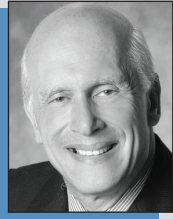


Master Salesmanship™

The Guide to Superior Selling Techniques

“Salespeople need to believe in their products and their ability to show the customer why he or she needs to purchase that product today.”



Becoming An ‘Inner Winner’ In Your Sales Career

by Jack Singer, Ph.D.

Greg is a sales rep with a computer software company. His responsibilities include generating new business by making “cold calls” and following up on leads from potential customers who respond to inquiries that his company receives. Besides feeling comfortable answering any questions about products, Greg has also been trained in the traditional practices of how to communicate with potential customers, how to get them to realize how his company’s products will make their jobs simpler and more efficient, and how to close a deal. But Greg is befuddled at his poor sales success rate. Are there other training techniques that can dramatically improve his performance? Is something missing that he can learn to do?

Yes! Traditional sales training techniques, like traditional athletic training techniques, ignore the biggest obstacle to success: Not recognizing and taking control of the Internal Critic that lingers within every sales person and athlete. The “Internal Critic” is a habitual pattern of negative thoughts that (untrained) people usually allow to continue unabated. Employing techniques that professional sports psychologists use to help elite athletes overcome their obstacles to success works exactly the same wonders for salespeople!

Here are a few tips that you can use in your sales career right now:

Understand the warning signs of your Internal Critic at work. Your self-talk will either make you successful or will lead to disappointment. So often, people unconsciously use self-limiting thoughts that prevent them from being successful. Examples of negative, pessimistic self-talk phrases are:

- What if ...
- I hope I don’t ...
- I should have said ...,
- I always have problems with ...

- I probably won’t be able to close this sale.
- I can’t believe how stupid I was to say that.

Negative, pessimistic messages that people allow to pass through their minds immediately lead to muscle tightening throughout the body. This tightening is accompanied by more rapid breathing and perspiring. Consequently, these physiological responses are perceived as “stress” and you can read that all over the face and body language of the salesperson (or athlete, for example). You can practice catching yourself when these types of negative thoughts go through your mind and make a fist (out of view of the prospective customer), which is a reminder to *stop* thinking that way. Next, take a few deep breaths, release the fist, relax, and proceed to think positively and optimistically.

There is an old saying that goes “What you believe, you can achieve.” Internal self-talk leads to beliefs (either positive or negative), and beliefs lead to the body’s reactions. Salespeople need to believe in their products and their ability to show the customer why he or she needs to purchase that product today. Once salespeople believe in themselves and their products, they are in a much better position to achieve sales success.

Give yourself positive affirmations each day.

Positive affirmations are positive, optimistic thoughts about your sales success goals as if that success is happening today. Since our subconscious doesn’t know the difference between something real or imagined (for example, visualize yourself biting into a tart lemon and see what your mind tells your salivary glands to do), when you give yourself positive affirmations and imagine these things are actually happening right now, your subconscious wants to make them happen for you.

(continued on page 3)

In This Issue

Becoming An ‘Inner Winner’ In Your Sales Career	1
An Easy Method To Blast The Price Barrier	2
How Important Is Timing In Selling?	2
Questions And Answers	3
How Well Do You Know Your Competition?	4
...and much more!	

“Professional salespeople are careful about their timing when it comes to calling on prospects and customers.”

An Easy Method To Blast The Price Barrier

The price of a product or service is usually an important barrier to closing a sale. This is especially true when the price is more than the prospect feels he or she can afford, or when the price of your product or service is higher than that of a competitor. Here's how you can remove or minimize the price barrier so you can get on with closing the sale.

When To Mention Price

A general rule of thumb is that price should be mentioned just twice in a sales presentation: when the prospect asks for it and when closing the sale. Ideally, the salesperson need only mention the price when handling the details of the close, but the price is usually important enough to the prospect that it has to be dealt with earlier in the sales presentation. Whenever price has to be mentioned, it should be followed by an attempt to close the sale.

If your price is lower than that of competitors, it is a

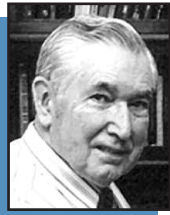
benefit to be used during the sales presentation. You bring it up yourself and use it to strengthen the close after establishing the other benefits that your product or service will deliver. Bear in mind that people do not buy just because the price is low. They buy only after weighing the benefits of ownership against the pain of parting with the money the benefits cost.

“We have established that you will be saving 53 cents on every gallon of disinfectant you use based on what you're paying now. Let's write an order for a six-month supply for delivery on the first of next month. Would that be soon enough?”

Price Plus Benefits

If the prospect asks for the price before you have had a chance to present the benefits that justify it, give a quick statement on the price and continue with the presentation. Do not stop and wait for the prospect to react. If your price varies with specific choices, a good stock answer is: “The price depends on your choice of options and your specific needs. Let's see what those are and then work out a good price.”

After the prospect shows a desire for the product, go into the close where the price can be quoted safely. ■



How Important Is Timing In Selling?

By Homer Smith

One of the classic stories told by the late Elmer Wheeler, a nationally famous sales trainer and author, was about his experience with two panhandlers. The first panhandler walked toward him, moving in front of Wheeler in spite of efforts to sidestep him. Finally, they came face to face and Wheeler shouted “No” even before the panhandler could ask for money. They glared at each other and angrily went their separate ways. On another day, Wheeler noted that another panhandler had gotten into step beside him. He had merely slipped into the same gait. He asked for the usual handout, and without too much thought, Wheeler had the money out and was giving it to the man. Some time later, Wheeler realized the real significance of the two approaches and he said they changed his career. The first panhandler failed one lesson in selling: He didn't get into step with his customer. Instead, he squared off with the prospect and lost out on the sale. The second panhandler was the better salesperson. He met the prospect side by side. The secret of this second approach was timing.

Wheeler began to think how he could time himself

properly so he would not call on prospects at the wrong time. In the future, before making each sales call, Wheeler would find out through a friend, secretary or relative what might be the proper time to see the prospect. Should he see him or her in the morning, early or late? What day of the week was best to call? Wheeler charted each prospect's life as best he could so that he could fit into the prospect's life.

Professional salespeople are careful about their timing when it comes to calling on prospects and customers. A basic philosophy of the appointment is that it fits the convenience of the prospect. In making the appointment, the salesperson asks, “Would it be convenient for me to call on Wednesday at 10:15?” The choice of words shows the salesperson's concern to accommodate the prospect. Customer records usually show the best day of the week to call on a regular customer, as well as the preferred time of day. Timing a call to match a prospect's needs is also important. Make an effort to find out about any changes, seasonal or otherwise, that your prospect plans to make, and arrive in time to do business. Some timing is pure luck, of course, but any salesperson can increase the odds by planning calls and proposals to fit the direction the prospect is going. Proper timing is what makes a steak broiled to perfection, what makes golfers experts and what puts salespeople in the upper-income brackets. ■

“Your sales performance is always equal to your sales talent minus inner distractions, such as negative, pessimistic self-talk.”

Becoming An ‘Inner Winner’ ... (continued from page 1)

Here are examples of positive affirmations for salespeople:

- *I know my products and 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.*
- *I see myself breaking my sales records each month.*

Make a list of at least seven positive affirmations to say each morning upon arising and each evening when retiring. Say each one 10 times in the morning and 10 times in the evening, breathing slowly, and imagine yourself accomplishing each affirmation as you recite it.

Visualize your sales success before approaching potential customers. Your subconscious takes orders from you without judging success or failure. As noted above, internal dialogue and beliefs are one means of directing your subconscious. Another powerful technique for directing the subconscious is actually visualizing success. Professional golfers, for example, who visualize each shot before they make it, find a tremendous similarity between their vision and their subsequent shot.

So visualize yourself preparing for the sales call, gathering your materials, feeling encouraged because you know your products and feeling confident as you enter the room where the pitch will take place. Visualize the sights and sounds around you as you begin the perfect sales presentation. Then, see the customer smiling and nodding in agreement as you show him or her how much this product will help his or her business. Finally, visualize yourself shaking hands with the client, closing the deal and writing up the order.

Practice powerful goal-setting strategies. People are 11 times more likely to reach a goal when they write it down, as opposed to simply thinking about it. 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 have accomplished that goal. Imagine it as if you have already accomplished the goal. Finally, perhaps most importantly, write down ways in which you can sabotage yourself so that you will not accomplish that goal. This is a critical way of recognizing ways you perhaps did not realize you were undermining your success and how you will now stop that self-defeating behavior.

Using these tips will teach you to look at the internal barriers that have gotten in the way of your success and how to release your true talent, consistently. Your sales performance is always 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!

Jack Singer, Ph.D., is a professional speaker, trainer and psychologist. Singer has been speaking for and training Fortune 1000 companies, associations, CEOs and elite athletes for 34 years. He is a frequent guest on CNN, MSNBC, FOX SPORTS and countless radio talk shows across the U.S. and Canada. He is the author of The Teacher’s Ultimate Stress Mastery Guide, and several series of hypnotic audio programs, some specifically for athletes and some for other people who want to raise their self-confidence and esteem. To learn more about Singer’s speaking and consulting services, please visit www.drjacksinger.com or call 800-497-9880. ■

Questions And Answers

Q: I’m not clear on how the “action close” is any different from simply asking for the order.

A: I would call an action close anything the salesperson does physically that will result in a sale, unless the prospect stops the action. The most common action close is undoubtedly writing up an order blank and asking the prospect to “verify” it. You would rightfully classify this as simply asking for the order but what makes it an “action” close is the added physical work the salesperson does to make the signature on the order easier to get.

Visualize the difference between this and simply asking, “May I have your order, Mr. Gould?” then waiting for the prospect to say “yes” or “no.”

The action close is not attempted until the prospect shows signs of being receptive to the benefits. You merely provide the tool for making up his or her mind. Incidentally, “verify” seems to be better for closing than “sign here” or even “OK this.” Leave the word “order” out of it, too.

Another action close would be, “What you should have is the Model C unit. Let me use your phone to see if we have one in stock.” Unless the prospect stops the salesperson, the sale is made.

Following a survey of a prospects needs, an action close would be, “Here’s what I think you need. If you will verify the list, we can deliver it next Thursday.” ■

“Explaining your competitor’s pluses and minuses can help you communicate your differences to prospects and customers.”

SELLING SLANTS

How Well Do You Know Your Competition?

At some point in most sales calls, having information about your competitors can come in handy. Taking time to know what your competition can and cannot do is what market research involves. Perhaps the easiest way to get to know your competition is to “take a walk in their shoes.”

Understanding The Competition

There are several key reasons why understanding your competition is important, including the following:

- Knowing the offers your competitors make to prospects and customers can help you better position your offer.
- Sizing up your competition fairly projects an image that you are unafraid to take others on because you know that your product or service is superior.
- Understanding a competitor’s past relationships with suppliers can help you avoid similar mistakes in your own business dealings.
- Explaining your competitor’s pluses and minuses can help you communicate your differences to prospects and customers.

Most Companies Fail At Learning More About Their Competition

Competitive intelligence gathering is a serious business for those who practice it. Yet, according to a survey by The Futures Group of Glastonbury, Conn., only one out of 10 American companies has expertise in competitive intelligence gathering. Most companies have ineffective processes.

There is a method to the madness of intelligence gathering. Here are the steps the pros use when conducting market research:

1. Identify Your Objectives

Determine what information you need and how it will help you do your job better. Just as important, pinpoint

what information is not essential, this way you won’t be wasting any time on useless facts.

2. Research Documented Sources

Once you know what you want, start gathering information through documented sources. Published sources are everywhere. New business plans and contract information are available in most business newspapers. Most are accessible by searching on the Internet. However, do not stop there.

Your public library can point you to other data that may be useful from state and local sources. Useful documents may include help wanted ads, filings with regulatory agencies, credit reports, court proceedings and other government documents.

3. Talk To Unpublished Sources

Talking to others often works hand in hand with researching documented information. Unpublished sources can include your own company’s employees, advertising agencies and other business contacts. Talking to other sales professionals and customers of competitors can also be beneficial.

Become active in a local chapter of a marketing organization, like the American Marketing Association, to stay in the know. It may also be useful to keep a file of articles on each competitor for ready reference.

4. Deliver The Information In A Helpful Way

The last thing a buyer wants to hear is innuendo. Back up whatever you say with sources. You can cast doubt without coming across as someone who demeans others. Deliver your information in a way that contrasts and sheds positive light on your organization. This means being perceived as constructive not destructive.

If you need information, it may be worth your while to hire an information investigator or researcher. Through interviewing and focus groups, he or she will probably be able to get information a lot quicker than you can. Since many sales professionals do not conduct research in a serious way, gathering useful information on competitors could give you the upper hand in securing business. ■



Master Salesmanship™ (ISSN 0199-3887) is published bi-weekly by Clement Communications, Incorporated, 3 Creek Parkway, P.O. Box 2208, Upper Chichester, PA 19061 for \$247.00 per year per single copy subscription. Multiple copy rates and back issues are available on request. Periodicals postage paid at Upper Chichester, PA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Master Salesmanship™, P.O. Box 2208, Upper Chichester, PA 19061. Customer Service: 1-800-253-6368 or customerservice@clement.com. The information contained in this publication is intended for the general information of our readers and should not be construed as legal or professional advice or opinion. CCI makes no guarantee nor assumes any responsibility for the information or its applicability regarding any specific or factual situation. ©2010 Clement Communications, Incorporated. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission. Printed in the USA.

Master Salesmanship™ — page 4

Master Salesmanship

DONNA S. DeCARLO — Managing Editor
NEIL TAPP — Art and Design
CARRIE CAPILI — Publications Director