

DAVID PENGLASE

ESSENTIAL SELLING SERIES

EVERYDAY LIFE LESSONS TO HELP SALESPEOPLE SELL MORE CONFIDENTLY,
COMFORTABLY, CONSISTENTLY AND COMMERCIALY

The Essential Selling Series

By David Penglase

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THIS IS NOT A TYPICAL BOOK

Welcome to The Essential Selling Series. Here you will find a collection of key ideas, practice principles, strategies and tips that will help you to sell more confidently, comfortably, consistently, and commercially.

You will quickly discover that this book has not been written to be read sequentially, therefore you won't find chapters or sections.....just a collection of individual messages from everyday life situations that are written in simple to read, entertaining and conversational style.

Most of us are time-strapped today, and although you may choose to read the book sequentially from start to finish, it isn't necessary....in fact, my recommendation to you is to turn to the messages that seem to jump out at you whenever you decide to pick up the book and flick through the pages.

Each message in The Essential Selling Series has been written with the intention for quick and enjoyable reading, a simple challenge and the opportunity to take immediate action.

My challenge to you is that as you read each message, ask yourself the question...how can I apply this to my own selling approach? Write your

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action plan, set some goals, implement the principles and review your progress.

I would welcome any feedback on your experiences with these ideas and you can email me at david@davidpenglase.com

Enjoy, and good selling.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Penglase', written in a cursive style.

David Penglase

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Understanding Choices Win Sales

UNDERSTANDING CHOICES WIN SALES

I don't know about you, but every now and then (sometimes more often than not), I think about the many choices that we all get to make in any day, and on reflection, my take on the choices that we make is that there are always upsides and downsides to the consequences of our choices.

Let me explain.

When my eldest son Matthew started pre-season Aussie Rules football training for the under 16's Ramsgate Footy Club it was brought to my attention that sometime during a weak moment in the previous year, I had apparently put up my hand to be assistant coach and fitness trainer for the boys.

Now I've got to tell you that at that stage it had been over 25 years since I played first grade football for the Koondrook Tigers, and after our first 2-hour training session, and almost 3 days later, although I felt fantastic, the pain really settled in on muscles that hadn't been used for those 25 years. Ouch!

At the end of the first training session, I still remember Jeff the coach coming over and telling me that one of the keys to gaining the boy's respect was to be able to show them that you'll put in as much as you're asking them to put in. And that was my goal for the season....to do

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whatever I asked of the boys myself...to model the fitness levels and participation that I expected them to achieve.

I had a choice to be a stand on the side and call the shots type of coach, or a get in and do it type of coach. I chose the latter. Now in making that choice there were times when I wish that I hadn't. A stress fracture in one foot, both ham strings tearing, a dislocated finger and another broken - but I wouldn't swap any of these things because of the fun I had with the boys at training, the success we had as a team and the pride I felt as I watched our training and fitness be displayed each week on the footy field.

So, what's this got to do with sales?

Well, it's really about choices. Our clients have choices that they can make about our products and services, and whether they will buy them from us from our competitors.

With every choice they make, there too will be upsides and downsides. Our job as professional salespeople is to understand what the up and down sides of our offerings are.... where are the strengths in our product features and benefits and where are the weaknesses. More importantly, how and why are these strengths and weaknesses for each client.

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This is again about being focused on individual client value, rather than just on our features and benefits.

It's highly unlikely that your products and services will be exactly everything the client is personally after to cater for their individual situation. Sometimes it might have more features than the client actually wants or needs (and although these features may be of benefit to some, they may not be benefits to every client). Sometimes your offering may not have the exact feature and corresponding benefit and value that the client is looking for.

So the key is to really understand each client's particular situation and then to be able to explain how your products, services, features and benefits can deliver the best value based on their personal circumstances.

This is the difference between selling features and benefits, to selling real client value.

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Key Points:

- Potential and existing clients will nearly always have a choice between buying from us and our competitors
- Competitive knowledge is important to understand how our products and services 'stack up' in terms of comparative value
- Selling value takes us beyond just features and benefits – it personalises every sales presentation we make.

Practice Principle:

Ask great questions about every potential and existing client's specific situation and you will be able to tailor every sales presentation to demonstrate real value.

Why First Impressions Win or Lose Sales

(How a kidney stone lost a sale)

WHY FIRST IMPRESSIONS WIN OR LOSE SALES

As you can see, I was going to title this message “How a Kidney Stone lost a sale” but decided on the less medical “Why first impressions win or lose sales.”

Obviously we all know that first impressions count, but recently I was reminded even more than ever. In fact my experience caused me to go back and review the **Top Ten *beyond the BASICS of selling*[®] Tips on Building Rapport.**

Let me take a moment and explain what happened, and at the end of this message, I've provided you with a link to allow you to download the **Top Ten *beyond the BASICS of selling*[®] Tips on Building Rapport.**

I needed to buy a duplex phone set for our home. I went to Myers department store in the Sydney CBD and was looking at the products available when I was approached by Brad (not his real name) who asked if he could be of assistance.

“Yes” I replied. “I need some help with choosing a duplex phone set”

“Oh man....” Brad had his hands resting on his lower back, and then he said “I've got a kidney stone.”

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Now I can tell you that I enjoy surprises, and of all of the things I thought he might have said, I'd never in my wildest dreams thought of that.

"Gee, I'm sorry about that" was the best I could reply. "Would you like me to wait for someone else to serve me?"

"No, you're right mate," Brad grimaced. "Now what are you after?"

"I need some help with these phones" I repeated.

"It was one and a half inches," Brad once again stopped me in my tracks.

"What was one and a half inches?" I confusingly enquired.....I know I shouldn't have asked, but I didn't quite know what he was on about.

"The first stone I had" came the reply.

"Ouch" was all that I could think....then I realised that I'd said it out loud.

"No it's O.K....I couldn't pass it, so they had to operate." Brad seemed to be feeling better as he explained his medical history.

"Gee, that's terrible.....but what about my phones?" I tried to get things back on track....I was after all there to buy something.

Brad took a deep breath and said, “Look mate, to be honest, I’ve been on my feet too long today, and the reality is that all the phones do the same thing. All you’ve got to decide is which colour, style and price you want to pay. I’m going for a break.”

And off he went.

Now I didn’t buy the phones from Myers, and although I did feel a bit sorry for Brad, if I ran my business that way, I’d be broke.

The reality is, first impressions do count for a lot, whether we like it or not.

How well are you managing your first impressions?

Key Points:

- First impressions count
- A genuine desire to help each and every potential and existing client is the foundation for long term sales success
- Whether we like it or not, people make judgemental decisions about what they see us do and hear us say

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Practice Principle:

Approach every potential and existing client in a way that demonstrates your genuine desire to help them. Give them the personal and emotional space to feel comfortable to make a wise and informed buying decision.

Handling the Tough Times in Sales

(Are you a 'good times' salesperson or an 'all seasons' professional?)

HANDLING THE TOUGH TIMES IN SALES

Recently I was reminded once again of the importance of promising what you can deliver and delivering on what you promise. This has been one of our business values ever since we set up our business over a decade ago. And I will be the first to admit that this is an easy value statement to say, but sometimes it really does take some work to be able to 'live up to' the value.

I firmly believe that most of us have every intention of fulfilling a promise when we make it – whether that is to a client or potential client in business, or in our social lives. And yet, sometimes our intentions and even our actions may not always equate to promise fulfilled.

It can be something as simple as a phone message that says "I'll get back to you".

Some time ago now, we had a plumber come and inspect some work that we needed to have done during our renovations on our home and office.

I remember that Liz and I had called the plumber a couple of times to find out where he was up to with preparing a quote and outline of what needed to be done to achieve what we needed.

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After a couple of phone calls where his voice message would simply say “I’ll get back to you” Liz and I basically gave up trying and went and sourced another plumber to do the work.

Months passed, and all of a sudden to our amazement, a proposal and quote turned up from the original plumber.....no letter with it, no explanation....just a proposal and quote. Now the reality is that maybe he was so busy that he didn’t want or need to do the work.

Life is great when business is booming.

What I can say is that this plumber will never receive a testimonial or referral from us...and maybe he will never need one - I hope that business is always as booming as it must currently be.

But for most of us the reality is that business has its seasons. Sometimes good and sometimes not so good. And it's how we handle both the good times and the more difficult times that is the key to long term business success.

How Do You Handle The Tough Times?

But how do we cope when competition increases and maybe we have to work a little (or a lot) harder to achieve the revenue levels and profitability that is essential for us to sustain and grow in the long term?

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I was with one of my clients recently, who for the past few years had been experiencing extremely good times from a sales revenue and profitability perspective. We were chatting about his sales team and the successes they were having.

I asked him a question that comfortably disturbed him. I asked “how do you know which of your salespeople were successful because of what they were doing, and which were successful simply because of the booming market that they were lucky enough to find themselves in?”

He thought for a moment, but then had to admit that he really didn't know. Was the fact that three of his sales team were on holiday and had actually achieved record sales a result of the work that they had completed prior to going on holidays, or was it just that if they were there or not, their customers were going to be placing orders?

Here's a question for you to consider

What are you personally doing for each of your current clients that will cause them to want to place the next order, or will cause them to refer others to you to place new orders?

The old chestnut of a salesperson being an order taker or an order maker is still one of the most important attitudinal differences that separate highly effective salespeople in the long run over those who are successful only in the good times.

Are you a 'good times' successful salesperson, or are you an 'all seasons' successful salesperson?

And so back to promise keeping

This brings me back to this notion of promise keeping. What promises have you or could you be making to your clients, that when you live up to those promises, will cause you to always be at top of mind for your clients and distancing you from your competitors?

Key Points:

- Promise what you can deliver, and deliver on your promises
- When times are good, keep in touch with clients even more – because when times get bad, they will remember you positively first.
- Extra mile philosophy is still one of the key success strategies for effective selling

Practice Principle:

Devise a 'stay in touch' program that enables you to systematically, but personally, stay in touch with your top class clients in ways that create

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additional value for them that they don't have to pay for and would be pleasantly surprised with.

Developing a Meaningful Point of Difference
(Beyond just being different)

DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL POINT OF DIFFERENCE

As you read through these messages, you will start to see that there is a recurring theme in many around renovations. That's because our family put up with nearly fourteen months of going through a major renovation to our home.

I hope you don't get sick of this renovation theme, it's just that as we renovate our home and office, I'm reminded of so many important principles by which salespeople and businesses in general need to be aware of and practice.

At the time when we were up to trying to choose a kitchen supplier, it became quite apparent to me why some businesses (large, medium or small) find themselves in trouble.

The lesson we learned was all about all to do with distancing ourselves from our competitors!

The first kitchen supplier that we went to was absolutely brilliant. They asked lots of questions to get a feel for what we were doing, when we were going to need the kitchen to be supplied, and our general price range. They also told us what we needed to do before they could help us – get our minds around specific detail about features and benefits that we were looking for. No pressure to 'buy now' and have really been a joy to work with.

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The other two suppliers that we have visited basically just seemed to be totally uninterested in our business – or at least the salespeople were, but I bet you the business owners would have been upset at how their people were losing sales.

Apathetic is probably the easiest way to describe how these other two kitchen supplier salespeople treated us as potential buyers. I'm convinced that they neither cared about our needs, when we were going to buy a kitchen and certainly didn't want to extend themselves to be of any assistance.

Now I'm sure you're not likely to treat any of your potential or existing customers in this way, but it is certainly worth a reminder to us all that in some way, we need to positively be distancing ourselves from our competitors.

Apathy is a terribly negative point of difference. When all else is the same – same products, same price, same quality – it really quite often does boil down to the person who genuinely shows the most interest will have a greater chance of winning the business.

What's your point of difference?

I've asked this question of many salespeople and business owners. Some are able to arrive at their answers quite quickly, while others

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struggle. Do you really have a point of difference? If so, is it really that important to your potential and existing clients?

This raises another question...How motivated are you to actually work on and continually develop your point of difference?

Just in case you haven't completed our free "Motivation-Thermometer" to see how you compare to other sales people and the way they view their overall level of motivation to win sales, you can do so by jumping on the net and visiting

http://www.davidpenglase.com/sales_motivation.html

Key Points

- Apathy loses new and repeat business
- When products and services all look the same, sometimes you and your approach to the client becomes the only valuable point of difference
- The questions you ask will distance yourself from product-focused sales people

Practice Principle:

Ask yourself what can you do to demonstrate value to this client above and beyond what they would typically expect when buying from you or your competitor. Your answers will set you on a path of differentiation.

Sales 101 from a Computer Hacker

SALES 101 FROM A COMPUTER HACKER

I've always found it fascinating to learn from other people who own and manage their own business just what they do.

Recently I was a guest of the Australian Institute of Export at the Premiers Awards of Excellence in Exporting. It was a great event and there was an air of excitement and a feeling of opportunity that is hard to describe in words that can really capture just what it's like to be in a room of 600 plus business owners discussing their challenges, strategies and successes.

Sharing the table with me were people who managed a vast array of businesses. Corrine on my left was a manufacturer and exporter of natural skin care products. Next to her was Lee who owned and managed an international diving instructors business. To my right was Andrew from the Australian Institute of Export, and my award for the most unusual business for the evening (on our table at least) was Robert.

Robert was a professional computer HACKER!

That's right. This young, fit, professionally and conservatively dressed man owned a company that was making a fortune by offering his and his ever growing internationally based team's service of legally (thank

goodness he isn't on the *dark side*) hacking into the computers and intranets of companies around the world.

Lessons from the computer hacker

A couple of points came from my chance meeting with Robert.

1. Find out what worries people and look for ways to solve it and you can have a very successful business.

Imagine if you're an 'at risk' company, dealing constantly on the internet, and someone comes along and shows your computer division that they can hack into the 'unhackable system' and then shows them how to make sure others can never do it.....what would you pay for that kind of security and peace of mind?

2. Sales and business growth requires first an attitude of personal growth.

This second point came from something Robert said to me....once again, one of those one-liners that went straight into my journal....and now I'm able to share it with you. What Robert said to me was "I think the stage that we are in our business is a mirror of the stage where we are in our own life." I've thought about this a lot since he said it, and have drawn the conclusion that I'm convinced he has made a great observation.

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If we're not growing personally (either intellectually or emotionally) I wonder if we could be in a situation where we would be challenged to grow in our business or to grow our business?

Key Points:

- Find out what problems clients have, what worries them, and work out how what you do can reduce their worries, concerns or undesirable situation
- Adopt a personal growth and continual learning attitude and your life and business will have a greater chance of flourishing

Practice Principle:

Take time to do a 'growth audit' on your skills, knowledge and attributes. Ask yourself, "What skills, knowledge or attributes do I need to develop to help me to achieve even greater levels of success?"

Personalise Presentations

(Beware the easy approach - it can lose you sales)

PERSONALISE PRESENTATIONS

I don't know about you, but one of life's joys is when I meet up with someone from my past who I haven't seen for a long time, but that for one of those mysterious reasons that I never try to understand or explain, they figuratively arrive on the doorstep just at the right time.

Has that ever happened to you?

Let me tell you about the time that I had a phone call out of the blue from a colleague that I used to work with in the late nineties, when I was working for one of Australia's largest recruitment and consulting firms.

Roger is now the co-director of an exciting new change management consulting firm called Elica. One of Roger's clients was needing some executive selling skills and he went searching the web to find me...and did.....so we're now about to work with the client to help them increase their sales strategies and results.

How a competitor won a sale for a friend

Anyway, the reason I mention Roger is that he told me about an assignment that they won recently – well, actually they didn't win it, their competitor lost it.

Roger's firm had tendered for some work with a potential client and when he received a call from them telling him that their company had got down to the final two potential suppliers he was obviously happy.

They presented their initial tender to the Board, and Roger recounted to me that he wasn't that confident at the end of the presentation because it seemed that one of the Board members had already made their decision to go with their competitor.

They were asked after the presentation to submit their final proposal based on what they had learned from the Board meeting and did so.

The following week, they received a call from the Chairman of the Board informing them that they had won the assignment. Obviously pleased, and somewhat surprised, Roger asked what it was that caused the Board to choose Elica over their competitor?

The Chairman told Roger that their competitor was definitely the initial choice up to and including after the Board presentations. However, when they submitted their final proposal, the competitor had obviously

just copied a previous proposal and had forgotten to remove the previous client's name and company logo from the footer of the document.

What was worse, was that the company name and logo that was incorrectly on the proposal footer was a direct competitor of the company that they were now pitching to do the consulting work with.

OUCH!

So what's the lesson?

Obviously if you're in the business of writing sales proposals, the simple lesson is to check your proposals before you submit them.

But there's a deeper and more important lesson (and probably more than just this one that I'm going to mention). The real lesson from this example in my opinion is although it's easy and O.K. to cut and paste standard information into a proposal document (I certainly do this and would encourage anyone in sales to do this), the document should reflect true client focus – not just a top and tailed standard proposal.

Here are some questions to consider when you're next in a situation where you might be writing a proposal to a potential client where the type of work that you will be doing is fairly standard for you:

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What are this client's real needs?

What value is this client seeking that differs from others?

How are you personalising every paragraph?

How are you tying back every point to “and what this means for the client”?

How are you really tailoring your response, as opposed to just top and tailing the header and the footer?

Humble arrogance versus Lazy arrogance

I often talk about a trait of highly successful salespeople that I've met as being the trait of "humble arrogance". I believe you need to be humbly arrogant about the value you deliver, but when the humble arrogance steps over the line and becomes lazy arrogance, you will lose more sales than you will win.

Key Points:

- Check the fine print before you send anything to a potential client
- Tailor your presentations and proposals – don't just top and tail with a new name and address
- A humble arrogance in your personal belief in the value you create is fine, but lazy arrogance can cost sales

Practice Principle:

Adopt a personal policy of tailoring every discussion or sales presentation to every client's personal needs or wants or situation.

Sales Scripts that Lose Sales

SALES SCRIPTS THAT LOSE SALES

Is it just me....or are you getting inundated with badly scripted, poor communicator type telemarketers?

Here's a typical example. I got a phone call (surprisingly at 9:30am and not the usual 8:30pm.....what are they thinking?) from a Motel in the beautiful Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

I answered the phone with my typical answer "Good morning, this is David Penglase". Immediately the person on the other end of the phone started with "Hello, I'm calling from the Take a Rest Motel "(not the real name) "to let you know that we're trying to get more people to come and spend time with us in the beautiful Blue Mountains."

Now, the person hadn't used my name, hadn't taken a breath, and somehow, just kept on going.

"To help convince people to discover or rediscover the Blue Mountains, we decided not to spend our money on advertising, and have selected 50 businesses of which you are one of the lucky ones to spend either 3 days and 2 nights on a weekend or 4 days and three nights mid week, breakfast and a 3 course meal on all nights, all for the amazing low price of \$269.....have you heard of our motel before?"

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Finally I had an opportunity to say something. I resisted saying what I was thinking, as I wanted to know how far this would go.....so I simply replied “No I haven’t”.....and off she went again.

“Well we are a three and a half star motel located in Wentworth Falls where you can experience all that the Blue Mountains has to offer during the day and then return to us by a cosy fire and share a quite port, liqueur and a chat with the other guests before your dinner.....it sounds lovely doesn’t it?”

And there it was...just what I was waiting for – the opportunity to answer the closed question that I knew would be coming....so I just gently and honestly answered “No...I’m sorry - it doesn’t”.

Now obviously the telemarketer had not expected this, because she fumbled to find what she was supposed to say and simply said “Oh....really”.

So I waited, and there was silence and she then said “Well, thanks for your time” and hung up the phone.

Now I fully understand that for many people the offer may have been fantastic, but for me, I really just wasn’t interested. But more than that, it was the fact that she was just reading a script at me that really put me off. She made no genuine attempt to enter into dialogue with me. There was no sincerity in her voice. There was no attempt to find out if

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a holiday in the Blue Mountains or anywhere for that matter was something I was considering.

My point is simply this, we can learn a lot about selling (and how not to sell) by listening to telemarketers who get it wrong. The poorly trained telemarketers don't try to build rapport and engage the prospect (you) in a conversation, and usually don't ask any *appropriate* questions to determine if you really are a prospect or just another person to read the script to.

Telemarketers can get it right

The good ones get it right and engage you. In my personal experience, Theos (a liquor outlet) telemarketers get it right. They've actually asked me when would be a good time to call me. They've asked me the types of wines I drink now and what I would be most interested hearing about. They've asked me the type of price range I am interested in.

Now when they ring me, we actually have a conversation about what I've tried (whether it's been purchased from them or not), we discuss their offers, and it's all very pleasant. Each time they seem to find out a little more about me and obviously note it down and when appropriate, refer to it in our conversations.

The calls don't take that much longer than a scripted call probably would, but the key point is that I am more likely to buy.

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Now maybe I'm not a typical consumer.....but talking with people in my seminars or at conferences, I haven't found many who are happy with telemarketers in general.

The take-away point from this week for me is that genuine interest in getting to know the potential client and their current situation can go much further than a shallow attempt at flogging a product. I still firmly believe that you can't fake sincerity – in the long run, we get the business we deserve.

Key Points:

- Nothing beats genuine interest in building rapport
- Scripts are fine in principle, but when used as a “talk at” tool, as opposed to a guide for decent dialogue, most people feel patronised and offended
- Don't tell people what they want, ask them what they want

Practice Principle:

Actually tell people that you want to help them (not necessarily using those words) and you'll be amazed at how that can help you connect both emotionally and intellectually with your prospective and existing clients.

In Sales You Can't Do Things in 'Half Rights'

IN SALES YOU CAN'T DO THINGS IN 'HALF RIGHTS'

Here's a good example of how the 'half right' principle can cause you to lose sales.

I remember receiving in the mail a package from my financial planner. Now, if you've seen any of my presentations, you will know that I am an advocate of the value that can be gained from professional financial planning. Liz and I have been with our financial planner now for the best part of a decade and he continues to help us achieve our financial goals which enable us to achieve our lifestyle goals.

But this time, in my opinion, he MESSED UP BAD.

In the package was a plain cheap red plastic two-ring binder. It had 3 clear plastic sleeves inside and 5 coloured tab inserts with nothing in them or written on them. On the spine of the folder inserted in a small plastic area there was a piece of paper with our names David & Elizabeth Penglase and the words "Comprehensive Ongoing Service Investment Folder."

O.K., so we've received a 'special' folder from our financial planner as part of their revised comprehensive ongoing service....so how is this messing up?

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Inside the first plastic insert, was a standard letter – sure it had our name and an update of our investments, but it was far from personal. Our financial planner knows us real well. But from this standard letter, you wouldn't know it.

The second plastic insert simply had (as advised in the standard letter) the contact numbers and email address for the financial planning office....but no names.

The third plastic insert had an A5 size piece of paper asking if we would like to receive their half yearly newsletter....not sure what would be in it, or what value we might gain from it....because there was no information about it at all....just an invite to receive it.

Also included in the third plastic insert were three coloured envelopes, no branding whatsoever on them, no address, no replied postage paid stamp, no explanation as to what they were for.

So I flick over the third plastic insert and I arrive at the 5 different coloured A4 tabs. Nothing in them, nothing to guide me on what they might be for.

Now, maybe you're reading this and thinking "boy....what a whinger" and maybe you're right.

But to me, this is a great example of going HALF WAY TO GETTING IT RIGHT. And sometimes, going half way to getting it right causes more damage than good.

O.K.....at least they've got the idea to supply the clients with something of added value. That's great. But personalise it. I don't just mean with our names, but how about a short hand written note on the standard letter from the adviser? How about a letter that included some linkage from our last meeting? How about a higher level of quality in the folder that was branded with their logo, business name and mission statement? How about a more personal list of names and contact numbers and email addresses of the people we might need to be in contact with? How about an explanation or suggestions on how we might best use the tabs?

It's a matter of perceived value again

Sure, we could work all this out, but that's not the point. It looked cheap, and therefore cheapened the value. It wasn't personalised, so therefore cheapened the value. It wasn't well put together, so therefore cheapened the value.

So here's the question that I'm asking Liz and myself about our business, and maybe you might ask it about your own business....

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“In what ways might we be only going half way to getting it right?”

Lizzie and I are now going back over our follow-up and stay in touch programs. We’re looking again at our email messages. We’re looking again at the consistency of our branding and what we’re sending out, what we place on the web, what we say and do.

It’s probably impossible to go all the way to getting it right all the time, but limiting the number of times that we go only half way to getting it right will, I’m sure, build greater relationships and deliver greater value.

Key Points:

- The half-right principle can cause you to lose sales
- When adding value, ensure that it truly adds value
- Do your added value attempts live up to the values and image and branding that you espouse?

Practice Principle:

Before you send anything out to a client ask yourself the questions:

“In what way will this form of contact add value to this client?”

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and

“Does what I’m about to send to this client reflect well on my business and my values?”

Like it or Not – Image Sells

LIKE IT OR NOT, IMAGE SELLS

I remember when I had just completed a national tour with one of Australia's leading financial services organisations. They asked me to be the closing speaker for the professional development training days in each of the capital cities around Australia. The theme of the presentations was 'beyond image – how to present effectively to win more sales'.

It was really a lot of fun doing this presentation. I had the audience laughing about some habits of men and how they really bugged some women, and how some habits of women really bugged men. I won't go into specifics, but I bet you can think of a few....dare I say, the toilet seat being left up was always one of the first habits raised.

Now we joked around a little about these 'personal habits' and then got to think about the habits that we have at work that can positively or negatively affect the image that we project.

I'm sure you've heard the maxim 'the teacher can only teach when the learner is ready to learn.' Having been in the professional speaking and corporate education industry for over twenty years this is certainly something that I truly believe and have observed in action many times.

During my presentation on 'beyond image' I would invite a person who we had pre-planned to dress quite unprofessionally. He'd have

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sunglasses sitting on top of his head, a Mickey Mouse tie, unironed old slacks, a yellow stained crumpled shirt and really badly worn unpolished shoes.

Again we'd joke around a little and we had some other people come and do a 'makeover' to reveal the true professional that he actually was. They would take his sunglasses away, having him get rid of the chewing gum, give him a shave and have him dress in a more professional suit, shirt, tie and shoes (this was all done back stage of course).

I covered a lot of important points about how our actions and behaviours send loud and clear messages to everyone about who we are and what we represent, individually and collectively. I talked about the six key stages of a sale where our image can either be goal supportive or goal obstructive, and the importance of genuine sincerity in our approach with potential and existing clients.

The presentations were always well received with lots of positive feedback.

But here's the thing. At the end of each of the presentations, the management team sponsored a few drinks and finger food as part of their end of year celebrations. Following the second last of the presentations, there I was, chatting with a few of the people from the audience, when I noticed this one guy, chatting to some other

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people....and guess what was sitting on top of his head –
yep....sunglasses.

Now, did I fail in my presentation? Well, maybe I'm disengaging from my responsibility, but I don't think so. And not that wearing sunglasses on top of your head while inside a darkened room deserves a prison sentence.

So what's my point?

My point is that the teacher can only teach when the learner is ready to learn.

He, like all the others in the room, listened to the presentation, but not everyone heard the presentation.

As you're reading this message, take a moment this week to think about what areas you still need to learn to help you to achieve your potential. What skills, knowledge or attributes will you work on throughout this year to help you to sell more than you've ever sold before, or to achieve at higher levels than you've ever achieved before?

Remember that if you're not investing in your own personal growth and development, you're not a very good judge of a worthwhile investment.

Key Points:

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- People make quick decisions about who we are based on our image
- Our personal and professional habits are the drivers of our success
- When the learner is ready the teacher will appear

Practice Principle:

Think about your personal and business brand and in everything you think, say and do, make sure that they are a true reflection of what and who you espouse to be.

Ask Yourself the Tough Questions

ASK YOURSELF THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

In a keynote presentation called “Fulfilling our promises” I take time to share with the audience a series of questions that I ask of myself.

I’ve been asked many times to record these questions, so here’s the transcript....I hope these questions help you reflect on the year past and plan for the year ahead.

“As I stand in front of you today, with all that I see happening, and with all that I feel in the depths of my emotion, I take this breath and dare to pose these questions, with apprehensive expectation of truthful answers.

I ask of myself.....what value my life? At the end of my hours, what if I look back and realize I have not made a difference?

I ask of myself....for what do I stand? In the light of day and in the shadow of night, have I vigilantly stood rigid and backed my beliefs in thought, in words, in spirit and in action?

I ask of myself....has integrity been my compass? In the face of youthful abandon, adversity, of ever present aging, of pressure, competition and ego, have I been true to my values and modeled the behaviour that I expect of others?

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I ask of myself...have I made valuable contribution? When life has been so good in providing us with such prosperity, have I shared knowledge, given time, and helped others to discover the passion to strive for their potential?

I ask of myself...have I spent my time well? As I watch with protective eyes, the growth of our children so precious, has their unconditional love been nurtured with concentration, encouragement, patience and reciprocal love unbridled?

I ask of myself...have I been a good neighbour? Not just to those in homes nearby, but to friends to my family and to colleagues in work? Have I been open, focused and genuine, and have I been there for those when all seemed too difficult to bare, with a window of opportunity, of support and care?

I ask of myself...have I sought knowledge and wisdom? And in searching have I discovered ways to enlighten those of lesser opportunity, but with dignity and meaning and never superiority?

I ask of myself...if it all ended tomorrow, would those who stood in repose of my soul, be singing my praises in truth and earnest, or be struggling to find a few good words?

I ask of myself...is mediocrity sufficient? Could it be that I could still learn more? Could it be possible to increase my skills and become a

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better person? Is potential worthwhile? If not, then why do we all have it, yet not strive to achieve it?

I ask of myself....can my dreams still come true? Could I set yet another goal, define another strategy and with trust in my intuitive faith and judgment, and despite all the evidence, that I might never succeed, still take the steps that I need and at least be able to say that I tried that which others have not?

And with no right do I dare to ask this of you....to not leave these questions to those final hours, when you will reflect, as I know we will all do.

These are the questions that I ask of myself so that in finding the answers, I might be able to strive to live up to and fulfil my promise.

Key Points:

- It's the tough questions that we ask and answer of ourselves that contribute more to our growth than most other things
- Life is more than just a sale, but our success in sales will be directly related to our life's purpose and pursuit of that purpose
- Finding purpose and staying true to that purpose can be a wonderful sense of pride.

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Practice Principle:

Take these questions and rephrase them to be more meaningful to you. Take time to reflect on each question's meaning and then answer them as honestly as you will allow yourself.

Enjoy the learning.

Lessons from the New Year Sales

LESSONS FROM THE NEW YEAR SALES

I don't know about you, but the madness around the new year sales doesn't really do that much for me. Crowds of people looking for a bargain that they may or may not actually need, and under-staffed stores that just want to do the transaction without actually wanting to help you at all.

But those of us in a sales or sales leadership role can learn some important lessons from this "bargain-hunting-season."

Here are a few top of mind thoughts that have hit me as I have watched and unwillingly participated in some new year retail store sales.

1. Price is important: Most people really do want to get the best price they possibly can and many will go to extraordinary lengths to do so.

So what?

When you discuss the price of the products and services you sell, are you competing on 'commodity-terms' or are you competing on 'value-terms'? If you're competing on commodity-terms then you will generally have to discount to win the sale. If you're competing on 'value-terms' you will be able to stack up the value units that are important to the client, differentiate in some way that is important to

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the client, and generally, be able to maintain higher profit margin sales than your competitors.

2. Discounting can breed consumer-cynicism: Look at the amazing reductions in prices that are promoted – certainly the conversations we've had with our friends and family over this festive season usually has someone say "if they can reduce it that much, and still make money, imagine how much they're making when they charge full price!"

So what?

Rather than reducing the price of a product or service, do you have the opportunity to bundle or package additional and complimentary products or services to distance yourself and your products and services from being a commodity offering?

3. Simple decisions are often the best: One of the most popular places that get visited at Christmas in the larger retail stores here in Australia, like Myers and David Jones, are the 'gift idea sections' with packaged gifts like chocolate sauces, jams, mini-puddings, chocolates, nuts, candles etc., for stocking fillers or that last minute gift for the person you've forgotten. These sections in the retail stores make the quick decision all that more simple.

So what?

These quick gift ideas focus on solving a problem....the problem of "I don't really know what to get them....so what's safe, and highly likely that they will actually like?"

How easy are you making it for your potential and existing clients to make quick and easy buying decisions? What are you doing through your advertising, marketing, calling and face to face conversations to make it easy to buy?

As each new year seems to start off with an ever increasing and sometimes uneasy pace...one that many of us will be trying to harness and control as soon as possible, just imagine for a moment, what you will be able to achieve over the next year.

Imagine the success

O.K.....enough imagining....let's get to work and make it happen!

Here's cheers to the current year and to each new year and all that they will bring.

Key Points:

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- Price is important – don't ignore this, but don't make it the only point.
- Discounting can breed consumer-cynicism – try to add value before you need to resort to discounting
- Simple decisions are often the best – make it simple for your clients to make decisions to buy from you

Practice Principle:

Stack up value for every offer you make to a client and you will have less price objections or obstacles. If you can't articulate the value that you're offering, how will the client be able to see anything other than the price?

Motivational Goals and Winning Sales

MOTIVATIONAL GOALS AND WINNING SALES

I love it when someone is able to capture a moment that can leave a lasting affect on those around them. It doesn't happen all that often, but when it does, it's a great experience.

I remember a recent weekend when we had a few friends over for a BBQ. As we sat outside by our pool with the kids splashing and shaded by the mid afternoon sun under our pergola, one of our friends, looking out over the shimmering waters of Kogarah Bay commented on the number of yachts and boats that were moored.

He asked "Do you see them" (referring to the yachts and boats) "getting used very much?"

I hadn't really thought about it much, but when he asked the question, and after conferring with my wife Liz, we replied that in the three years that we had been in this home, and of the hundred or so yachts and boats that were moored, we had probably only seen less than ten ever move off their mooring.

To this, our friend replied "There are a lot of dreams out there that have never been fulfilled."

Wow!

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As I thought about his words, and took time out after the BBQ to put them into a broader perspective, I wanted to share with you a couple of questions that spring to mind this week:

Is what we often say we dream of, really what we would enjoy if we had it?

I wonder now whether many of the owners of the yachts and boats moored in the bay over which we look, had every intention of being out for a sail or fishing trip every or most weekends? And if they did, I also wonder what's now stopping them?

Now this may seem a bit strange, but I wonder if some dreams can be achieved, and yet still not fulfilled?

Selling is an interesting profession. For many of us, we are not working for a salary..... there are commissions and bonuses etc. As we set our sights on achieving each year, do we set our sights on achieving and then exceeding budget and receiving high commissions and bonuses?

This is of course how many of us do actually operate. We see the sales targets and what we need to do to achieve higher commissions and bonuses and then work like crazy to achieve those levels of sales.

However, I don't know about you, but for me, I've always needed something more than just the thrill of achieving and exceeding budget,

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commission and bonus to really motivate me. And I know this to be true for many others.

Maybe it's a trip, car, reduced mortgage, increased investments, golf clubs, new wardrobe, or whatever.....but it tends to be these things that are what most of us are really working for...not the dollars....but what the dollars will enable us to do.

As sales professionals sometimes it's easy to focus on the sales target – accept that it's a given...then focus on how you will be rewarding yourself and your loved ones when you achieve it.

Don't let your salary, bonus or commission end up just moored outside like the many yachts and boats sitting idly out in the bay.

Set some motivational dreams....set some personal rewards.....don't just achieve the goal, realize its full potential.

Key Points:

- Meeting our sales targets is of course a minimum standard of performance
- Our motivational goals help keep us focused on actions that will help us achieve our sales targets

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- Focus on sales activity and delivering high value and sales targets are often more easily achieved and beaten.

Practice Principle:

If you haven't set motivational goals recently for yourself, take time this week to do so, and remember to keep reminding yourself of how important they are to you. This will release an enormous amount of internal energy and drive for success.

Positive Thinking Without Action is just Pipe
Dreaming

POSITIVE THINKING WITHOUT ACTION IS JUST PIPE-DREAMING.

This week's message is a simple and short one, and it hit me square in the face and rang in my ears as I headed out this morning for a 10km run. Now don't tune out just yet....there really is a great sales message in this message.

I headed out for my run following the easterly shores of Kogarah Bay and as I turned to follow the shore around to the much more famous Botany Bay, I ran directly into a head wind. How fast? Can't tell you....except to say that I had to work harder than normal to keep up what I know to be a consistent pace.

Anyway to cut this potentially long story short, as I was running into this head wind, I heard that little voice inside my head (you know the one....we all have a little voice inside our heads....some of us more than one....but I digress....back to the story)...the little voice inside my head was telling me to keep going and push through this tough wind because the trip back will be a tail wind and soooo much easier.

And as my mind tends to do (it's probably a bit of a sickness I guess) I started to think about selling and how the head-wind was like the 'tough stuff' in sales and the tail-wind was like the rewards.

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Now you might be thinking that I'm drawing a long bow here, and probably I am, but again, I don't know about you, but for me, a lot of the must-do marketing activities (whether they are proactively passive or reactively assertive strategies) can be like running into a head wind.

We've got to do them.

We may not necessarily enjoy them. We may be rather doing other activities, but when it all comes down to it.....if we don't keep running into the head-wind, that is, if we don't do the marketing activities (the calls, the visits, the follow-up), the chances are that the head-wind will just get stronger and stronger until it becomes an absolute gale that we won't want to venture into at all.

The reality is that in sales, we've got to do the tough stuff to be able to enjoy the rewards...the tail wind.

So let me leave you this week with this thought....

“What are the tough-stuff in your sales and marketing activities that you might be currently avoiding that if you actually set a plan and followed through with it, would help you to experience more tail-winds and success?

Just before I ran my first ever marathon, one of the people in a seminar I conducted in Perth wrote to me and said....”You've completed all the

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training, and you've done what needs to be done....now enjoy your 42km victory lap."

They were wonderfully inspiring words that really did help me enjoy my first marathon.

Well, selling of course isn't a marathon. It's a process of clarity of purpose, genuine belief, planning and implementation of strategy and mutual exchange of value.

I hope that your head-winds are not too strong and that your tail-winds are many.

Key Points:

- Thinking about doing things and doing them are two totally different things
- Selling is a process and not just a project. Projects have end dates, the sales process continues with staying in touch with our clients to build advocacy.
- Doing the tough stuff can usually reap great rewards than spending too much time looking for the path of least resistance.

Practice Principle:

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“What are the tough-stuff in your sales and marketing activities that you might be currently avoiding that if you actually set a plan and followed through with it, would help you to experience more tail-winds and success?”

Tune in to What's Around, Not Just the Obvious

TUNE IN TO WHAT'S AROUND NOT JUST THE OBVIOUS

We once had an unplanned trip of necessity back to my home town of Koondrook, situated on the Victorian side of the Murray River. It was a quick trip in which we had driven over 2000 kilometres in the one week.

When we left Sydney we faced an immediate drive of about 1000 kilometres in the day. But when we broke it down into two hour blocks of shared driving between Liz and myself, the trip was actually quite enjoyable (despite the occasional “are we there yet” from our wonderfully patient sons).

I don't know about you, but for me, I've always found it to be amazing what you can experience, when you're ready to experience it.

On one of the mornings during this trip, I was staying with my eldest brother and his family in the nearby town of Cohuna, and I went for an early morning jog. The run took me out of town to the golf course where Stuart Appleby (at the time of writing Stuart was ranked in the top 10 players in the world of golf) started his golfing career.

As I ran (actually it's more of a limp and shuffle these days) along the road that was flanked by herds of cows that had just been milked that morning, I became aware of a sound that I didn't recognise and couldn't at first work out. It was a ripping sound that was echoing around me in the still morning country air.

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At first I thought it was a stone or something caught in the bottom of my running shoes, but then I realised it was an entire herd of cows, ripping and eating the grass in the left paddock. It was so loud, and yet, despite spending the first 20 years of my life in this type of environment, I had never heard this sound before.

Now there's a strong chance you're saying "big deal", and I guess I wouldn't blame you.....it was one of those moments you just had to be there.

However, in my somewhat twisted mind, this experience reminded me that quite often we can be in the midst of something and not necessarily be aware of it. You know the saying....."can't see the forest for the trees".

O.K., I know you're wondering where's the connection to selling here?

I'm glad you asked!

The connection is that quite often in sales, especially when we are in situations of managing larger accounts with multiple contacts, there is always the danger that we focus only on the 'doable deals' and not necessarily on the peripheral opportunities that might be nearby.

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If you're managing larger accounts with multiple contact potential, try to widen your focus by asking your existing contacts about who they interact with both inside and outside of their department and organisation. Then it's a case of asking in what ways these contacts influence their work flow and success.

You see, what you're doing by identifying these other contacts is not just for the purpose of finding out who else you might be able to speak to within and outside of the organisation, but you're keeping the conversation specifically focused on the work flow and success of the person you're speaking to.

This can be a great 'consultative way' of helping discover ways the client might be able to improve their communications and interactions with internal and external influencers of their success, but in addition, you get to learn a little about other potential contacts who you might be able to create value for through sales of your products and services.

Key Points:

- Break down large tasks into small manageable segments to change your view on what's possible
- In large accounts, sometimes we miss the potential by focusing on the obvious

- Look to the peripheral to discover additional sales potential

Practice Principle:

Make a list of the other contacts who your direct contacts are in touch with. Who do they rely on? How might you find opportunity to create more value for your clients by better understanding their other contacts?

How Your Label Can Win or Lose Sales

HOW YOUR “LABEL” CAN WIN OR LOSE SALES

Isn't it amazing how some of the marketing material for products and services can send conflicting or confusing messages?

This week I purchased a few energy gels for that extra carb hit during my training runs. Now, I'm not a big user of the gels, but find that they can really give you that boost to get you through barriers that can sometimes cause you to back off.

Anyway, this is not about fitness training or the level of my gel intake....it's about the labelling on the gel package.

Here's what was on the label....

FORMULATED SUPPLEMENTARY SPORTS FOOD

Not suitable for children under 15 years or pregnant women: Should only be used under medical or dietic supervision. Daily consumption should be no more than 1 satchel.

Fair enough you might say.

But on the reverse side of the package it read.....

Energise with one satchel 15 minutes before activity, sustain with one satchel every 45 minutes.

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Confusing? It provided me with enough information to decide not to use that particular brand at all.

What about your marketing material?

When was the last time that you sat down and read your brochures, sales and marketing materials from your potential and existing client's view point.

Here's an exercise for you this week that will be of real value to you.

Take one of your brochures or marketing letters etc., and with a highlighting pen, read through the material and highlight any words or phrases that might be jargon that your industry uses and that may not be that familiar to your potential and existing clients.

For example, in the financial services industry they use terms like "compounding interest" and "deeming accounts" and "redraw facilities" and "set-off accounts". Now although these terms are used often, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are often understood.

The jargon-value switch

Once you've completed this activity, you can use the brochure of marketing material much more effectively by using the *jargon-value*

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switch. The way you do this is to actually use the word or phrase as you're showing value to your potential clients, and then convert the word or phrase into a more client focused term.

To continue the example of the financial services industry, you might say something like.....

“You mentioned that you might need to get access to additional cash every now and then and that you're concerned that by paying more off your home mortgage might restrict your cash flow when you need it. Well, we have something that we call a 'redraw facility' which will allow you to withdraw the money that you have paid into the account when you need that little bit of extra cash....so that's certainly something you wont have to worry about.”

So make sure that when you do use jargon that you're showing value by converting the jargon into more client focused terms.

Key Points:

- Your collateral material (brochures, business cards, website etc) can help or hinder the buying/selling process
- Jargon in selling is often a blockage to the sale

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- Make connections between your jargon and what it means to the client thereby making the *jargon-value switch*.

Practice Principle:

Get your brochures and collateral material and highlight jargon (uncommon language for clients) and make *the jargon-value switch*.

How Mistakes Win or Lose Sales

HOW MISTAKES WIN OR LOSE SALES

I don't know about you, but I'm a big believer that if you make a mistake with a client, you have a great opportunity to genuinely demonstrate your commitment to the relationship in the way that you address the mistake and remedy the situation.

Now that doesn't mean that I enjoy making mistakes.....in our business we firmly stand by one of our internal company values, which is we try to promise what we can deliver and to deliver on our promises.

This week, we had a great example of how a person can really make a positive impression in the way that they fix a mistake that they originally made.

Our youngest son Anthony needed a hair cut, and hadn't really been that happy with the person that cut his hair previously. Liz had been referred by her beautician to a new hairdresser, so Liz decided to call her to book Anthony in. When she made the phone call, Liz quickly let the hairdresser know that she had been referred by Julie, her beautician. The hairdresser, whose name was Sally, said, "That's great" and then apologised and asked Liz if she could "hold for a moment" and Liz agreed. Sally put the phone down, but not "on hold" and was talking to someone in the background. After about 1 minute, the conversation seemed to have ended, and Liz was still waiting, but now expecting to be spoken to.....but nothing happened. Now Liz is a

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lot more patient than I am, so she remained 'on hold' for a total of 7 minutes before just hanging up.

As Liz was relaying her experience to me, she said, as soon as she had hung up, she had decided to not to ring back, and to look for another hairdresser.

However what happened next changed her opinion.

About half an hour later, Liz gets a phone call from Sally the hairdresser. Now, Liz had not left a return phone number, and had not given her last name to the hairdresser. Apparently, while being put on hold, there was an accident outside of Sally's shop, and she had gone to help out. Returning to the shop about 10 minutes later, she realised that she had left a potential customer on the phone. Sally had remembered that Liz let her know that Julie, her beautician had referred Sally, so Sally had called Julie and found out Liz's number.

Now when you think about it, it would have been just as easy for Sally to have just put the call down to a lost opportunity....but she went that extra distance to make what was an unfavourable first impression and turn it into a much more positive impression that caused Liz to now think that if Sally was prepared to go that far to regain her trust, that she was prepared to give her a second chance.

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Now.....Anthony hasn't been to Sally yet, but it really is a great example of going that extra mile when you've made a mistake, can really make a favourable impression on your clients.

So what are you doing to make favourable impressions with your clients? Not just when you make a mistake....but continually....even when things are going well. It's that extra mile philosophy that will create advocates who will pass on your name to others.....just as I'm passing on our experience with Sally the hairdresser.

Word of mouth marketing is a powerful strategy that you can control when you adopt an extra mile philosophy.

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Key Points:

- It's easy to just 'let go' of a problem, but that doesn't mean it ever really goes away
- First impressions count, but second impressions can be more lasting
- Word of mouth marketing starts with an extra mile philosophy

Practice Principle:

Adopt an extra mile philosophy this week. Look for opportunities to go that little extra way in service delivery, follow-up, or even just in the way that you communicate with people.

Self-Leadership and the Sales Professional

SELF LEADERSHIP AND THE SALES PROFESSIONAL

I like to look for quotes during movies that can help me challenge myself to continually do better.

While watching a TV series called LOST, one of the characters said the following:

“Effective leaders can’t lead until they know where they are going.”

Now I think that’s a pretty powerful quote. It’s true for leaders and it’s true for sales people too.

In sales, whether you are self employed, employed on a retainer or salary, or whether you are in a 100% commission based selling role, the more clear you are on where you are going, the more likely it will be that your self-leadership will help you get there.

This week, take some time to think about your self leadership.

Here are just a few of the areas worth considering, and I hope that some of them will help spark even more self leadership ideas for you.

Self Leadership Inventory Questions

How clear am I on my life goals?

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How clear am I on my sales goals?

How clear am I on how achieving my sales goals will help me achieve my life goals?

To what extent have I defined the daily, weekly and monthly strategies and activities to help me achieve my sales and life goals?

To what extent am I diligently acting on and successfully completing my daily, weekly, and monthly strategies and activities to help me achieve my sales and life goals?

How am I reviewing, reflecting and learning from the daily, weekly and monthly activities that I am completing?

What am I doing to increase my self learning and expertise?

What skills, knowledge or attributes do I not currently have, that if I developed them would help me achieve my goals?

Some of these are quite easy to answer, while others are somewhat more difficult. I hope you find one or more of them can be an excellent trigger for you to enhance your self leadership.

Key Point:

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- The more clear you are on where you are going, the more likely it will be that your self-leadership will help you get there

Practice Principle:

This week, take some time to think about your self leadership and set a personal development goal to improve in some way.

“Purchase Ponderers and Sales Opportunities

“PURCHASE PONDERERS” AND SALES OPPORTUNITIES

This message is short and specific. It's about creating great experiences for our clients and potential clients.

I remember one Easter weekend some time ago when we celebrated the 70th birthday of our dear friend Hope (no really.....that's her name), and we got to spend some time getting to know the new man in her life.

His name is Manfred and he came to Australia from Germany in the sixties. Manfred owns an antiques store in the Blue Mountains and he was telling us about his plans to increase the number of people who would visit his shop and thereby increasing the number of sales that he was making.

Manfred calls his shoppers, “purchase ponderers” which was a term I had never heard before. What Manfred believes is that people who come into his shop are looking, and may at times not even have entered the store with any intention to buy.

However, he also believes so much in the items that he stocks in his store, that he knows that many of the people who enter just need time to ponder over their decision. That's why he refers to them in a term of endearment as *purchase ponderers*.

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So his new plans are to open a high quality coffee and cake shop at the back of his store, that will enable people to browse through the antiques and bric-a-brac as they walk through the shop, and then, when they get to the coffee shop, they can ‘ponder over their intended purchase’ over a cup of coffee and perhaps a chat with Manfred himself.

Let’s take a moment this week to think about his reasoning and what we might learn as salespeople.

Manfred already has high quality products....but he wants to create reasons other than the products themselves for people to want to come into his shop.

In other words, it’s the experience above and beyond the products that he is focusing on to increase sales.

Some questions to challenge you

What are some things that you can do that would cause your potential customers to want to find out more about what you do and what you have to offer?

What experience are you creating for your existing clients and potential clients that will cause them to say “wow – that’s outstanding!”

Key Points:

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- Many people genuinely need time to ponder over their buying decisions
- Make it easy and comfortable for people to ponder over their buying decisions – sometimes *forcing* the issue can result in a *forcefield* that stops people from buying
- Create buying experiences for clients and not just a sale for you

Practice Principle:

Look for ways to create buying experiences for clients. Do things beyond just what your products and services offer. Look outside your industry for examples of what other sales people are doing to create buying experiences above and beyond just what they offer through their products and services.

The Principle of Active Empathy

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTIVE EMPATHY

I was interviewed by Valerie Khoo from the Sydney Morning Herald in 2005 for a story that appeared in the careers section on why companies hire professional speakers. One of the questions that Valerie asked me was “*what’s your angle?*”

When I told her that my main premise was that “*salespeople will sell more when they stop trying to sell*” there was a couple of seconds of silence on the phone, and then Valerie asked “*what do you mean by that?*”

We then started to discuss what I refer to as the Principle of Active Empathy. The principle of active empathy is different to merely having empathy for someone else. Empathy is an attitude. Active empathy is behavioural. It’s one thing to say that you need to have empathy for a client or a prospective client. It’s much more valuable to the building of any relationship to actively communicate and demonstrate that empathy in our thoughts, words and actions.

In a nutshell, most people communicate with others in the way that they themselves like to communicate. So, if you are a detailed type of person, you will generally communicate with others at a fairly detailed level. If you are a big picture type of person, you will generally communicate with others in big picture terms and little detail.

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However, applying the principle of active empathy causes us to allow the person with whom we are communicating to communicate with us in the way that they like to communicate. This doesn't mean we change our personality or mirror the other person. What it does mean is that we get a sense of how this other person likes to communicate and provide them the opportunity to do so.

For example, if the other person likes detail (and let's say you're not a detailed person), it just makes sense that even though you may not want to get bogged down in the detail, that if the other person wants to hear about the detail, that you will increase the value of the relationship by providing them with the detail.

Now the principle of active empathy is as simple and as complex as that. If the other person likes to talk a lot and you don't, the key here is that it's not about you necessarily talking more, it's about creating an opportunity for the other person to talk. If the other person just wants you to get to the point, it will add more value to the relationship if you just get to the point....regardless of whether you would like to go into more depth or not.

Think of your own buying situations.....how well do you think most salespeople who you buy from practice the principle of active empathy? Do they allow you to buy the way that you like to buy or do they sell to you in the way that they like to sell?

What about you?

Practising the principle of active empathy starts with an attitude of allowing others to be who they are.

Now I have been challenged occasionally by some people that this puts all the emphasis on us and that there is no responsibility on the other person to meet us half way.

My take on this is that it is our responsibility as sales professionals to create an environment where the buyer is comfortable to buy....not to create an environment where we can sell the way that we like to sell.

Hopefully you'll agree with me on that one.

Applying the principle of active empathy will definitely help you win more sales. Why? Because you're not trying to sell....you're creating an environment where people will feel comfortable and confident to buy.

Key Points:

- salespeople will sell more when they stop trying to sell.
- Empathy is an attitude. *Active empathy* is behavioural.

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- It is our responsibility as sales professionals to create an environment where the buyer is comfortable to buy

Practice Principle:

Practising the *Principle of Active Empathy* starts with an attitude of allowing others to be who they are.

A Reminder of the Power of Questions

A REMINDER OF THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

As I was preparing for a business trip to Malaysia and Singapore, I was busily pulling together various brochures, product samples and collateral material to use during the meetings that I had lined up with a range of multinational companies.

As I was putting together these 'information packs', I realized that I was potentially setting myself up for failure if I wasn't careful. I had a flash back to my first ever sales call, which was a disaster, when I was working as a sales consultant for one of Australia's largest recruitment and HR consulting firms.

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I remember that I had secured my first 'cold call' appointment with a large national men's clothing manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer. I took a colleague along for moral support and also to provide me with some feedback on how I would go in this first important meeting.

Well, it started out well. We were greeted by the General Manager, who invited us into his office. Meg and I sat down at his work desk, and I was about to say something to break the ice as it were, when the GM says to us "O.K. what have you got to show me?"

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I had prepared a desk top flip chart that went through our company, vision, objectives, and the areas that we were specialists in. To start my presentation I remember handing the potential client a 'one-page' brochure on what areas we generally helped companies with and then launched into the presentation, basically talking through each of the flip chart pages (kind of like the equivalent of today just going through a slide by slide power point presentation).

I could see this glazed look come over the prospect's face, but warily kept on with the presentation....realising that it wasn't going well, and that I was just talking and not really sure about what might be of interest to him.

That's when Meg came to my rescue. She simply and carefully interrupted my presentation by saying something like.... "while David's going through the presentation, and there really is a lot we'd like to cover, I was just wondering, what are some of your current issues that you're facing in getting your people to achieve the goals you're after?"

Well, you could see the colour start to come back in the prospect's face, he leaned forward, and for then next 15 minutes, provided us with a list of his current issues with his people. Now some of them we could help him with, and others, we could refer him to people who could help him.

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I know what you're probably thinking.....asking questions is so important....why didn't I start with a question like that?

Well the answer is simple. I didn't know then what I know now.

I was product focused. I was company focused. I was focused on everything but the client's needs.

Well, as I prepared my materials for that international business trip, I simply reminded myself not to be too anxious and excited to 'show my stuff' to prospective buyers in Malaysia and Singapore.

On the same topic, one of my existing clients who I met with recently was telling me how their salespeople seem to have reverted back to product selling, and they asked what was a good exercise or activity that they could complete that would get their people refocused on client needs.

Here's the question that I suggested that they facilitate a discussion around:

“Other than our product, what value do or could we create for our client that would cause them to choose to do business with us rather than our competitors?”

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It's not an easy question to answer, but one that if you ask it, and if you can come up with some real ways to create value, you are well on your way from transitioning from product focus to value focus.

Key Points:

- Plan, prepare and practise your sales and communication strategies
- Questions are the window to sales success
- Client focus is more powerful than product, company or self interest focus

Practice Principle:

Challenge yourself and your colleagues to answer this question:

“Other than our product, what value do or could we create for our client that would cause them to choose to do business with us rather than our competitors?”

The Answers Aren't Always Obvious

THE ANSWERS AREN'T ALWAYS OBVIOUS

I am often reminded of the value of listening and the value of seeking client feedback – especially when it comes to solving problems for clients.

Just one of many examples was at the Mercure Hotel (formerly the Airport Hilton) as I was sitting in the main entrance foyer waiting for a colleague. An upset customer staying at the hotel, who was obviously from overseas (I couldn't work out the accent), approached the reception desk.

I couldn't help but overhear the conversation, as she was quite loud, not aggressive, just loud. Apparently she had somehow locked herself in her room, and had to ring to get a hotel employee to let her out. She was now getting her key card for the room door re-activated, but was really concerned that she would somehow again lock herself in the room.

The front desk person said to the customer, you'll be O.K. now, the key is re-activated, so don't worry.

However, the customer again expressed her concern saying something like, "but I'm still worried it's going to happen again."

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The front desk person didn't budge, and just kept saying something like "it won't happen again, I've re-activated the key card."

This went back and forth for a while until the customer stormed off to the lifts to return to her room, still concerned and saying "why are all of you Australians so rude and snappy?"

Now I'm sure it is obvious to you, as it was to me, it would have been quite simple to have another hotel staff member escort the customer back to their room to check the situation and to ensure that the customer wasn't about to lock herself in the room again, and have to repeat the entire experience.

Obvious to you and me...but why not to the front desk person?

Sometimes our assumptions about a situation can block us from finding the best course of action from the customers point of view.

When you're speaking with your clients, especially if they have some kind of obstacle or objection or issue that they are facing, what do you do to ensure that you are really hearing what the source of the problem is, and what do you do to ensure that you are offering a solution that is going to actually satisfy the client?

A simple question to the client in this type of situation can often be of great assistance, and the question is.....

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“If I could do something to fix this for you, what specifically would you like to see happen?”

Now change that into your own words to reflect your own personality, but what this question doesn't say is that you will do what they want. What it is saying, is that if you can understand what the client actually wants to have happen, at least you can respond with whether you can or can't do it....and if you can't, at least you might be able to offer some alternative, based on your better understanding of what it is that the client would like to see happen.

Key Points:

- Listen beyond just what is being said by clients
- Seek feedback regularly when communicating with clients – ask for their opinions, feelings to gauge their understanding and agreement
- Assumptions can sometimes block the path to successful win-win situations

Practice Principle:

When faced with obstacles, objections or complaints from clients, ask them what they would like to have done to achieve the result that they're seeking. This is just one of many strategies to form a base for negotiation.

Rising Above the Sales Pack in Tough Times

RISING ABOVE THE SALES PACK IN TOUGH TIMES

Here's an example of when my thoughts were turned to how we as sales professionals can maintain our success during the 'tough times'.

I was sitting in the car wash café just around the corner from our home. We were in the middle of one of the worst droughts right across most of Australia, and with the water restrictions on in Sydney, it occurred to me that the car wash business must be doing amazingly well.

Apart from, in my opinion, the absurd notion of legislating that we can only wash our cars with buckets of water instead of using a hose – which has been proven to waste more water than using a hose, the manager of the car wash confirmed my observation that indeed times were good for them.

But the car wash is pretty much a 'come to' business, whereas, for most of us in professional selling, we are in a 'go get' business. So in this message I wanted to reflect on what to do in the tough times.

You see, it's all very well to gloat on how well things are going in the good times – budgets are easy to achieve, the phone is ringing and the orders and revenue is streaming in.

I remember working with a General Manager of one of this country's largest financial planning companies. I challenged him that when the

financial markets were booming, that his business development managers had it pretty easy.

I also challenged him (with the intention of comfortably disturbing his thinking) by saying 'in the good times even your lower performers can look like stars.' And I followed this up with 'but it's in the tough times when you really work out who the great sales people in your team really are.'

Rising Above The Pack

So here's a question for you to consider. When times are tough, markets competitive, brand differentiation is difficult, what can you do to rise above the pack?

Here are a couple of top of mind thoughts for you to consider and take action on:

1. Stay in touch with existing clients - especially the long-term loyal clients. Look for ways and opportunities, or create them, to say thank you for your business, and create some additional value that they don't expect or have to pay for.

2. Revisit lost accounts - review what happened with those accounts that you weren't able to win. What was or were the reasons? Is there

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opportunity for you to take some actions, send them something, have things changed?

3. *Continued learning* - what can you do to improve your skills, knowledge, attributes or motivation levels, that if you did, would help you to increase your quality and quantity of contact initiation activity?

4. *Open discussion on 'borderline accounts'* - discuss with your manager and sales team colleagues any account that you think could be borderline in terms of winning or losing the sale. Discuss what you've done so far and brainstorm what additional value you might be able to create that will help distance you from your competitors.

5. *Feedback market observations* - your marketing department has no better resource than you and your colleagues in the sales team. Organise a market feedback meeting with your marketing and product development people. Spend time discussing your observations about your competitors, the client feedback, why you've won business and what caused you to miss out on sales.

Each of these activities can keep you focused in the tough times on what you can do, and not on what you can't do.

Focused activity produces results.

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Try these out and turn the tough times into times of opportunity, creativity and success.

Key Points:

- If you just do what everyone else does, you're aiming for mediocrity
- In the tough times especially look for ways to stand out from your competitors
- Focused activity produces results.

Practice Principle:

Select one of the five ideas in this message and get to work on its implementation. When you've completed that task, start on the next and continue until you are soaring above your competition.

The Principle of 'Welcome Surprise'

THE PRINCIPLE OF 'WELCOME SURPRISE'

In this message I want to talk about the principle of 'welcome surprise, and how we can apply it to win more sales.

I don't know about you, but I readily admit that I love to eat out at special restaurants on special occasions. The month of May is a big month that as a family we all share in a celebration. Our two sons and myself have birthdays and we help Liz celebrate mothers day.

So during May this year, we all went to our favourite French restaurant Chez Pascal. It is one of those quaint places that seats about twenty or maybe thirty people. From the moment we walk in, to the moment we leave, chef Pascal and his waiters create a series of ever changing experiences. Some we expect, others are '*welcome surprises*'.

We expect to be warmly welcomed. We expect fine food. We expect good service.

But in addition to what we have come to expect, chef Pascal is always trying to create welcome surprises.

During this visit he surprised the four of us, and the entire restaurant for that matter, while we were half way through our main course he shouted at the top of his voice "Is everybody happy?" Well our sons

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jumped a little, and you should have seen the smiles in the restaurant as we all yelled back “Yes Chef!”

Two points to consider here.

Point 1: We were pleasantly experiencing service and product to a level we expected, and even if Chef Pascal hadn't shouted his question, we would have left satisfied. But, our two sons are still talking about this crazy chef who shouts out in the middle of a meal....with great humour, and a little risk, he gave us a welcomed surprise.

Point 2: The second point was the level of energy that was buzzing straight after Chef Pascal's outburst. Wouldn't it be powerful if you could create some form of welcome surprise for your clients that gets them buzzing with re-energised vigour toward you, your products and services and your company?

So how can we apply this principle of welcome surprise? What could we do that catches people pleasantly by surprise (and I'm not suggesting yelling at our clients)?

Here are a couple of top of mind ideas:

- Send a postcard to your clients with your favourite quote on it

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- Find an article in a newspaper or magazine that might be of interest to your clients – or better still, write your own article, publish it yourself and send it to your clients (with your picture and contact details)
- Buy 20 copies of your favourite music cd single and send it out to your top 20 clients

Now these are just a couple of thoughts to get your creative juices flowing.

Key Points:

- Good service and value are just expected these days
- Welcomed surprises generate buyer energy and motivation
- Tap into buyer energy and motivation and you win more repeat and referral business

Practice Principle:

Revise the top of mind ideas in this message and arrive at an action plan of your own to build in the principle of welcome surprise in your sales process.

The Past, Present and Future of Sales

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF SALES

“Don’t let your past dictate who you are, but let it be a part of who you become.”

I heard this wonderful piece of advice this week when watching an interview on Enough Rope with Andrew Denton speaking with Steven Spielberg.

Apart from the philosophical value of these words, I wanted to include them in this message because of a personal experience.

Let me share it with you now.

I had one of the most interesting meetings with a General Manager of Sales and his three regional sales managers. One of the regional sales managers was literally stuck in the past. Everything that was being offered as potential solutions to a few specific sales issues that their people were facing, was immediately knocked on the head by this one regional sales manager.

His approach to sales was pretty much the old “ABC’s of selling”. The ABC’s of selling was a term used decades ago to represent the approach of Always Be Closing.

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Anyway, the quote from Spielberg would be well worthwhile considering for that regional sales manager. Our past experiences certainly do contribute to who we are, and in the case of selling, our past experiences and lessons contribute significantly to the way we sell.

However, the way that we sell today should not block out opportunities to help us be able to sell to people in a way that they will want to buy tomorrow or even today.

I have a friend of mine who has changed the old saying of “that is so yesterday” to “that is so last minute”. What he is suggesting is that time and change are working together even quicker than ever before.

Now whether you believe that or not, the point I’m trying to make this week is that to be able to arrive at creative solutions to competitive selling situations, we need to be open to new ideas, be willing to try new strategies, and be ready to even leave behind some of the ‘old ways’ that may be hindering our opportunities to succeed tomorrow.

So let me leave you this week with a couple of questions to consider, answer and take action on.

- How open are you to new ideas on selling and communicating with your clients?

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- What sales and communication strategies are you currently practicing that you might need to change?
- What are you doing to learn about new ways of selling that will better match the new consumers' buying styles?
- When was the last time you asked your existing customers how they prefer to buy from you and how they prefer to communicate with you?

Answer these questions and you may discover that you are not only open to new ideas and change, but that you're already on top of tomorrow.

Alternatively, as you answer these questions, you may discover that you're letting your past dictate the way you sell, and that you are maybe missing out on some opportunities to be even more successful tomorrow.

Key Points:

- Selling is a process
- There may be strengths and weaknesses in the traditional approach to selling

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- Being open to new ideas and new approaches to selling and communicating can provide great opportunities for personal and business growth.

Practice Principle:

Revise the questions being asked in this message, answer them as honestly as you will allow, and arrive at your own personal sales process that matches the market and needs and value that your clients are seeking.

Make the Most of those First Impressions

MAKE THE MOST OF THOSE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In this message I want to talk about what I know to be one of the essential keys to success in selling.

Now, you may already know this, but if you don't, you need to not only know about it, understand it, but more importantly, to be taking action on it.

Let me explain.

I was speaking to a colleague this week about the pace of life and how we often skim through information, emails, newsletters etc., looking for the catchy title that entices us to read a particular bit of correspondence.

He told me that if he wasn't excited by the first few lines of any correspondence – especially via email, he would simply delete it.

Now, I don't know about you, but that process is probably true for many of us, me included.

For that reason, something I learned many years ago, is the importance of communicating with people in the way that they like to be communicated.....not just the way you like to communicate.

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So the question is, how do you communicate to large groups of customers when they all might like different communication channels and modes?

Here is one of the keys to success in selling (and in life for that matter).

When you're preparing any kind of marketing or prospecting or promotional communication, don't just use the one channel.

Don't just use email....try to replicate it in other channels such as:

Letters; Newsletters; Magazine articles; Newspaper articles; Personal meetings; Special small group presentations; Special reports; Audio on cd or dvd; Telemarketing calls; Conference calls; Webinars; Pod casts etc.

There's an old adage "Fish where the fish are."

I personally love this (and not just because I enjoy fishing), but because it really does sum up another key to successful selling.

But what this means is that we need to be where our clients are. Not necessarily physically.....that's probably impossible. However, thinking about what our clients read, what functions they attend.....(and I'm not recommending stalking....).

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So your challenge is to think about the extent to which you are communicating to your clients and contacting them, and being visible by using a number of different communication channels that will ensure that you end up being 'top of mind'.

Key Points:

- First impressions count
- Getting people's attention early in your communication is a key driver of selling success
- Use multiple sources of communication to attract, sell and stay in touch with your clients

Practice Principle:

When you're preparing any kind of marketing or prospecting or promotional communication, don't just use the one channel.

'Pull Your Wings in' When Selling

‘PULL YOUR WINGS IN’ WHEN SELLING

I grew up with four brothers and when we all sat around the family table for dinner, as we nearly always did, especially on a Sunday for a baked leg of lamb, our mum would always throw out a barrage of one liners in an attempt to drum into us some common courtesies, values and manners.

Here’s just a few of her favouritesI wonder whether you’ve ever heard these?

- Don’t speak with your mouth full
- Get you elbows off the table
- Put your fork down when you’re not using it
- Don’t point at your brother with that knife
- Don’t chew with your mouth open

It’s kind of funny to hear Liz and I now trying to instill the same messages with our two teenagers.....everything old is new again!

My favourite from mum was “pull your wings in”. This was mum’s most repeated dinner table piece of wisdom. Maybe it’s just a bloke thing,

but we were always elbowing each other, kind of setting our personal space with our elbows (wings) to keep the other brothers far enough away to enjoy our meal in comfort.

What sparked this line of thought for this message was a trip that I once had. I was traveling on a plane to Brisbane from Sydney, and the woman next to me had her denim coat hanging off her shoulders. You know the look – her arms weren't in the coat, so the arms of the coat were flopping around and when she sat next to me one arm of the coat was more in my seat than hers.

Now this bugged me.

I'm a big believer in respecting other people's personal space. I wanted to tell her to "pull your wings in" and prove to mum that I had learned something ... but I remembered another of mum's sayings which was if you've got nothing nice to say, say nothing.

Pull Your Wings In When Selling

So how well do you pull your wings in when you're with your customers? Now this might seem strange, but let's consider a few ways that you might need to pull your wings in .. It's all about giving your clients physical and emotional space:

Do you give your clients space to think things through?

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Do you give your clients space to experience your offer?

Do you give your clients space when you first meet them?

Do you give your clients space when they're making a decision?

Do you give your clients space when they're giving you answers?

This metaphor of pulling your wings in can remind us all that we need to respect the personal space, both physical and emotional, respect the thoughts, time, actions, opinions and experiences of those around us.

In what areas might you need to "pull your wings in?"

Key Points:

- Be aware of personal and emotional 'space' that clients value
- Are you sales focused? Or are you Client Focused?
- Give clients the space they need to buy in the way they want to buy.

Practice Principle:

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Notice the body language of people, but don't read too much into it. Some people who have their arms folded are simply cold or comfortable.....it doesn't necessarily mean that they're closed to your ideas.

Be aware of body language, but don't read too much into it.

Our Values Are Always on Display

OUR VALUES ARE ALWAYS ON DISPLAY

As you read each of these messages, you will quickly learn, if you haven't already, that I place a high emphasis on the importance of our personal values and how our clients emotionally and intellectually connect with us.

In fact, our personal values are on display through our thoughts, words and actions. And yet it continues to amaze me how some salespeople just don't understand this vital key to success.....and if they do understand it, that they either ignore it or don't place high enough importance on its impact.

So what's got me reflecting on this? I'm glad you asked.

We've been looking for a timber floor sanding and finishing tradesperson. Now I didn't think that it would be difficult to find someone, but in asking friends, associates and strangers if they could recommend anyone, we unfortunately haven't found anyone to date.

So we went to the Yellow Pages, and you'd be surprised at the values-on-display that some of the trades people we contacted demonstrated.

Instead of excitement and belief in their value, we hear and see concern and apathy.

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Instead of punctuality we see poor commitment.

Instead of trust we see deceit.

Instead of good manners and respect, we see arrogance and broken promises.

O.K.....so I've now vented my spleen and feel so much better.

But this key point of this message is to serve as a timely reminder to us all that our actions and our behaviours display to the world who we are, our values, morals, professional and business ethics, our beliefs and what we stand for.

How do you hope that your existing and potential clients would describe you personally?

Make a list and then ask yourself what you're doing, thinking and saying that will ensure that clients and prospects experience the values you espouse.

By the way, if you know a good floor sander.....

Key Points:

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- Our personal values are on display in our thoughts, words and actions
- Living up to the values we espouse means staying on purpose
- Staying on purpose starts with each of us being aware of our values and the priorities in our lives.

Practice Principle:

Write down your own personal purpose. What are your priorities?
What are your values? How will you ensure that you live up to your values and stay on purpose?

Comfortably Disturbing Clients into Action

COMFORTABLY DISTURBING CLIENTS INTO ACTION

My wife and children are constantly telling me how annoying I am when I continually flick between radio stations (I'm told that it's a bloke thing).

It was while indulging in this apparently abhorrent habit in the month of September, when I heard on a talk back radio station the radio announcer explain his amazement that although it was only early September, that there were a few stores already getting their Christmas range of products on display.

Apart from the scary thought that December comes around so quickly every year, it got me thinking about a key selling concept that I've coined as the ability to "comfortably disturb" clients into wanting to take action.

The principle and practice of comfortably disturbing a client is sometimes a fine line to tread, and I recommend that you think about how you approach this principle and the impact that it might have on your existing and potential clients.

Quite simply, *the principle of comfortably disturbing* a client is to do something (for example it might be a question that has the capacity to comfortably disturb, or an action that you might take) that causes existing or potential clients to disrupt their usual pattern of thought and to get them focusing on something that you can help them achieve.

The Christmas-in-advance approach that these stores are taking here in Sydney is an example of comfortably disturb. I was not expecting anything “Christmassy” to be spoken about for at least a couple more months, so it interrupted my thoughts at the time, and got me thinking about getting in before the mad rush in December.

What do you do that has the capacity to comfortably disturb your clients into thinking about the value that you could create for them?

Do you ask questions that create value for the client in getting them to think beyond just their current situation? Or do you ask questions that merely gather information for you?

There is a big difference between information-gathering questions and value-discovery questions. Value-discovery questions create value for the client in their thoughts and their potential, and value-discovery questions create value for you in that they provide you with information that you need, but more importantly, additional information that typically a client may not have thought about that will help you create the most value for them.

Value-based questions create reciprocal value for both you and your clients.

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So besides the idea that Christmas is just around the corner, this week, why not start to think about the opportunity that you have to comfortably disturb your clients through value-discovery questions.

What questions are you asking?

Key Points:

- Comfortably disturbing a client into taking action is not a technique
- There is a vast difference between information questions and value-discovery questions
- Comfortably disturbing a client into taking action starts with an attitude of truly being client focused.

Practice Principle:

Make a commitment today to craft and ask more value-discovery questions...questions that have the capacity to comfortably disturb clients into taking action that will increase the value they receive from you and from others.

Algorithms and Sales Success

ALGORITHMS AND SALES SUCCESS

I never thought that I would be telling anyone that I was excited by an Algorithm, but that's exactly what I want to talk about in this message....stay with me...there's a great message for every sales person and sales manager in this slightly twisted example.

I heard this definition of an algorithm by my eldest son Matthew this week.

An algorithm is a process you repeat time and time again to achieve a successful outcome.

Now whether this is right or not, I really liked it, because it reminded me of the importance of our activity and communication habits in sales. Our habits are those learned automatic sequences of behaviour that we repeat time and time again to achieve successful outcomes.

It's kind of funny that as I speak with literally hundreds of sales people, one of their key focuses is often on the sales they haven't won. My suggestion to them and this week to you also, is to remember to reflect on the sales that you win.

The old saying of "you can learn from your mistakes" is one that I certainly agree with, but there is always the danger that we forget to learn from our successes.

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So this week, take a moment and pick out two or three of your most recent successes in selling, and ask yourself the following questions to help you reflect on the habits that caused you to achieve that success:

1. What were the communication strategies that I used that helped cause the success of this sale?
2. What did I learn within each step of the sales process (Build rapport, Ask questions, Show value, Identify obstacles, Confirm the sale, Stay in touch) that I was able to use that helped cause the success of this sale?
3. How can I apply the same communication and sales strategies with other potential clients to help cause success in future sales?

Ask yourself these questions, and you will be able to build an Algorithmic approach to successful selling.

Key Points:

- Our habits are learned automatic sequences of behaviour
- That which we practice over and over form habits of either success, mediocrity or failure

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- We get to choose that which we focus on to create habits for success.

Practice Principle:

Don't forget to review your success in sales. We don't only learn from our mistakes, we can learn a lot from successes by repeating our thoughts, words and actions that led us to that success.

The Dominant Deciding Values of Clients

THE DOMINANT DECISION VALUES OF CLIENTS

Recently I was completing a large assignment with one of Australia's leading financial planning groups and we were discussing that moment that every buyer has when they're about to make a positive buying decision.

As sales people we can learn a lot about buying behaviour by reflecting on how we personally buy.

Let me give you this example of Liz and my own personal buying experience.

We were choosing tiles for our kitchen. We'd hired an interior decorator to help us and the three of us set off to the tile company to check out the tiles.

After a little while, the interior decorator who had been searching through the myriad of tile choices (in a way that Liz and I were very impressed with) arrived at a tile choice, presented it to us, showed how it would match our colour scheme and kitchen bench-top and immediately Liz and I agreed.

We then discovered the tile was out of stock and wouldn't be available for ten weeks....ten weeks!!!

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Liz and I quickly decided that we'd waited this long, another ten weeks (ouch) without the tiles would be well worth the wait to get exactly what we wanted.

O.K....so why tell you this?

It's about the process of reflection on our buying experiences that we can learn how we can help improve our sales approach (and our client's buying experiences).

Here are a couple of thoughts on our buying experience:

1. We hired an expert – our interior designer sped up our choice process and gave us confidence in our final selection.

Question: What 'expertise' can you draw on (not just your own) to help you build your clients' confidence in their buying decisions?

2. We were prepared to wait for value – when we'd finally decided that the tiles were exactly what we wanted, compromising for a quicker delivery wasn't an option we wanted to consider.

Question: To what extent do you demonstrate value to your clients that outweighs any negative issues (timing, delivery, price or other)?

So getting back to that moment when clients make buying decisions, the big lesson for us as salespeople is that if we provide advice, expertise and value that is so compelling their decisions to buy will typically be more comfortable and confident.

Once again, this highlights our ability to stack up our value units to build compelling value propositions (plural). And remember, you can't select from these value units to create a compelling value proposition (singular) for each client, unless you first fully understand the value they seek.

Well in this message I'm suggesting that you think about what causes you to buy, what determines your own decision to buy? And to challenge yourself whether your sales approach would help someone like you buy.

And one final warning. Remember that not everyone will want to buy the same way that you like to buy.

Five Dominant Deciding Values

There are five dominant deciding values that are in a hierarchy for most people when they are thinking about buying something of importance. The key is that the hierarchy of these deciding values changes with different people and under different buying situations.

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The dominant deciding values are:

Economics (some people are very price focused)

Ego (some people are very “Me” focused)

Ease (some people are very cautious)

Evidence (some people are very facts focused)

Enjoyment (some people just want to enjoy the buying experience and interaction)

Hopefully some food for thought for you.

Key Points:

- Not everyone buys the same sort of thing for the same reason
- Reflecting on our own buying experiences can teach us a lot about how we can sell more
- People have a combination and hierarchy of five dominant deciding values

Practice Principle:

Think about how the products and services you offer can meet the five dominant deciding values of economics, ego, enjoyment, ease and evidence. Make sure you structure your presentations and communication in all forms to address each of these deciding values as they relate to each client.

Re-learning the Value of Goal Setting

RELEARNING THE VALUE OF GOAL SETTING

At the monthly meetings of the NSW chapter of the National Speakers Association of Australia (NSAA), I really enjoy getting to talk with other business educators and information experts.

My good friend Max Hitchins was at one of the more recent meetings that I attended , and he reminded me of two great strategies that can help all of us increase our levels of success.

The first strategy was around goal setting, and the second around using our memory.

This message is about the value of goal setting and how it can help us succeed in sales and I've forgotten what was important about using our memory (sorry about that).

Now as you're reading this, you might be saying to yourself that you've already learned the importance and value of goal setting. And so you may have. However, it's always a good practice to relearn key principles.

You'll notice that I used the term "re-learned". Something that I am a firm believer in, is our ability to not only learn, but to re-learn. What I mean is we may already know something, but we may have forgotten it, stopped practicing it, or be not practicing it as much as we used to.

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Max's lesson on goal setting was subtle, and by way of demonstration. Let me explain.

Max is an expert on the Melbourne Cup (just in case you've never heard of it...it's Australia's premier horse race, and quite literally stops the nation when the race is on).

One of Max's annual projects is a book that he writes, updates and sells over the web.

It's called The Mugs Guide To The Melbourne Cup (you can check it out at <http://mugsguide.com.au>).

Now the lesson didn't come from the Guide, it came from something he said to me. Max shared with me a goal that he had of a target number of sales he was aiming for with a new Melbourne Cup project he was working on.

So what was the lesson?

It was in the importance of not only setting goals, but to increase your level of commitment to achieving the goal by making it public in some way.

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Now that doesn't mean that you need to put your goals on the front page of a magazine or tell everyone you meet, but the principle is to tell a select few – people you trust, and by letting them know what you're trying to achieve, they will keep asking how you're going, and keep you focused on achieving the goal.

This has happened for me quite often in my life. A simple example was when I openly told some close friends that I was going to run my first marathon. When I made the statement, I wasn't sure how I was going to do it (at that stage I hadn't run any further than about 10 kilometers...and the marathon is 42 kilometers). But what it did, was increase my resolve to achieve it.

So the challenge for you as you read this short message, is to think about a goal or goals that you are currently working toward, or maybe that you would like to start working toward, and select a few good friends and/or colleagues you trust, and share the goal with them.

Maybe the goal will be a date by which time you will have achieved your monthly or quarterly sales target or maybe it will be a specific sales or marketing activity level target that you are going to achieve.

The power of goal setting is probably understood by most people, but my experience is that it is only practiced by a few.....and it's kind of funny how they seem to be the successful ones.

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That's it for this message – how well are you setting and managing your goal achievement?

Key Points:

- Goal setting is known by many, but practised by few
- Share your goals with 'trusted others' to build your own personal commitment and support from those around you.
- Breaking goals down into incremental steps can be a great way to help with goal achievement

Practice Principle:

Share a goal or goals that you have with a trusted other today, and keep them informed of your progress.

Our Personal Choices and Actions in Sales

OUR PERSONAL CHOICES AND SUCCESS IN SALES

Sometimes we can learn things from the funniest and most unexpected sources.

This message is short, but hopefully one that might challenge you about the choices that you are currently making and the degree to which those choices are helping or hindering your sales success.

Each of the messages in this book were first written as part of my personal journal that I keep about events that happen and lessons that I learn.

Our sons, Matthew and Anthony find it quite amusing (lame I think they call it) that I keep my journal with me most of the time. We'll be watching a dvd or some show on the TV and the boys will look at me and say something like...."That's a good one Dad, put that in your journal."

And so it was this week as we were all watching Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets. The character of Professor Dumbledore gave me my quote for the week, and before I had even gone for the journal, my youngest son Anthony says to me...."I bet that one gets in the journal Dad." And he was right.

The quote was something like this

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"It is not our abilities that show us who we are, it is our choices."

So this week I was reflecting on the choices we have as sales professionals.

We can choose to be motivated, or not.

We can choose to be healthy, or not.

We can choose to be structured or not.

We can choose to be proactive or reactive to our market.

We can choose to be client focused or product focused.

We can choose to plan or leave things to chance.

We can choose to be positive or negative.

We can choose to learn or not.

We can choose to seek new opportunities or accept status quo.

We can choose to set goals or not.

We can choose to pursue goal supporting activities, or goal obstructing activities.

What choices are you currently making that demonstrate to the world who you are and what you stand for?

I remember having an interesting discussion with a colleague about whether choice is actually something that we all have.

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Well, without going into the depths of the philosophical discussion, I guess my position is that I firmly believe that most of us in sales careers, for most of the time, do have choices.

And above all else, I believe we have a choice to define the level of activity that we are prepared to pursue to achieve the success levels we believe we deserve.

I also believe we get the business we deserve. We get the referrals we deserve. And what makes us deserve the business and referrals is directly related to the choices we make.

So thanks to J.K. Rowling for the theme for this message, and hopefully you will be able to continue to make wise choices, and equally of importance, hopefully you will be able to create environments for your new and existing clients to feel confident and comfortable to make wise buying choices.

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Key Points:

- Our choices form the steps toward our success
- Although we can't control everything, we can still control our choice about how we deal with what happens to us
- The freedom to choose success over mediocrity or failure is the foundation upon which highly effective sales professionals base their thoughts, words and actions.

Practice Principle:

Apply the *BASICS of success*[™] formula and choose success over mediocrity or failure. The *BASICS of success*[™] formula is a goal setting and management system that guides you to success by **B**uilding goals, **A**ffirming value, **S**trategising plans, **I**ncubating the goals, **C**ompleting the actions and **S**elf evaluating your progress.

Beyond the BASICS of Selling

BEYOND THE BASICS OF SELLING

The final message in this first book in *beyond the BASICS essential selling series* was written just before Christmas 2005.

The Penglase family had just selected our Christmas tree. We buy our tree every year to support our local scout group – and the trees are always just the right size for what we want and always look fresh right through the Christmas period.

As a family we put on a Christmas Carol cd and all help to ‘dress the tree’. It’s a great time and we all look forward to the evening when we can then turn on the Christmas tree lights for the first time.

For us, it’s become a tradition to do this as a family, and traditions are great things to hold onto.

And it’s in this notion of tradition that this final sales message is focused.

There have been a wide and varied number of tried and true traditions in selling that we’ve covered throughout the year....too many to cover here in one message, however for this final journal message of the year, I thought I’d go back to tradition and remind us all of the *BASICS of selling*[®].

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I developed the *BASICS of selling*[®] because I was not completely happy with other sales processes that I had been introduced to.

So let me finish this year with the foundation system or process of communicating with clients that has helped me in my own selling career and certainly been the cornerstone of our business.

Each step in the process is represented by a letter in the acronym BASICS.

The steps are:

B uild rapport	<i>to earn trust</i>
A sk questions	<i>to discover and clarify client needs</i>
S how value	<i>to demonstrate how you can help</i>
I dentify obstacles	<i>to deal with value blocks</i>
C onfirm the sale	<i>to take the next appropriate steps</i>
S tay in touch	<i>to deliver on your promise</i>

Now although I refer to this as the *BASICS of selling*[®] the reality is that we can't go beyond the BASICS until we are sure that we have the BASICS under control.

Sometimes it's the simple things, those traditional things that we learned years ago that we may now forget from time to time, that could be the missing link to taking us to the next level in our success.

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So let me conclude this first book in the *beyond the BASICS sales essentials series* with these questions that I ask not only of myself, but that I challenge you to ask of yourself as well:

Build rapport: To what extent have you been able to build rapport, gain trust and connect emotionally and intellectually with clients and potential buyers and to create environments where people feel confident and comfortable to make wise buying decisions?

Ask questions: To what extent have you been asking appropriate questions that by and of themselves create value for the client, challenge them and comfortably disturb them into wanting to take action that will fulfil a need, want, solve a problem or create value for them?

Show value: To what extent have you been able to show value based on the identified needs and wants and value that the client has shared with you? How well are you able to separate your presentations from being capability driven and ensure that you are value driven?

Identify obstacles: How well are you able to identify and effectively deal with the obstacles, issues, or objections that clients want to resolve?

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Confirm the sale: Are you confident that when you ask your clients to make buying decisions that you are about to create value for them that will meet and where possible exceed their expectations?

Stay in touch: How well through 2005 have you been able to effectively complete a stay in touch program with your key clients? To what extent have you been able to demonstrate that you truly value them as a client?

Finally, how well do you believe that you've got the *BASICS of selling*[®] under control?

Key Points:

- Selling is a process
- Selling is not something we do to people, it's what we do with and for people to create value
- You can't go beyond the BASICS until you're sure that you've got the BASICS under control

Practice Principle:

Apply the *BASICS of selling*[®] formula and create environments where people feel comfortable and confident to make wise buying decisions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DAVID PENGLASE is a behavioural scientist and Australia's leading expert on the Art & Science of Building Customer Trust. David shares his research on how trust impacts almost every measure of success in our personal and business lives ... Especially in sales and service roles.

With degrees in Business and the Psychology of Adult Learning, an MBA, a Master degree in Professional Ethics and a Master of Science degree in Applied Positive Psychology, David is one of Australia's most booked and rebooked conference speakers and masterclass presenters – both in person at your event, or livestreamed from his purpose built multi-camera livestream and recording studio.

David's clients range from large multinationals to boutique small businesses looking to create successful sales cultures.

David and his wife (and business partner) live in Sydney and have two adult sons.

For more information about David or to inquire about booking David for your next conference event, or Professional Learning Development program visit www.davidpenglase.com or call +61 (0) 418 400 369.

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