I am concerned and you should be too." This enables Susan to hear the concern. Again, asking *permission to be honest* enables Susan to be engaged at a higher level cuts down on defensive mechanism.

**4. Assume innocence.** In tough conversations, don't use accusatory language, and don't assume you know everything about the individual or the behavior being displayed. *Assume innocence*. When you ask for permission to coach or be honest, presume that the other party has no idea there is an issue or problem. Just because Susan is habitually tardy doesn't mean she is doing it to disrespect you. She could have a dying mother or a medical problem. Susan could have an issue that only *you* should investigate,

especially if she has been a great employee up to this point. Even if Susan is not doing what is expected of her, assume innocence and ask permission to coach—and then ask if Susan can meet the request. Asking is the cure for misguided and bad relationships. If you wonder what is happening, then just ask. But when you ask, don't ask with an attitude—assume innocence and be curious, like a child!

Remember, ask for permission to coach and to be honest; use words that don't limit the impact of the information; assume innocence—and stay away from accusatory language. Focus on the fix not the flaw; this can help you encourage others to greatness! **SSE**

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**ACTION: Engage in tough conversations.**

## MANAGEMENT/TEAM

### Team Happiness

Focus on today's game first.



by John Grubbs

THE KEY TO HAPPINESS IS THE ability to *live in the moment* and *place less emphasis on both the future and the past*.

**Your obsessive preoccupation with the past and the future are burdens that limit your happiness.** Your stress over past events and worry about the future negatively impact your happiness. Your ability to *live in the moment* and *search for the contentment of the present* is key to deliberate joy and happiness.

In business, *the extremes are amplified*. Our need to learn from historical trends or undesirable events has made us more preoccupied with blame and perspective. We have difficulty confronting the brutal truth. *Communication has become more filtered*, and unfiltered honesty is very rare. Accountability is defined improperly, and trust is scarce between employees and their leaders.

Over-speculation about the future can be equally demoralizing. The emotional strain created by economic fluctuations can kill morale. The fear of recession and wasted energy over worrying about future possibilities that may occur kills productivity and profitability on the front lines.

The answer is simple in concept, but challenging in application. Emphasis on employee morale to derive enhanced

productivity is not revolutionary. Yet, most companies create a culture that reward managers *for activities that limit individual productivity* greatly. Most organizations do not consider the collection of individual morale as the cumulative output for the organization. Many corporate policies destroy the happiness of the team. The most demoralizing policies are blanket and zero-tolerance policies designed to *punish everyone for the negative actions of the few*. The fear of litigation (future) coupled with precedent actions (past) lead to an unhappy workforce and workplace.

Many managers focus on the output rather than *creating a culture that promotes output*. Managers are not taught to nurture a culture that is fertile for productivity. They are taught to emphasize results. This misguided emphasis rewards the lucky and punishes the diligent.

Teaching managers to emphasize the moment without neglecting the future is like focusing on today's game *first* as the path to winning the season. Winning at business is about performance in the present. *Neglecting the now in order to win later has no logical basis*. The old cliché still rings true that *a happy employee is a productive employee*, yet many managers fail to see that on the path to success, there are no short-cuts or quick fixes. Your team's happiness holds the key to your success. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Cultivate a culture of happiness.**

# Faces of Intention

Live and work with purpose.



by Wayne W. Dyer

**W**HEN YOU ARE INSPIRED by a great purpose, everything will begin to work for you. Inspiration comes from connecting to *the seven faces of intention*—creativity, kindness, love, beauty, expansion, abundance, and receptivity. *Will* is the idea that *I'm going to make things happen. Intent is inspiration—allowing it to take place.* I don't say that will is bad. But will is the work of the ego—believing you control everything.

- **Creativity.** We all have a gnawing sense inside that there's something we are here to do, something creative. *Don't die with your music still inside you.* Listen to your intuitive inner voice and find what passion stirs your soul. Intention is the difference between motivation and inspiration. Motivation is when you get hold of an idea and don't let go of it until you make it a reality. Inspiration is the reverse—when an idea gets hold of you and you feel compelled to let that impulse or energy carry you along. You get to a point where you realize that you're no longer in charge, that there's a driving force inside you that can't be stopped. Your job is not to say *how*—it's to say *yes!* The answer to how is yes! When you say *yes* to life, you attract divine guidance. Everything starts working for you. *Yes* is the breath of creation.

- **Love.** If you're doing what you love and loving what you do—whatever it is—you make a living at it! Anytime you feel anxious, insecure, worried, angry or resentful, you leave love and enter fear. To erase fear and access the power of intention, repeat these five key words: *I want to feel good!* This is like saying, *I want to be in harmony with the source of well-being.* When you feel inspired, what once appeared to be risky becomes a path you feel compelled to follow. The risks abate because you are following your bliss—the truth within you. This is really love working in harmony with your intention. If you do not feel love, you do not feel the truth, or connection to Spirit. This is why love is such an important part of your intention to live a life on purpose. When I left the work that no

longer inspired me, *every detail that I had worried about was almost magically taken care of for me,* because I was feeling love for what I was doing, living my truth. Financial remuneration flowed to me with the same energy of love.

- **Abundance.** You may think it is too risky to give up a salary, pension, job security, or home because of a dim night-light in your mind that draws you to see why it is turned on. I suggest that *there are no risks at all if you pay attention to that light.* Combine your strong knowing with the faith that Spirit will provide—acknowledge the power of intention at work. Trust

in this inner knowing. I call it *faith*, not faith in an external being to provide you with purpose, but *faith in the call you are hearing from the center of your being.* You are a divine, infinite creation choosing to be on purpose and connected to the power of intention. It all revolves around *your being harmoniously connected to your Source.* Faith eliminates the risk when you choose to trust that inner knowing about your purpose and become a channel for the power of intention. Accessing this power relieves you of much of the seemingly impossible work of striving to fulfill your desires by sheer force of will.

- **Kindness.** One fast way to transform fear into love and tap into the source is through kindness. Kindness strengthens the immune system; unkindness weakens the body and creates dissonance. Extend acts of kindness; ask for nothing in return. We all have capacities for kindness and creativity and beauty. Choose to believe that the universe is friendly. Start celebrating and honoring others. Anyone who's angry, nasty, or rude is really *offering a plea to be loved.* I try to convert them from *low-energy emotions*—frustration, irritation, anger and impatience—into *high-energy emotions*—love, caring, kindness. I do that by asking a surly waiter or harried airline clerk about themselves or by expressing empathy, "Where are you from? It must be tough standing on your feet for eight hours." I let them



know that, in that moment, I'm thinking more about them than about myself. And, instantly they smile.

- **Beauty.** For every act of violence, ugliness, and messiness *there are a million acts of kindness and goodness.* It just depends where you look. When I look at virtually anyone or anything on the planet, I see another face of intention—*beauty.* All you have to do is *see a flower in bloom.* That is the breath of beauty! Surrender to the source of energy, and allow this divine source of kindness, beauty, and creativity to be *the dominant force in your life*—whatever you're doing.

- **Receptivity.** This means that *no one and no thing is rejected.* When you have a thought that excludes or judges anyone, you aren't defining them—you are *defining yourself as someone who needs to judge others.* When I judge harshly, I feel worse. Stop taking yourself so seriously! Get your ego out of the way and *connect to kindness.* Ego is intention's

enemy. Ego believes: *I am what I have, I am what I do. I am what others think of me.*

This is an illusion. If you are what you do, who are you when you don't do it? If you are what you have—when you no longer have it, you have no value!

- **Expansion.** We are all *spiritual beings.* When you see yourself as a piece of

God, you see yourself as connected to everything and everyone. In that *heightened state,* you tap into expansion and abundance. You need to connect with the image of an expanding source—one that never becomes stagnant or gets tired of growing. When you see there are no limits to your potential, you can tap into abundance, knowing there's *more than enough.* Don't ask the source to understand scarcity—something that is not! People pray: "Please give me more . . ." Or, "Please heal me." If you do this, you'll only attract more scarcity into your life. You can't think about *what's missing* in your life, *what you don't like,* or *what "they" want for you.*

When you align yourself with the power of intention, you'll experience calmness, less anxiety, and leave others feeling energized. People will want to be around you. You'll see miracles—the right person shows up, you experience unanticipated abundance. You feel that you're collaborating with the universe, instead of it working against you. **SSE**

Wayne Dyer, Ph.D., is author of 22 books, including *The Power of Intention (Hay House).*

**ACTION:** Connect to the seven faces of intention.

# Content Marketing

Engage potential customers.



by Natalie Roberts

THERE ARE NOW THOUSANDS of articles on how you can use *social media marketing* to become wildly successful. Yet you might remain confused about how tweeting or “friending” the right people can benefit your business.

Before you can contribute to social media in a compelling way, you must have something worthy to say—something relevant to share with prospects. You need to leverage *Content Marketing*.

*Content marketing is the creation or sharing of content for the purpose of engaging current and potential customers.* This makes sense. Yet, many companies don’t even include content marketing in their marketing strategy. Some product managers might be blogging and the marketing team might have a Facebook page, but these efforts are not viewed as strategic and rarely enjoy the support of leaders (“keep blogging—but do it on your own time.”)

Content marketing meets resistance because most managers do not want to give away anything without being assured of a sale. Yet prospects are finding the information they need to purchase without any direct dialogue with the seller. *So, if you aren’t offering the information they need, when and how they need it, how can you possibly expect to influence their buying decision?*

Maybe it is time to provide relevant, compelling content without expecting an immediate return. *Nurture prospects* and share what you know about their problem—and how we could solve it.

## Four Common Objections

Here are four objections to content marketing, and my response to them:

**Objection 1: I can’t give away my expertise for free—customers pay good money to find out how I can help them.** To build credibility, you regularly share valuable information in sales calls—insights your customers access before they buy. Start writing this advice. *This is content.* Craft an article, a blog post, a Facebook status update, or a Tweet. Then put it out there for those *virtual sales conversations* and let it work for you.

**Objection 2: I’m not a good writer—I can’t create new content every day.** If you aren’t a confident writer, find someone who is! Creativity is a collab-

orative, not a solitary, task. Rally the troops for brainstorming; find out from your sales team what questions your prospects are asking; ask your product managers *what issues are being addressed*; monitor your competitors websites and blogs. Then craft an editorial calendar and assign content to key staff.

**Objection 3: I must spend my budget on tactics that produce immediate sales.** The sales process starts with the *engagement of a suspect* (someone you suspect needs your product or service). You need *lead magnets* to do this. Rarely do you go from *suspect* to *customer* in one activity. You have to nurture the suspect, qualify the prospect, assess the lead, and convert to customer. Content marketing is key in this nurturing process. It is an ongoing effort to rein-

force your expertise (and relevance) by showing how you solve your buyer’s problem. *If you build it, the sales will come.*

**Objection 4: Why should I add my two-cents to the noise being published?** Use your content marketing to reinforce your brand and what makes you different. Every post, white paper, and article you create should reiterate how you can help your customer solve what ails them. If your content benefits the customer, it isn’t noise. So be relevant!

Download our *Content Marketing Strategy Sheet* to assess what tactics are right for you. Create and share *compelling content* through social media. SSE

Natalie Roberts is marketing manager at Go-To-Market Strategies. Visit [www.gtms-inc.com](http://www.gtms-inc.com).

**ACTION: Engage in content marketing.**

## SALES/SELF

# Escape Job Jail

Improve your resume in 2011.



by Audrey LeGrand

I’M LESS WORRIED ABOUT THE *unemployed* than I am about the *underemployed*. The phenomenon of underemployment affects nearly twice as many Americans as unemployment, and the underemployment rate for Americans has leapt from 10 to 18 percent. *Underemployment* is a category that includes, but is not limited to, people who are unemployed, or who have a job but still can’t make ends meet.

**Your resume is your first line of defense** for preventing being incarcerated in the *job jail* of underemployment. Your resume could be landing in the recycle bin because it is not thought-out, laid-out, or carried out correctly. Job Jail is a sneaky trap. In fact, you may land in it without ever realizing it. Whether your hours have been shaved from full time to part time, or you’ve struggled just to get two low-paying jobs to replace the one higher-paying job you once had, it can be *almost impossible to escape* once you’re locked in that cell. The first thing you should do this year is to take a new look at your resume, because it represents the first time a potential employer considers you for a new job.

My tips for resume health include:

- **Appearance**—Check for typos and grammatical errors. Use spell check, and ask someone else to read it. Human resources professionals will

many times summarily dismiss a qualified candidate because their resumes were rife with grammar and spelling errors. Don’t wind up in the reject bin because you aren’t perfect with the written word. Take care to be articulate and informative with your resume.

- **Size**—Don’t use such a small type font that your resume is difficult to read. If your background is so extensive that it will take two full pages to lay it out, use the spread wisely.

- **Ethics**—Don’t fudge dates of employments, degrees earned, or career accomplishments. If a prospective employer conducts a background check, you’ll lose that opportunity to work for them.

- **Target your audience**—don’t just email your resume to every posted position. Narrow your search for exactly what you want and what you’re qualified for. Don’t waste your time or the recruiter’s time.

- **Tell us why you are the best choice**—don’t copy your current job description. Show *what you achieved* in your previous position and *why you are more qualified* than the competition for the positions you are seeking.

Cheating on professional resumes has become common, but that does not make it right. When candidates are deceptive or dishonest, it makes it more difficult for job seekers who have been honest and forthcoming about their qualifications. Perpetrators are almost always caught. SSE

Audrey LeGrand is CEO of Innovators and Motivators, a HR consulting firm, and author of *How To Get Out of Job Jail*. Visit [www.audreylegrand.com](http://www.audreylegrand.com).

**ACTION: Improve your resume this year.**

# Reclaiming Resiliency

Show patience, not panic, and thrive.



by Eileen McDargh

**I**N EARLY MARCH, SNOW STILL spots many parts of the United States. The earth looks brown and barren. But I know that if I could walk the fields and wait patiently, I'd see signs of new growth inching out of hardened earth. I'd eventually find dead-looking tree limbs swelling with rising sap, pushing buds into blossom under the warming sun.

But what if I opted not to be patient, panicked, burned the *dead-looking* trees, cut off limbs, and retreated in disgust within my cocoon? Spring might never come because my shortsighted actions jeopardized *the natural course of events*.

Such actions create a rippling self-fulfilling prophecy. I'm concerned that departed talent and trust might not be regained, that customers will retreat as quality and service suffer. Perhaps we have grown fat, lazy, and greedy instead of prudent and thoughtful.

By historical standards, we've seen far more dramatic financial times. Once the U.S. had 20,000 phone companies and 2,000 auto companies. General Motors was once a tech stock. As we say, *from breakdown comes build up*.

*I intend to be the voice of reasonable optimism, to figure out a passage through this tough time.* Howard Zinn said: *to have hope, one does not need certainty, only possibility.* So, figure out how to be the bearer of hope—in spite of all bad news.

## Intelligent Optimism

There is hope—not *cock-eyed optimism* but *intelligent optimism* that does not deny harsh realities but seeks to learn how to fashion a life amid such difficulties. Psychologist Martin Seligman notes that *optimism can be learned*.

Consider these eight basic steps:

### 1. Focus on what you can control.

Don't get carried away by circumstances you cannot change. You might not change global warming, but you can control your energy consumption. You can't stop the downsizing, but you can arm yourself with marketable skills. You can't control the Stock Market, but you can rebalance your portfolio. You can examine expenses and determine what are *necessities* and what *nice-to-have items* can be dropped. Resolve to spend

money or time on things that give you pleasure and lighten your spirit.

**2. Reframe the event so that you are not a victim.** There is always another way to view a situation. A flight cancellation that causes you to miss (and forfeit) a major engagement is not *planned to get you*. It just is. Your choice is to decide what you can do next. When Hurricane Katrina wiped out the home of a nurse, she told me that *she focused daily on what she still had* and she had her children do the same thing. Every day started with gratitude. She refused to see herself as a victim.

**3. Think enough.** When you concentrate on what you don't have, you miss all the many things you do have. *You have enough intelligence.* It might not be as much as you would like, but for today, it is enough.

**4. Cultivate optimistic responses.** Like a farmer tending a field, optimism will never grow unless it is watered, fed, weeded, and nourished. We all have days of negativity. And, sometimes, that is a wise response because it keeps you grounded in reality. Just make sure it is *reality* and not *the imagination making extraordinary leaps into conjecture*. Weed out *conjecture*. Ask what you can do to see a result that gives you a sense of power. As Alexander Graham Bells stated, *"Sometimes we stare so long at the closed door we fail to see the one that is opening."*

**5. Remember the power of example.** Children of optimists are prone to be optimists. What do you choose to pass along? Even if your parents were negative, you can break the cycle by freeze-framing a situation, listening to the negative self-talk, and then giving yourself a different message. Yes, this is a hard practice. But you can make it a habit if you work it over time.

**6. Sing.** When all else fails, *start singing*. You can't feel negative when you lift your voice in song. Music enables you to formulate words, add nuance, and then get your toe tapping.

**7. Refuse to watch or read anything that puts a dark pall over your day.** Instead of tuning into gloom, read a book that transports you to another

time and a better mood. Go play with the baby next door. And if you can't stand children, take a walk with your dog, dig in the yard, or get a bucket of balls and practice your golf swing. Better than walking around with heart and mind weighted down.

**8. Refuse to participate in a chorus of negative conversations if the only thing you will hear is whining, complaining and moaning.** Tell your group that they have three minutes to throw a fit, but then it must stop and the next six minutes must be devoted to either finding something positive about the situation or something that they can do. Practice this mantra, "This too shall pass." It always has and it always will.

## Resilient Actions

Within the word *resilience* are *nine actions* you can take:

**R: Remember to breathe.** The ability to calm down is critical in order to take stock and move forward.

**E: Enlist support of others.** Love people and be lovable in return. A supportive family (genetic or hand-picked) can keep you alive. The word *wretched* comes from *wrecche* meaning *without kin*.

**S: Stay focused.** Intentionality lays the groundwork for what we want in our life. See it, say it and

claim it. Don't let external forces cloud your vision or deter your mission.

**I: Identify your strengths.** Energy and health are two elements of resiliency. Work on your *physical well being* first.

**L: Laugh out loud.** You'll be amazed how much better you feel.

**I: Insist on optimism.** Positive mental health comes from *reframing the situation*. Recall ways in which you've handled similar situations.

**E: Extend yourself to others.** Self-absorption deepens depression and worry. Going out to serve others lifts the cloud around you, enabling you to become both *blessed* and a *blessing*.

**N: Never say never.** The *resilient spirit* knows that there is always tomorrow.

**C: Contribute.** Ask yourself *what endures*. Innovation, engaged employees, customer-focused products and services, and shared commitment to make meaningful contributions carry the day.

**E: Enjoy life.** Give thanks—there is always so much to be grateful for. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Reclaim your resiliency.**

# Poor Service

You can't hide behind it.



by T. Scott Gross

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS THE expression of your brand.

I have much more to say about customer service and branding, but if you truly get the message that customer service is the expression of your brand, you are ahead of the average corporate manager or leader who thinks branding issues can be cleared up by a trip to the graphic designer.

In preparing for keynote speaking assignments, I have asked clients of organizations large and small about their brands. Over the past 10 years, the likelihood of my questions resulting in only dead air over the phone line has gone down considerably. Either more companies are at least trying to understand their brands, or maybe I'm just working in better neighborhoods. These days chances are good that my client will rise to the challenge and hand me a lavishly designed printed piece that fully explains their branding efforts.

Nice. But printed statements don't matter that much. Your *brand statement* tells who you want to be. Your customer service says who you really are.

How you treat your customers, employees, and vendors tells the truth about your brand. Just as actions speak louder than words, there is no way you can proclaim yourself a "people company" unless you prove it by living the values that look so good in print.

Who you hire, what you celebrate, and the values you live tell more about your brand than any fancy brochure.

## Motivation Is Not Your Problem

When clients mistakenly hire me as a motivational speaker, it is hard to avoid the tried and true tricks of the motivation trade. When the client tells me, "Fire them up!" and then schedules me for 20 minutes of platform time right before an open bar on the beach in Maui, I know that I had better be funny—forget useful content.

Some people believe that humor is the same as content, but I hate thinking of my work as a comedian—all fluff and no stuff. If my audience isn't better when I leave them, what is the point?

Besides, motivation is not your problem—and it's not your employees'

problem. Here it is: *The behavior you get is the behavior you reward.*

If you reward *stupid*, then *stupid* is what you get. Reward *sloth* if you wish, but don't whine when the result is *more sloth*. And, don't ask me to fix it with a 30-minute keynote speech!

What most folks think is a *motivation problem* comes down to three potential causes (sometimes all three act in concert): Miscast staff, uncertain leadership, and antagonistic systems.

About 70 percent of your employees are not in a job that leverages their talents. The result: *Unhappy people*—and you know where that leads!

If you *really* need a motivational speaker, you likely also need new leadership. Once, as I took a walk around a hotel before I delivered a keynote for an audience of about 600, the hotel general manager recognized me and

joined me for the walk. Along the way, we encountered some trash blowing across the parking lot. I promptly picked up some trash, but the clueless GM *just watched it blow by*. Then he took the paper from me, tossed it on the ground, and said, "Don't worry. I have people who will clean this up."

All of the motivational speakers in the world couldn't fix that problem!

The demand for motivational speakers is driven by *systems that reward non-behavior or counter-productive behavior*. I advise you to take an SOS tour to *Stamp Out Stupid* and rid your organization of policies that encourage stupid behavior. *Again, the behavior you get is the behavior you reward.* **SSE**

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**ACTION:** Reassess what you reward.

## MANAGEMENT/DELEGATION

# Delegation

Empower others.



by Marty Stanley

WHY IS DELEGATION SO difficult for so many people? You may not delegate tasks or projects for fear of failure. You may have said, "I can do it faster." "I can do it better." "It will take too long to tell someone how to do it." But then you feel overwhelmed with too much to do; at the last minute, you delegate a task to someone just to meet a deadline. If things go wrong, you think, "I'll never do that again!" Remember: *a key to your success is your ability to develop other people—and delegation is a good way to do it.*

Here are four tips to delegate right:

**1. Failing to plan is planning to fail.** Plan the delegation well in advance of the due date. Don't try to shoot from the hip. Ask yourself: What outcomes do you want to achieve? What potential problems can arise? What skills does the person who will do the project need? What are appropriate checkpoints to see how things are going?

**2. Looking for Mr. or Ms. Right.** Pick a person who has the skills to do the task. If the project or task requires accuracy, choose a person who excels at attention to detail. If a project needs creative thinking, pick a person who can think outside-of-the-box. What you delegate depends largely on the experi-

ence of the person and *the level of trust* you have with them. If you have confidence in a person, you can delegate more complex projects to expand the person's skills. If the person is new to the job, *close supervision* may be needed.

**3. Communication is key.** Set expectations. Agree on the tasks, quality, quantity, checkpoints, deadlines, and monitoring process. Be available for questions and guidance. Ensure the person has the tools, information, and resources. If you ask someone to make a key presentation, do a walk-through with him or her a couple days in

advance to prevent problems, provide coaching, detect glitches early, and keep the lines of communication open.

**4. Debrief.** Do a post-task debriefing with the person. Ask: *What went well? What could have been done differently? What can we do in the future to improve the process?*

Ask the person to describe what went well first. *Praise work well done* to boost morale. When discussing poor performance, ask the person for their input before providing your own. This provides additional coaching. List ways to improve the process. Are more resources needed? Are all materials or information available? Is more time needed? Done well, debriefing builds skills and the relationship.

Effective delegation empowers people to take on more responsibility. **SSE**

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**ACTION:** Consider these four tips for delegating.

# Mindset of a Champion

*Skyrocket your sales performance.*



by Jack Singer

**P**EOPLE WITH THE MOST SALES talent are often *not* the most successful? What gets in their way? Why do some people with less talent over-achieve? Is there a certain mindset that can lead you toward championship sales performance?

The biggest obstacles to sales success are the *internal mental and emotional barriers*—not recognizing and taking control of the *Internal Critic* (habitual negative thoughts). How can you overcome these obstacles? Try these six tips:

**1. Take charge of your internal dialogue.** Your *self-talk* is the foundation of your belief system, and your belief system determines your attitude and success altitude. You may use *self-limiting thoughts* (self-sabotage). Examples include: *The economy will make this a tough sell now or I'll be lucky if I make half the sales I made last year.* Such thoughts are like eating junk food, and they set you up for failure.

Thoughts determine beliefs; beliefs develop attitudes; attitudes drive behavior and action. Negative, pessimistic thoughts lead to procrastination and poor sales outcomes. Such thoughts convince your mind that you will fail.

Keep a journal of negative thoughts regarding your sales performance and notice the patterns. Then, use rational thinking to counter negative thoughts with healthy, positive thoughts. For example, change *"This economy will drive my customers away now."* to *"I don't need succeed with every client. I am a sharp, creative person and I'll find new markets/customers for my product. I'll keep my eyes open for opportunities."*

**2. Unleash the power of your mind to plow through the mental blocks.** Your *subconscious mind* takes orders from you without judging success or failure. You can choose what you feed it. So, believe in yourself and in the value of your products. Eliminate *imposter fears*—the belief that *you are not good at what you do or your products are not as valuable to potential customers as you propose they are.* Instead of focusing on your failures, focus on what you *have achieved.* You can program your mind to believe in your strengths and your success. Remember that your product

knowledge, your service skills, and your sincere concern that the customer is satisfied and better off having purchased your products or services will overcome any deficiencies.

Practice presenting a positive attitude toward *everyone you meet*, not just prospects. Constantly pat yourself on the back with positive self-talk, such as, *I provide a valuable service to my clients and I help people achieve their goals.* Focus on results achieved in your sales career and pat yourself on the back. Learn from poor results and move on. Keep a *Success Journal.* Record times and situations *when you were proud* of what you achieved. Add at least one item each day. Review the list of successes regularly, especially when you are having a worrisome day.

**3. Fill your mind with optimistic expectations.** The most powerful predictor of sales achievement is *optimistic expectations.* Ability and motivation are not always enough. Your *expectations* often determine outcomes. So, *believe that you will succeed,* despite challenges, obstacles, setbacks, resistance, rejection, and hostility. How you respond to setbacks often determines how successful you'll be. Train yourself to look at setbacks as *temporary* and look for a way to overcome them. Develop *optimistic expectations* to overcome negative beliefs or a pessimistic style. Seek to understand your negative thinking patterns and practice changing them—your sales performance will skyrocket!

**4. Understand the warning signs of your internal critic at work.** Limiting, negative, or pessimistic self-talk will lead to disappointment. Negative, pessimistic messages lead to muscle tightening, rapid breathing and perspiring. These stress responses can be read all over your face and body. Catch yourself when negative thoughts enter your mind and make a fist to remind you to stop thinking that way. Take a few relaxing breaths: release the fist, relax and think positively and optimistically. *What you believe, you can achieve.*

Internal *self-talk* leads to beliefs (positive or negative), and *beliefs* lead to the

body's reactions. *Believe* in yourself and in your products; show customers why *they need to purchase the product today.*

**5. Give yourself positive affirmations each day.** These are positive, optimistic thoughts about your sales goals—as if that success is happening today. When you give yourself positive affirmations and imagine that things are happening right now, your *subconscious mind* wants to make them happen for you. Affirm: *"I will show my customers how these products are perfect for their situation;" I know how to treat people so they will be open to my suggestions;" My self-confidence grows each day;" I see myself breaking my sales records each month."* List seven positive affirmations to say

each morning and evening as you breathe slowly and imagine achieving each affirmation as you recite it.

**5. Visualize your sales success before approaching potential customers.**

Visualize success. See yourself preparing for the sales call, gathering your materials, feeling encouraged because you know your products and *feel con-*

*fidant* as you enter the room. Visualize the sights and sounds around you as you begin the *perfect* sales presentation. Then see your customers smiling and nodding in agreement as you show them how much this product will help them. Finally, visualize yourself shaking hands with the client, closing the deal and writing up the order.

**6. Practice powerful goal setting strategies.** You are 10 times more likely to reach a goal when you write it down. Write down short and long-term goals that are specific and action-oriented. For example, *"This month, I will sell at least 27 widgets."* Make sure your goals are realistic. Next, *visualize yourself feeling wonderful* once you achieve that goal. Imagine it *as if you have already achieved the goal.* Finally, record ways in which you might sabotage yourself or undermine your success and how you will stop that self-defeating behavior.

**Use these six tips to release your true talent, consistently.** Your sales performance is equal to *your sales talent minus inner distractions,* such as negative, pessimistic self-talk. Eliminating that *Internal Critic* will enable you to become an *Inner Winner* every time! **SSE**

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**ACTION: Cultivate the mindset of a champion.**



# Persuasive Sales

You can win sales by a NOSE.



by Tom Sant

**T**HIS SPRING, RETURN TO SALES basics. And nothing is more basic to your success in delivering a persuasive sales message or in writing a winning proposal than understanding *persuasive structure*.

Just dumping a bunch of facts on your audience doesn't motivate anybody to say *Yes* to you. And yet most sales presentations and proposals are organized as nothing more than information dumps. That doesn't work.

## What Decision-Makers Ask

*Persuasion is the flip side of decision making.* You are trying to get the customer to decide in your favor. They are trying to make the best possible choice. To persuade them, you need to deliver the right content in the right order. You need to address the issues that they are focused on in the same order they're thinking about them.

*The first question a decision maker will ask is this: Are we getting what we need?* People don't want to go any further if they're not confident you understand their needs.

*The second question is a bit more complex: Is it worth it? Is it good value? Is there sufficient return from solving this problem or addressing this need to justify the investment of money, time or effort it will take?*

## What You Need to Say

So, in any persuasive message to customers or prospects, you need to communicate four things:

*You listen to them* to understand what their problem is. Focusing on their need will get their attention.

*You help them see the big payoff* that will come from addressing the problem. Focusing on the payback will get them motivated to take action.

*You recommend a solution.* The prospect wants to hear it now. They see that we understand their business and that it's probably worth taking action. But what are we suggesting? Does it make sense?

*You provide evidence that you can deliver your solution on time and on budget.* Give them the logical justification for moving forward with the emotional decision they are ready to make. Cite your case studies, your ref-

erences, your project management approach, your qualified team members, the awards you've won—whatever evidence you have to differentiate yourself and make the prospect confident about choosing you.

Following *the four steps of the NOSE pattern* will lead to *effective persuasion* in letters, proposals, and presentations:

**Needs:** State your understanding of the specific need, problem, gap in capability, or opportunity that your customer faces. Why is it a problem?

**Outcomes.** Spell out the *outcomes* the decision maker seeks. What positive results will come from meeting the need or solving the problem? How much are these results worth? What are the possible consequences of inaction?

**Solution.** Recommend what you

think the decision maker should do. Link your recommendation back to the client's needs and desired outcomes. Show how your products and/or services will solve the problem and meet the needs. Always link the details of your solution to the client's needs and constantly return to the key persuasive point—how the solution components will contribute to maximum return.

**Evidence.** Answer the question: Why should they hire you? What makes you different? What makes you qualified?

By following these steps, you build persuasive structure into every proposal and presentation and *win by a NOSE!* SSE

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**ACTION: Win more sales by the NOSE.**

## SALES/NETWORKING

# Social Networking

How to get more leads and sales.



by Joanne S. Black

**S**Ocial networking isn't the next best thing—you are! The personal connection seals deals.

Increasing speed and sophistication not only create an intensely competitive marketplace, but place further demands on you to act and react quickly.

Social media sites such as *Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, and LinkedIn* have lured many sales pros into scaling back personal interactions and relying on social media to get "qualified leads." It's time to get real!

*Social media is a powerful tool for three things only:*

1) *search engine optimization*—use your key words and raise your web presence; 2) *find out who people are*—learn about their background and your connections; and 3) *find out who people know*—look for close connections that you can leverage.

You may get clients through social media, if you have a commodity business. But don't rely on it! Count on what you cause through a proactive referral strategy with personal introductions.

*Social Networking won't bring you more leads and sales.* Key decisions are based on *personal relationships*. Customers make buying decisions because they *like* and *trust* the salesperson and his firm. You are selling services, systems, products—you are asking for people's time and money! Why would they work with someone who *hasn't* been referred?



Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, urges college graduates to step away from the virtual world and *make human connections*. "Turn off your computer. You're going to have to turn off your phone and discover all that is human around you."

That said, *a social media presence is a must-have today*, but you need to change the way you're social networking.

Here are *three ways to get more leads and sales* with social networking:

**1. Develop a social media strategy.** Like a sales plan or a marketing plan, *write your social media plan*. What is your goal? Who is your audience? What do you want to communicate? *Leverage social media* as part of your go-to-market strategy and link your strategy to your customer's needs and business priorities.

**2. Establish relationships.** Take the time to *build your personal connections*, pick up the phone and talk to people. Just because you have a name in hand, doesn't mean you have a relationship.

**3. Communicate useful information.** Social sites are not for selling. They are for establishing connections, identifying ways to collaborate, and providing value. What tips can you provide? Link to other sites you strongly recommend. Get recognized as the expert and build your web presence. Be a resource.

The most energizing and exciting part of sales work is the relationships you have with your clients—the *interaction*. Enjoy learning about your client's business and matching your solutions to their needs. Personal connections, referrals, and earning trust count most. SSE

*Joanne Black is an expert on referral selling and founder of No More Cold Calling. [www.nomorecoldcalling.com](http://www.nomorecoldcalling.com)*

**ACTION: Practice smart social networking.**



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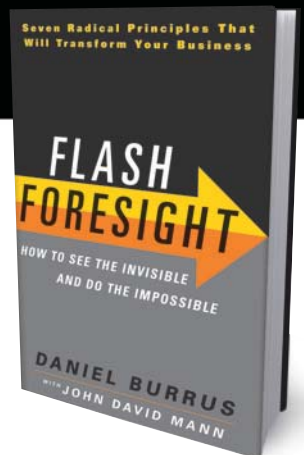
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