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## **“TOP 10 REASONS WHY SALESPEOPLE DO NOT REACH THEIR TRUE POTENTIAL**



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**The content in this informative little book is developed from research  
conducted by the Sandler Sales Institute in Dublin, Ireland**

## CHAPTER 1

### **Buyers have a system, sales people usually don't.**

Selling to professional buyers becomes a battle of the plans, and the person with the stronger plan wins. Buyers have a very effective system to deal with sales people. Many buyers today are formally trained.

The buyer's system is designed to get as much information as possible as well as maintaining control of the situation. Buyers often mislead sales reps about their intentions, how much they'll spend, who makes decisions and other tactical ploys. The buyer's system is designed to turn sales people into unpaid consultants, lead them on until they have all the information they need, and often use their proposals to negotiate better deals with their current supplier or a competitor. When they have what they need they terminate the relationship by failing to return phone calls.

This does not mean buyers are bad people. We all tend towards this system when we want competitive pricing.

Why do buyers do this? That's easy . . .

because it works. The stereotype of a sales person is not a good image for most of us, and buyers are afraid of being sold something they don't want. In order to protect themselves, buyers feel they need a system to deal with sales people. It is an instinctive reaction to the negative stereotype of a salesperson that causes buyers to put up a defensive wall when dealing with anyone who is selling something.

So how do most sales people deal with the buyer's system? Most play right in to it. Many don't use a systematic approach to selling and find themselves shooting from the lip. They allow the buyer to take total control of the sales process. They eagerly:

- Give their information
- Make commitments without getting anything in return
- Waste resources on pursuing deals that will never close
- Make unneeded concessions
- Misinterpret the old hackneyed phrase, "*I'll think it over and get back to you*" as a future sale.

### **The Solution?**

The nine step selling system, a non-traditional approach to selling that provides a system that sales managers and reps buy into 100%. The system that balances both the buyer and sellers best interest – the art of mutual agreement. (*See BBAP route map presentation*)

## CHAPTER 2

### Spending too much time with Customers who will never commit

A sales manager recently evaluated two of his reps like this:

“Gary spends a disproportionate amount of time with buyers who spend little of their budget with us. One root cause of this behaviour is that he doesn’t ask the tough questions.”

“Ann is strong with users, but both she and Gary have lost deals because our competition has contact and influence at the CEO and Executive Director level, and they don’t.”

Why is this true?

- A) Sales reps won’t ask the hard questions up-front for fear of making their prospects upset.
- B) Customers don’t want to say no. Most sales people think their job is to make a sale on every call, and over the years sales training has taught, “Don’t take NO for an answer”. Reps are taught to be persistent . . . handle stalls and objections . . . trial close . . . always be closing . . . and yes event manipulation.  
No wonder buyers need a system to protect themselves. Buyers realize sales reps don’t want to hear “no” and when they do they’ll “hang in there” and try to turn “no” into “yes”. When the poor buyer really means “no”, he or she has found the easiest way to get rid of a sales person is to tell them “I’ll think over, I’ll get back to you.” How many “think it over’s” really turn into business.
- C) Sales people don’t get to decision-makers. Instead most sales people spend time with ‘comfort people’ who are easier to get in front of, and to whom the salesperson is more comfortable talking.

**FACT:** Only 12% of a sales person’s time is spent in face-to face selling to decision makers.

#### **The Solution:**

The sales rep needs the tools to separate tyre-kickers from buyers and an approach to obtain executive sponsorship early in the sales cycle. Learn the tactful art of qualifying your Customers buying potential. The top rep learns to ask the hard questions up-front, to save precious resources for real opportunities. “NO” is an acceptable response from a buyer. “Going for the “NO” requires a tremendous paradigm shift for most sales people, but it can take all the pressure off the rep and increase his or her productivity. The Customer is also a beneficiary because it makes the process feel more like ‘buying’ than ‘being sold’.

## CHAPTER 3

### Sales people talk too much

A sales manager recently told me that her sales reps listening skills aren't what they need to be and that they don't find out the real reasons or intention behind the question, which leaves the Customer feeling like the sales rep is only interested in making a sale and not in listening to them.

Of course when we employed them we gave them the good old product knowledge course. Topped them up with features and benefits and then sent them out to make their budgets. The marketing department has given the sales team a company line . . . cutting edge, user friendly, scalable, reliable . . . all from an industry leader.

So what's the problem telling our story?

First, people buy for their reasons, not the sales person's reasons, not even their company's reasons.

Second, most companies' sales presentations sound the same to the buyer, and when they sound the same, low price becomes the determining factor in getting the business.

#### The Solution?

Find out the Customer's real pain.

Learn to ask questions and stop "pitching."

Teach your sales people the 70/30 rule . . . your Customer should be talking 70% of the time and the sales rep should be talking 30% or less.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Sales people focus on price and want discounts for every deal**

Price is never the real issue! Sales people focus on price because it is often the first thing the buyer asks about. Yet study after study confirms that quality and services are almost always more important than price. Price is never the main reason for getting and keeping business. People buy your products and services to solve a problem they have or to change something.

#### **The Solution?**

If you are effective in asking questions and getting to real issues, price should not be the determining factor in winning and losing, and you can sell at a premium over your competitor's price.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Product training is over emphasized, product knowledge miss-used, and selling becomes 'presenting'**

Most sales training focuses on product knowledge. In fact, studies show that 80% of training provided for direct sales people and channel partners is product oriented. Sales people, once filled with product features and benefits, are eager to share this information and show off their knowledge. The focus then becomes totally on your product or service, and not on the buyer and his or her problem, where it belongs.

#### **The Solution?**

Provide training in the strategy and tactics your sales people need to follow the route map to meeting the buyer's needs. Help buyers clearly define their problems and co-build solutions to exactly fit their needs. Product knowledge is important, but how it's used at each phase of the buyer process is the key.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Sales people fail to get Customers to reveal budgets up front**

Most people are uncomfortable talking about money. Discussing money is sometimes seen as intrusive, and discussing money is an unpleasant task people avoid. Many sales people avoid talking about money, emailing or faxing over a quote to communicate the price to their Customer. Sales people can't afford this common disease.

#### **The Solution?**

Knowing whether there is money available will help the sales person distinguish between the prospect who is ready to solve a problem from one who is not committed. Comfortably talking about money is a key to the executive suite, where projects are evaluated based on bottom line impact. You need to find out two things about money:

- ✓ How much the Customer's needs are affecting his decision
- ✓ How much they'd be willing to invest to solve the problem

Without this information your price will always be too high.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Sales people fail to get firm commitments from buyers**

Sales people are often very willing to jump at the opportunity to do a proposal, presentation or demo. This approach is incredibly time consuming and resource intensive. How many bids and proposals has your firm sent out over the last twelve months that has resulted in nothing? How much does it cost you on an annual basis in misspent sales time, trial software or loan equipment? Sales managers often contribute to the problem by monitoring the wrong statistics . . . quotes sent, meetings held, proposals outstanding . . . driving lots of activity, but little results.

#### **The Solution?**

Sales people must learn what motivates people to buy (pain/gain) and become masters of the skills required to help buyers become comfortable sharing their pain/gain. Never do anything unless you know why, and it's in the best interests of making a sale.

Managers must monitor and reward the proper behaviours . . . first calls, executive sponsorships and decision meetings.

## CHAPTER 8

### The sales person came into sales with the wrong idea of the profession

It's an easy and common mistake. I love people, so I'll be a sales person. The company ends up with a sales person who would rather make "friends" with their Customers than conduct business. Good sales people help a lot of people, it's true. However, sales is not the place to get your social needs met. It's the opposite, a tough and demanding profession, full of rejection.

**FACT:** Sales interactions are fundamentally different than social interactions. Successful professionals understand and accept the bottom line of selling: **Going to the Bank!**

#### The Solution?

Hire strong people and teach them a system that helps them strike the appropriate balance between developing rapport and getting commitment.

## CHAPTER 9

### **Some sales people go through the sales process and then freeze when it's time to ask for the order.**

After the sales person has reviewed the information gathered during the sales process, and begun their presentation to address the Customer's needs, it is time to close. The sooner the decision maker says "yes" the better off you are. However, the sales person must make sure that the Customer is ready to commit.

#### **The Solution?**

Taking the Customer's temperature means measuring how close the Customer is to saying "yes" by using a scale of 0 to 10. The prospect may be at a 10, in which case this is the time to ask the closing question.

If, however, the Customer is not yet at 10, you need to find out why. It could simply be that the Customer agrees with everything you have presented so far but wants to know how you address the remaining needs. In that case you continue the presentation, and stop later for another temperature check.

Of course, it is possible that the Customer will never be a 10. He or she may be the type of person who never gives a perfect score for anything. In that case, you'll need to revise your scale, perhaps from 0 to 8.

Keep in mind that some Customers need to see and hear everything before they are comfortable enough to make a decision. Others can decide more quickly. If you don't ask the question it is unlikely the Customer will volunteer an order, or if they do it is bound to be smaller than it would have been if you had suggested a quantity.

On the other hand, if you keep presenting after the Customer has made a decision, you may undo the decision.

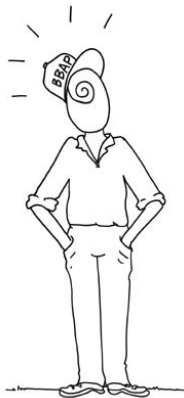
**You don't have to finish the presentation!**

## CHAPTER 10

### **Sales people don't treat sales as a profession**

Professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers and accountants all have one thing in common . . . they attend continuing education to maintain and increase their proficiency. Yet how many sales people are continually seeking new ways to increase their skill? Many have the attitude, "I've been selling for years, what more can I learn?"

**Ask yourself if your sales people have 10 years experience,  
or 1 year's experience repeated 10 times.**



***Watch out for the BBAP  
Sales Team Assessment Tool,  
soon to come to this website.***