SUPERSTAR
SELLING SKILLS

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INTRODUCTION:
HOW GOOD CAN YOU BE?

How good can you be? Can you be a sales SuperSTAR? Scientists estimate that the average human being uses less than 1 percent of his own potential. Scientists also note that over the course of our lifetime, we lose 1 percent of our potential. Now, we just need to make sure that the 1 percent we lose isn't the 1 percent we use.

Research indicates that ongoing learning and training help people tap into their potential. This means that you have a tremendous opportunity to achieve sales success. Unfortunately, too many salespeople use excuses, which ultimately cap their income and limit their results. There are 7 common excuses that can be dangerous:

1. *I don't have time.* They aren't organized!
2. *Management doesn't support me.* They blame their lack of results on management!
3. *It's a tough world.* They aren't prepared!
4. *Price is the issue.* They don't know the market well enough!
5. *Customers don't understand.* They're not aware of the customer's real needs!
6. *I tried.* They aren't initiating enough conversation with potential customers!
7. *It's unfair; the competition has the advantage.* They aren't students of the game!

The complaint list could continue, but the salespeople that grumble with these excuses are forgetting what President Harry S. Truman once said, "The buck stops here." If you are a salesperson, you are accountable and responsible for your results. PERIOD. Obstacles are inevitable and usually difficult, so what are you going to do about it?

PUT YOUR ENERGY INTO THE POTENTIAL, NOT THE PROBLEM!

Cliff Miedl, a 20-year-old plumber's apprentice, accidentally drove his jackhammer through three high-voltage cables one day at work. His body instantly received 30,000 volts of electricity. That's fifteen times the voltage delivered by an electric chair. The shock shattered his knees, exploded part of his skull, took off most of his toes, and left a hole in his back as the electricity left his body. Even though his heart stopped three times, he still survived. Doctors said he'd never walk again.

Through a slow and painful recovery, Cliff learned to walk again. Even further, he was inspired to start kayaking by Greg Barton, the 1988 Kayak Olympian who managed to win two gold medals in spite of having two clubfeet. Cliff became so good that he made the U.S. Olympic team. At the 2000 Sydney Games, the 603 U.S. team members nominated Cliff to be the flag bearer for the opening ceremony march. Cliff turned a tragedy into a triumph.

Receiving 30,000 volts of electricity is hard. The road to recovery is hard. Product problems and customer complaints can also be hard, but not in comparison to Cliff's ordeal. Always believe in your potential – the things you can manage and control. Do not waste time on things you can't do or can't control. SuperSTARs have a persistent spirit and a can-do attitude that their clients love. The payoff is in the increased sales and income!

BE ACTION-ORIENTATED, NOT APATHETIC!

According to research, salespeople are the single largest contributors to the customer's decision-making process during a purchase. What an opportunity to make a difference! Too many salespeople react negatively to rejection, they quit and let events strain their spirit. But, SuperSTAR salespeople think proactively and take action to elicit positive results. This isn't a cliché – it's a reality.

A few years ago, there was a story published about a man in the *Guinness Book of World Records*; he held the running record for completing 90 marathons in one year. In honor of the new millennium, he ran 200 marathons in the year 2000! When asked about his purpose for the adventure, he said that he didn't want anyone to break his record, and he knew he could do it. What an attitude! If you're not

interested in adjusting your attitude and polishing your skills, how can you expect your customers to be convinced that working with you is the way to go?

STAY PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE!

"All great achievers are great planners." While you may not like paperwork or computers, you have to have a plan and adjust the plan as needed. Scientists say the DNA difference between a human and a gorilla is 2.8 percent. It's not much, but it matters. Because of that 2.8 percent, humans have the ability to think – so, use it to your utmost potential. SuperSTAR salespeople outthink others.

Recently, the media has had a series of articles about the Human Genome Project, which is the effort to identify the human-DNA map, cell by cell. This evidence is significant considering it could move medicine from a reactive discipline into a proactive discipline. Scientists predict that if a baby were to be predisposed to a disease before birth, doctors would have the ability to preventatively change the cells. While there are many ethical concerns to this debate, the bottom line is that this technology was discovered by the human intellect. This demonstrates a person's power to identify issues and problem solve strategically. That's an important part of a salesperson's job. Think! And then, work with customers and coworkers to achieve the goal. Never underestimate your ability to excel and succeed. How good can you be?

Read this book diligently. The material can be implemented immediately because it's a selling workshop, designed to help you assess your strengths and areas of improvement. Complete the SuperSTAR selling assessment, and then explore the details of each element throughout the rest of the book. There are 15 sales activities to complete, so that you can quickly apply the ideas and skills discussed. For your encouragement, there are three motivational messages interlaced throughout this book. It's been said that if you increase your learning, you will increase your earning!

With 27 years of sales experience, we have worked with everyone – from the beginner to the best of the best. SuperSTAR selling skills can catapult you into new levels of sales success and greater gains of income increments! So, it's up to you now, isn't it? Begin today, so that you can be on your way to SuperSTAR sales success.

Rick Conlow
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February 2012

GETTING STARTED

SuperSTAR salespeople take the right steps, which pays off in income, success and happiness! Isn't it true that when you take shortcuts during the sales process, it often catches up with you later? Causing problems that potentially reduce your ongoing sales and income? Would you agree with me that it is right to…

- Be prepared to sell everyday!
- Build rapport with customers!
- Identify a need!
- Sell product benefits!
- Address concerns, positively!
- Close the sale!
- Follow-up, follow-up and follow-up!

It's been said that success is simple. Just do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time. However, in order to do what's right, you have to think about what's right. *Thought always precedes action*. Poor attitudes and negative thinking don't sell services or make you any money. In other words, to take the right actions, you have to have the right thoughts. That's the beginning of SuperSTAR sales, and the key to making the SuperSTAR selling process work for you.

William James wrote, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind." You can too! You have tremendous talent, skill and potential. With the right thinking, you'll put all of your capabilities to use more consistently and passionately.

BELIEVE!

In order to believe in positive results, you have to work at it. There are too many variables that adjust our attitudes. We know them by heart: rejection, disappointment, frustration, illness, the news, complaining friends, and other elements. Ac-

cording to research, the average person thinks more than 85,000 thoughts each day and 85 percent of those are negative. You can't leave your attitude to chance. If you do, you're destined for failure or worse yet, mediocrity.

How do you work at being positive? Start by thinking better about yourself – believe you are the best version of yourself. We will review this more when we discuss emotional resiliency and peak performance. Next, review these two questions after every sale (especially after a lost sale):

- What did I do right?
- What can I do better or differently next time?

Oftentimes, salespeople get discouraged by a *no* and don't try again. Rather than doing this, when you get a *no*, think of how you feel when you get a *yes*. Review what you have done right, remind yourself that you're the best, and then take appropriate action. Contact another customer promptly, and then remember that the best time to make a sale is right after rejection! That's right! You build sales success through successful sales activity. Steve, a new sales manager, focused his team on this motto: excellent sales activity = excellent sales results. It isn't surprising that his team is 50-90 percent above their sales goal. So, when you get a no, ask the two questions, and then call another account!

LEARN!

Do you have insurance? Auto? Health? People buy insurance for protection, don't they? In case of an illness or accident, insurance protects us from financial loss. As a salesperson, your most important personal assets are your skills, attitude, and experiences. Why not ensure that your assets are protected and that your ability to make money is established? Don't be content with the way things are. Keep learning, expand your comfort zones, and work at developing new skills, tools and approaches.

Every year, as the baseball season begins, someone refuses to play because of a contract dispute. Consequently, the player misses part of training camp, and usually, starts the year poorly. In baseball and in sales, a lack of training yields poor results. Absorb all you can from your sales training and coaching sessions. Work on fundamentals by listening to tapes, reading books and attending sales seminars. Your thoughts will be more positive, your skills will improve, and your results will follow.

ACT!

A goal is the most powerful motivational device known to man. It's a documented fact. I've seen goals inspire people to lose weight, to finish a degree, to achieve new results, to sell a product, and to make a lot of money. Are you attracted to any of

these results? First, set the goal, and then, regularly review your progress.

How can you offer more value to customers? Did you earn the money you wanted? What's your goal for the New Year? Take the time to make a plan and go for it, now! And, don't forget, excellent selling is excellent service!

Arlene Lenarz wrote, "All the beautiful things that are going to happen in the future are the seeds of today. This is the year of your dreams. No matter what, if you want it badly enough, and you're willing to pay the price – your dream is possible. No dream is too lofty, no goal is too high." To succeed, you must be willing to do what others won't do. Implement these three sales ideas: believe, learn, and act to acquire the right thinking, and you'll become a SuperSTAR. Now, let's work on the SuperSTAR sales process

SUPERSTAR SELLING ASSESSMENT

As sales professionals, we have the opportunity and obligation to provide the highest quality of products, services and information to our customers and their customers. Notice the assessment is customer-centered. SuperSTAR salespeople are customer-focused not self-focused. This requires a high degree of sales knowledge and competence, as well as organizational support and teamwork. This SuperSTAR selling assessment is intended to help you self assess and develop a plan to maximize your competence and income. To build a solid foundation and to achieve better results, review what you do well and what you need to improve. Start by looking in the mirror!

Indicate the degree to which you see yourself as fully competent in the sales behavior described. A candid assessment of yourself is needed. Use the following scale:

1 – To no degree
2 – To a very small degree
3 – To a small degree
4 – To some degree
5 – To a great degree
6 – To a very large degree

To what degree are you currently competent in…?

A. Maintaining a Customer-Centered Focus

1_____ focusing entirely on the customer's world?
2_____ confirming the client understands the communication?
3_____ reading the client's nonverbal cues?
4_____ maintaining contact with customers?

5_____ fostering long-term relationships?
6_____ adapting behavior to cater to a client's reality?
7_____ assessing the client's personality?
_____TOTAL?

B. Sales Planning and Preparation

8_____ developing prospective customers?
9_____ accessing the decision-makers in client systems?
10_____ monitoring the competition?
11_____ establishing realistic goals?
12_____ applying creativity to the selling process?
13_____ recording sales activities?
14_____ engaging in time-and-territory planning?
15_____ participating in sales-call planning?
16_____ forecasting sales and profitability?
17_____ catering sales strategies to client information?
_____TOTAL?

C. Building Rapport with Customers

18_____ using the telephone to sell?
19_____ communicating with a wide range of people?
20_____ creating a positive first impression?
21_____ making positive contact with the customer?
22_____ building rapport?
23_____ adapting your style in order to connect with the client?
24_____ establishing a safe and constructive communication climate?
_____TOTAL?

D. Identifying Customer Needs

25_____ asking the client questions?
26_____ listening intentionally?
27_____ raising the client's awareness of unperceived needs?
28_____ clarifying client problems?
29_____ effectively distinguishing factual information from critical needs?
_____TOTAL?

E. Presenting to Customers

30_____ finding solutions to client problems?
31_____ generating effective selling statements?
32_____ demonstrating new products and processes?
33_____ developing clear self-expression?
34_____ maintaining active dialogue in sales presentations?
35_____ conducting yourself persuasively?
36_____ delivering presentations to a group audience?
37_____ using audiovisual aids to sell (e.g., computer technology)?
38_____ simplifying technical presentations?
39_____ identifying the benefits to the client?
40_____ using sales support (e.g., statistics, exhibits)?
_____TOTAL?

F. Addressing Client Concerns

41_____ asking for feedback on proposed solutions?
42_____ expressing empathy for others?
43_____ managing resistance from the client?
44_____ addressing interpersonal conflict?
45_____ repairing damaged sales relationships?
_____TOTAL?

G. Closing the Sale

46_____ closing by asking for the business?
47_____ securing the client's commitments?
48_____ demonstrating assertiveness during negotiations?
_____TOTAL?

H. Follow-Up and Follow Through

49_____ using the telephone to maintain sales relationships?
50_____ reestablishing dormant account relationships?
51_____ sending written correspondence to customers?
52_____ sending written correspondence within your company?
53_____ keeping adequate records?
54_____ increasing the focus on existing accounts?
_____TOTAL?

I. Leveraging Team & Organizational Support

55_____ functioning as a team member in selling?
56_____ relating effectively to sales-support personnel?
57_____ taking quick action in critical situations?
_____TOTAL?

J. Emotional Resiliency and Peak Performance

58_____ learning your company's products and services in depth?
59_____ staying informed about your company's products and services?
60_____ handling rejection professionally and appropriately?
61_____ evaluating personal sales-call performances?
_____TOTAL?

SUPERSTAR SALES DEFINITIONS

Sales professionals may be successful in a number of different ways. One may be particularly strong at establishing new account relationships. Another may be most effective at building trusting relationships and carefully understanding the needs and objectives of customers, while many others are highly knowledgeable about their products and services. Yet, research suggests that effective salespeople excel in several key areas. SuperSTAR selling requires versatility, a strong skill set, and an unwavering commitment to customer-centered activity. Here are the 10 critical competencies that will spark success in your sales world.

Customer-Centered Activity: the ability to approach the sales relationship and focus entirely on the customer's needs, wants and expectations. A commitment to adjust behavior accordingly, communicate effectively, act ethically, read nonverbal cues, help customers achieve their goals, cater to the client's style and personality, and confirm that communication is properly understood during the entire buying process.

Effective Sales-Call Planning: determining your position in the sales relationship, planning your sales activity sequence appropriately, generating profitable and mutually beneficial outcomes for you and your customers, managing your time and resources in ways that maximize their value, building effective business results for your customers, working collaboratively, and coordinating internal resources. Other competencies include: time-and-territory planning, individual sales-call planning, and annual strategic business planning.

Building Customer Rapport: establishing rapport, making positive impressions, building trust, listening intently, creating a safe and constructive communication climate, building relationships with key decision influencers, and connecting with your customers by utilizing all communication tools at your disposal.

Identifying Customer Needs: planning and executing a brainstorming session that enables you and your client to think through personal and professional needs in a way that results in a mutual realization of the best product or service solution that addresses the client's unmet and undefined needs. Asking questions, listening carefully, and raising the client's awareness of overlooked needs.

Presenting Solutions to Customers: developing solutions to client problems, generating effective selling statements, demonstrating new products and processes, expressing yourself clearly, maintaining active dialogue in presentations, acting in

a persuasive manner, presenting effectively to group audiences, using sales support effectively, and simplifying technical presentations.

Addressing Customer Concerns: requesting feedback on your proposed solutions, expressing empathy for others, managing client resistance, dealing with interpersonal conflict, and repairing broken sales relationships. This competency involves skillfully applying the ability to generate dialogue and mutual involvement in the sales process with the customer, while competently working with the customer when she is frustrated, angry or opposed to your solution.

Closing the Sale: all sales activity is directed toward specific outcomes. This competency involves encouraging the customer to commit to using your products. Additional elements include demonstrating assertiveness during negotiations, asking for the business, and securing client commitments.

Follow-Up and Follow Through: maintaining sales relationships by using the telephone, sending appropriate and relevant correspondence to customers, reestablishing dormant account relationships, taking action, coordinating activities and outcomes within your company, keeping adequate records, and increasing the focus on existing accounts.

Leveraging Team & Organizational Support: functioning as an external/internal team member, effectively relating to sales-support personnel, taking prompt action during critical situations, and aligning activities to customer commitments and expectations.

Emotional Resiliency & Peak Performance: maintaining proper life balance by handling rejection and stress appropriately, evaluating personal sales-call performance, and committing to ongoing learning and development.

To summarize, outstanding sales professionals are consistently growing in each of these ten competencies. You simply don't master one, and then take it for granted. You keep polishing your skills and expanding your knowledge. As the old adage goes, "Life is a journey, not a destination." Establishing excellence in sales is a process that includes periodically taking inventory of your strengths and areas of improvement, and then taking action. We will cover each of these areas as they relate to the SuperSTAR selling model. To begin, you need two things:

A strong awareness of your abilities in each of these competencies.

A plan to excel.

SUPERSTAR SELLING ASSESSMENT SCORING SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS

Transfer your scores from the assessment sheet to the appropriate spaces on this page.

SITUATION	COMPETENCY	SCORE
1 - 7	**Customer-Centered:** The ability to focus on the customer's world and to avoid preoccupation with your own needs.	
8 - 17	**Sales Planning:** The degree to which you are able to orchestrate and execute an effective, results-producing plan.	
18 – 24	**Building Customer Rapport:** The ability to establish rapport with customers, even when they are out of sync with your preferred style.	
25 - 29	**Identifying Customer Needs:** The ability to ask the right questions to diagnose customer needs and to create a mutual understanding of client priorities.	
30 - 40	**Presenting to Customers:** The ability to execute a compelling and results-producing presentation that highlights your solutions to the client's needs.	
41 – 45	**Addressing Customer Concerns:** Effectively generating feedback and constructively working with client objections, frustrations and disagreements.	
46 – 48	**Closing the Sale:** The ability to encourage the client to commit, and to follow through with mutual action on business agreements.	
49 – 54	**Follow-Up and Follow Through:** The ability to recognize follow-up opportunities, and the initiative to take steps toward building long-term relationships.	
55 – 57	**Leveraging Team & Organizational Support:** Effectively orchestrating appropriate resources to generate customer results.	
58 – 61	**Emotional Resiliency & Peak Performance:** Personally taking steps to manage individual learning and mastery as a professional.	

SUPERSTAR SELLING ASSESSMENT INTERPRETATION KEY

SALES DIMENSION	SCORE	☐✓
Customer-Centered: The ability to focus on the customer's world and to avoid preoccupation with your own needs.	35-42 21-34 7-20	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Sales Planning: The degree to which you are able to orchestrate and execute an effective, results-producing plan.	50-60 30-49 10-29	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Building Customer Rapport: The ability to establish rapport with customers, even when they are out of sync with your preferred style.	35-42 21-34 7-20	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Identifying Customer Needs: The ability to ask the right questions to diagnose customer needs and to create a mutual understanding of client priorities.	25-30 15-24 5-14	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Presenting to Customers: The ability to execute a compelling and results-producing presentation that highlights your solutions to the client's needs.	56-66 23-54 11-22	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Addressing Customer Concerns: Effectively generating feedback and constructively working with client objections, frustrations and disagreements.	25-30 15-24 5-14	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Closing the Sale: The ability to encourage the client to commit, and to follow through with mutual action on business agreements.	15-18 9-14 3-8	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Follow-Up and Follow Through: The ability to recognize follow-up opportunities, and the initiative to take steps toward building long-term relationships.	30-36 18-29 6-17	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work

Leveraging Team & Organizational Support: Effectively orchestrating appropriate resources to generate customer results.	15-18 9-14 3-8	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work
Emotional Resiliency & Peak Performance: Personally taking steps to manage individual learning and mastery as a professional.	20-24 12-19 4-11	☐ High Propensity ☐ Development recommended ☐ Area that needs immediate work

SUPERSTAR ACTION-PLANNING GUIDE

1. List 3-5 strengths based on your inventory.

2. Choose 2-3 that would give you the biggest "bang for the buck" if you improved.

3. What benefit is there for you if you improve in these areas?

4. What efforts have you made in the past? What worked?

5. What resources are available to support you in these developmental areas?

6. What are your intended first steps?

7. Who needs to know about your plan?

8. How will you recruit others to help you?

SUPERSTAR SELLING PROCESS

To be the best, you have to be willing to do what others are unwilling to do. You have to be willing to learn what others don't know. The old adage that claims winning isn't everything is misleading; sales professionals of all industries know that although winning isn't everything, the will to prepare to win is everything. Bert Jones, a SuperSTAR salesperson, understood this concept when he claimed, "You can't teach others how to sell – you can only teach them how to learn how to sell." Our approach in this book is similar to that belief; the SuperSTAR selling process is geared toward one customer and one sales call at a time.

How good can you really be? Are you willing to do the preparation required to achieve what you want? We have seen sales professionals develop the competencies and apply the SuperSTAR selling model in ways that increase their sales from 30 to 52 percent, some even to 124 percent! Most continue to improve for 3-5 years, and then maintain a high level of excellence. Remember, an increase in sales means an increase in income!

Why can't you achieve this same level of success? You can! It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or a sales veteran. Sometimes, veterans have created so many ingrained habits over the years that they have even more to learn and relearn. The good news is that positive change can happen, and in most cases, it can happen quickly! Why? Because you can start increasing sales using proven and practical approaches now!

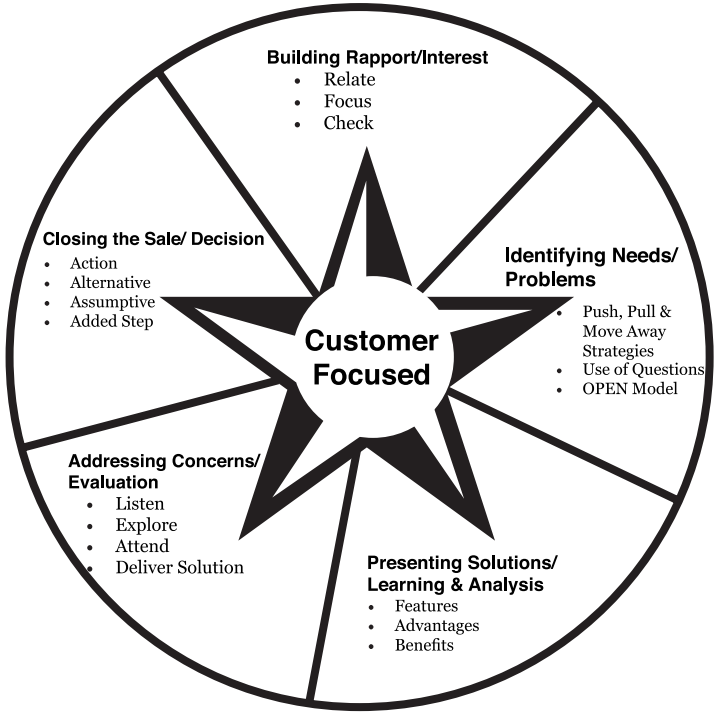
Review the SuperSTAR model on the next page. Notice how it relates to the assessment. Three parts aren't on the model, but they do circumvent each step:

- Customer-Centered
- Leveraging Team & Organizational Support
- Emotional Resiliency & Peak Performance

Also take note of the red, which indicates where the customer is at in the buying cycle. We need to align our approach with the customer's position in the purchasing process, if we hope to be successful. We will talk more about that later. For now, let's dig into the key stages of the SuperSTAR selling process.

"Excellent selling is excellent service, and excellent service is excellent selling!"
-- Rick Conlow

SALES PLANNING & PREPARATION



FOLLOW-UP & FOLLOW THROUGH

REFLECTION: STARTING POINT

Now that you have taken the SuperSTAR Selling Assessment, learned about the various sales dimensions, and committed to becoming a SuperSTAR sales professional, it's time for a moment of self-reflection.

1. What brought you to this book? What motivated you to start focusing on your selling skills?

2. What long-term selling goals do you have that you want to use these skills to achieve?

3. What's in it for you to become a SuperSTAR sales professional?

4. When you read the question above, "How good can you be?" What answers came to mind for you? How good can you be? (Dream big and stay positively focused.)

5. What is the one thing you want to remind yourself throughout this SuperSTAR Selling journey?

MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGE #1:
WARNING: PESSIMISM IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH!

A 25-year study at the world-renowned Mayo Clinic determined that pessimism is hazardous to your health. To identify optimism and pessimism tendencies, the Mayo Clinic distributed a personality test to hundreds of participants. The results proved that, on average, pessimistic people die 19 percent earlier than optimistic individuals; in other words, optimistic people live 13-14 *years* longer, suffer less illness, and experience a better quality of life. Who wouldn't be happy to hear these results?

Some people like to complain, others like to criticize everything, and then there are a few who have bad news by the hour. These attitudes destroy sales, decrease income opportunities, and according to Mayo, diminish our life expectancy.

Positive attitudes make everything better, including sales. It all begins with your goals, so what do you really want in life? Recently, this question was asked of SuperSTAR salespeople. Their responses fit into these categories:

- Health/Wellness
- Self-Satisfaction
- Travel
- Recognition
- Security
- Success
- Happiness
- Enjoyment
- Quality Family Time
- Material Things
- Money
- Fun

Where do your responses fit? These desires are the true motivators in life. It's not about the contests, products, or quotas you get from your company. For any person, the clearer you are about what you want, the more specific you set your goals, and the sooner you take action, the faster you'll make these dreams a reality. *We still live in a land of opportunity.* William Clement Stone said, "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve!"

Selling is one of the highest-paying professions in the world, which gives you a direct line to achieving many of these goals. Truly, there are unlimited possibilities! Too many salespeople learn everything they can in the first year of their career, and then decide they know it all. But, they don't have 10-20 years of experience – they have one year of experience, 10-20 times. So, some complain because they can only focus on how bad it is, and they forget that they are responsible for the situation they have created.

Why not get positive and optimistic today? Why not take action and stay focused on the SuperSTAR selling strategies? Others are doing it. You're worth it, aren't you? It comes down to accountability, right? It's been said, "If it is to be, it's up to me!" Nobody can do it for you. You have to take action and make something happen for yourself. Do it for your own reasons. Do it for yourself and your family. Remember to stay positive! May the best of success be yours!

REFLECTION: OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

If pessimism is this bad for you, we can't just rush right passed this point! Very rarely is pessimism something we're intentionally or thoughtfully choosing; however, once it becomes our way of living, it can become so innate that changing our ways feels like we're going against the wind.

So, if you're a pessimistic person, take some time to make a plan on how you're going to head in the direction of change. Thinking, being and living positively is possible, even if you're living pessimistically now. Awareness is the first step toward change. So, let's start there.

1. After reading the above Mayo Clinic health study results, how did you feel?

2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 = very pessimistic; 10 = very optimistic), how would you rate yourself currently? And why do you give yourself this rating?

3. As you reflect on your life, has that number changed over time? What's responsible for the change that's taken place?

4. Who are the 3 most positive people you know? And how does being around them make you feel?

5. How do you want to make those around you feel?

6. What are three things you want to start doing to become more positive?

If you're already an optimistic person, great! Keep making positive living a priority!

SALES PLANNING & PREPARATION

When you think about your job as a company sales representative, how much of your time is spent planning for sales and generating activity that's designed to sell? While there is always a certain amount of market planning and strategic effort required during the product-development launch stage, how much planning time is put into customer interactions? We have learned that whatever time is currently designated to planning isn't enough, mainly because everyone is so busy with this, that and the other thing. SuperSTARs plan well, without overdoing it, and they make more sales.

We believe in strategic sales planning and preparation. In some ways, strategic sales planning is like chess – we must think and plan several steps ahead. We want to act with a more comprehensive understanding of each player's position. And we want our efforts to be governed by the customer's business, personal needs and goals, while we take into account our competitor's activities and our own desired outcomes. Finally, we must consider selling something today, while strategically planning for the long-term, so that we anticipate business changes that evolve from customer activities.

We will consider a number of topics here:

1. The *Market Potential Matrix*, which helps us determine the difference between a *valued customer* and an *expandable customer.* This matrix allows us to consider the criteria that can be used to help us identify our accounts with the most growth potential. The key operating principle is to utilize our scarce resources to our advantage. One of the primary resources is the potential customer pool at our disposal. To determine which accounts have the most potential, we suggest using the *Market Potential Matrix* to evaluate the business within each of our current accounts. Continued success requires an appropriate mix of customers, balanced between the potential risk and return.

2. To ensure that we understand how decisions are made, we will explore the various *buyer roles and decision styles* within an organization. Once we are aware of these roles, we are much more likely to tailor our selling activities accordingly.

3. The *Sales Relationship Map* allows us to consider our position within each account, which helps us adjust our selling activity in ways that allow us to advance within an account. Our position on the map gives us guidance as to how to pursue additional business, so that we can progress on the map.

4. The *SWOT Analysis* reviews the organization from a practical perspective, using the identification of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This allows us to focus on high-priority, high-payoff opportunities to develop our solution. We will review and develop our skills to determine our *value proposition*, which includes the resources, tools, skills, services and products that our company can provide that differentiate our offer from the competition and add value to our proposed solution. We will also evaluate the competitors' activity to determine how to best counter or overcome their strategies. Combining these tools gives us indicators and diagnostics that we can use to identify our position in the competitive playing field. With this knowledge and awareness, we can plan our activities more effectively and utilize our resources to achieve our strategic objectives.

REFLECTION: YOUR PLANNING PERSONALITY

Before we move into the Market Potential Matrix, let's stop, so that you can assess your planning personality. Planning is one way of preparing, it's not the only way, but we believe it's an essential part of the preparation equation.

Alan Lakein, an author and time-management expert, once said, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." Now, although sometimes luck is in your favor, if you want to increase your odds for consistent success, start planning! Take this quick five-question quiz to determine your planning personality. Rate yourself 1 – 5 depending on how likely you are to do the following.

5 = Almost Always
4 = Often
3 = Occasionally
2 = Seldom
1 = Almost Never

1. If you spent a total of 10 hours on one customer, 2 hours (or more) of that time would have been committed to planning and preparing for the call.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. If you have a prior personal relationship with a sales client, preparing is less of a priority because you already know what you need to know about that client.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. You would feel very unprepared if you didn't thoroughly research the customer sales and prepare your sales call thoroughly.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. If you were really busy and had been experiencing a lot of sales success, the easiest place to cut back, in order to save time, would be the planning stage.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. You would invest more time understanding your client than you would spend face-to-face with your client.
   1 2 3 4 5

There are no right answers. But, to give you an idea of what we think, the higher the score on questions 1, 3 and 5 - the better; on questions 2 and 4, the lower the better.

MARKET POTENTIAL MATRIX

Before we even begin to contact customers, an important strategy question must be asked: Where is the best opportunity? Where are the right targets to invest our time? There is a difference between *valued customers* and *expandable customers*. Certainly, every customer that has the potential to use our products is a valued customer relationship that we want to foster. But, valuing a customer and protecting a customer from competitors require different activities, in order to build business and to expand sales. Making this distinction is important for us to do.

Utilizing the matrix is one way we can look at each customer through two dimensions.

1. First, we must review the amount of business we own, as a percentage of all of the potential business. For example, if we sold 20 products a month to a customer that occupied 50 percent or more of that area's sales activity, we would know we own a high percentage of activity in that area. Alternatively, if we sold one product to one account per week, we would know we own a small percentage of that business.

2. The other dimension considers account growth potential. Typically, there are two ways an account can grow. The first is to expand our market potential by finding more new customers than we have at a given point. Do this through conducting research, contacting marketing companies, using industry associations, purchasing mailing lists, or hiring a consultant. The second is to win market share. We can do this by upgrading our product advantage to current customers to ensure our company products have a larger share of their business. In the matrix, the vertical access is occupied by the amount of business owned, whereas the growth potential is on the horizontal access. This allows us to plot four distinct matrix positions.

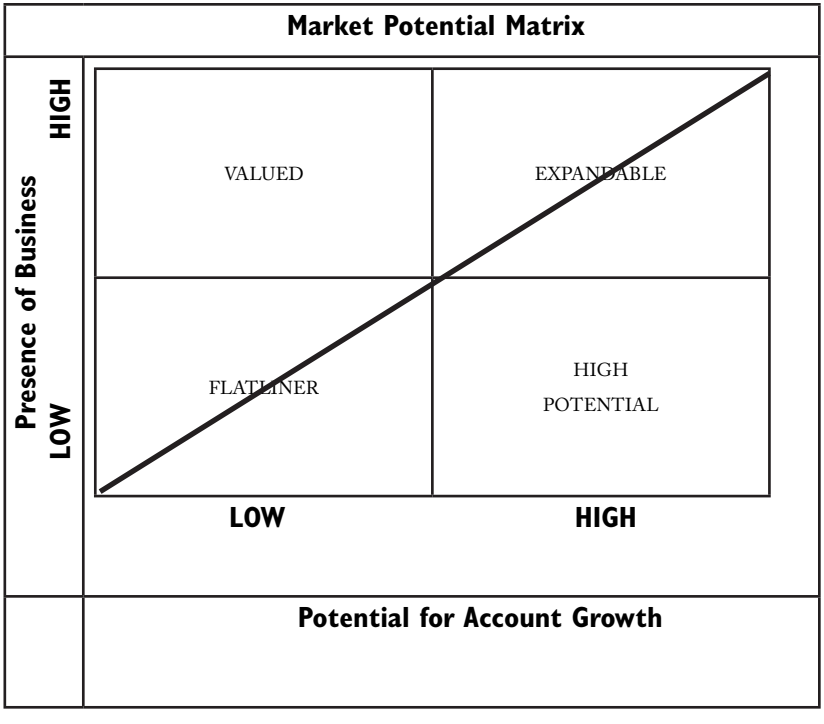
Flatliner: If we own a small percentage of an account's business and there's little growth potential, then there is little opportunity for our company to grow. Customers in this quadrant are unwilling to consider buying more of our products as a percentage of their overall sales. This category is not a priority; it's more about maintaining the minimal sales they are contributing, without wasting too much of our time on them.

Valued: If we own a high percentage of an account's business, but there's little growth potential, we want to protect that account and take advantage of ongoing

profitability that's available to us. Because the potential is minimal, we don't want to over invest, but we do want to provide what's appropriate to allow the account to continue using our products. We want to protect the business that's there, maintain the relationship, and preserve the account, so that competitors don't impede on our position.

High Potential: When we own a small amount of an existing business but there's potential for growth, our strategic goal should be to build upon the existing potential. Increasing our market share or capturing market share from our competitors may generate this growth. This category is worth our time and attention. Customers with high-rise potential deserve a high-level of generative activity.

Expandable: Another high-potential customer includes the *expandable* customer. We already own a high percentage of this customer's business and there's potential for future growth, so this customer deserves our best, most persistent efforts.



- Low Presence & Low Potential – Don't Waste Your Time
- Low Presence & High Potential – Build & Execute Strategy to Win
- High Presence & Low Potential – Milk It & Protect It
- High Presence & High Potential – Grow It & Grow With It

SALES ACTIVITY #1: CURRENT CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Determine where you are spending most of your time and effort right now. Use the grid above to identify where each account falls on the Market Potential Matrix, and then determine the appropriate action based on our discussion so far. In the other sales activities, use the highest-priority accounts to apply the sales skills that are discussed.

ACCOUNT	POSITION	ACTION
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

BUYER ROLES & DECISION STYLES

In most organizations, we see five key roles played out in regard to how decisions get made for the purchase and implementation of services and activities.

1. The *financial decision maker* is the person managing the account's budget. Usually someone in the purchasing department plays this role, but a purchasing team, an owner, or an individual with complete financial responsibility, like a CFO, can also operate this position. Typically, this person makes the final spending decisions, such as: approving a purchase, allocating money to a particular product, or agreeing to spend more than originally anticipated. This role is so critical that if we don't know who the financial decision maker is, we are operating blindly during the sales process. We need to understand the financial decision maker's process, adapt our sales efforts accordingly, and be aware of the criteria she uses to make decisions.

2. The *user* is the individual that's implementing the product or service. Users are intimately involved with the product, especially from an application and technical perspective. They consider the solution's utility based on how it aligns with their needs; therefore, they are personally invested in the value of the offered solution.

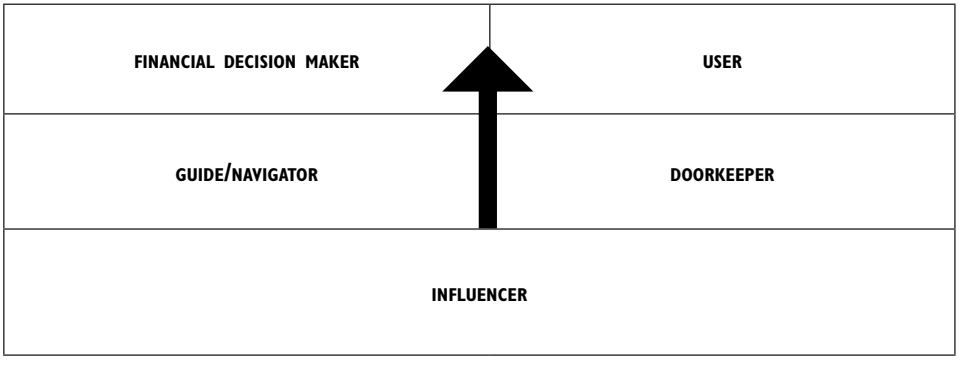
3. The *influencer* is an expert who has substantial product knowledge and product experience. Influencers can be internal or external, or industry-recognized experts with a reputable status. Their influence is so inherently involved in the process that they are able to shape decisions without being present. Influencers' advice and opinions hold a lot of weight with customers.

4. The *doorkeeper* is the individual who gets access and insight into the process. They can be office managers, administrative assistants, or receptionists. A doorkeeper's *yes* may not influence the process, but a doorkeeper's *no* has the power to shut the door on a particular provider altogether. The person answering the phone has a lot of power because he has the authority to permit or withhold access.

5. A *guide/navigator* demystifies the organization and the roles that others play in the organizational setting. They can direct sales professionals to the real decision makers, and provide internal information that's critical to the purchasing

decision. Having an effective guide or navigator is usually the difference between a successful sale and a lost sale that went awry at one point or another during the process.

As a sales organization, our strategic goal is to ensure that we have an accurate understanding of the varying roles that influence the decision-making process, so that our sales activities honor and collaborate with these roles. Review the chart below to put this information to use. SuperSTAR salespeople take action. So, apply this information to your next sales contact. Then, do it again and again.



SALES ACTIVITY #2: CUSTOMER ROLES IN DECISION MAKING

Pick one customer and identify the individuals that influence that relationship. Make a few notes to yourself. If you get a chance, review this with a peer or your supervisor.

DECISION STYLES

By understanding the decision-making process that will be used, we are given another strategic advantage in our customer setting. Many sales are derailed because we have assumptions regarding how an organization will make decisions, so we inadvertently miss steps that would otherwise accommodate an organization's preferred decision-making style. Although there are a number of different decision styles, we will discuss the four primary categories.

1. **Command:** one person is empowered to make the decision based on ownership, position, expertise, authority, or a combination of these factors.
2. **Consultative:** one person makes the decision after consulting others. Consulting may be done for support, advice, technical assistance, reputation purposes, etc. The information obtained during the consultation may or may not be utilized.
3. **Consensus, Collaboration or Other Group Method:** we all make a decision that we mutually accept. Or, we vote to reach a majority.
4. **Laissez-Faire:** all practitioners do their own thing.

Command: One person makes these decisions. Oftentimes, this person is an executive like a manager, managing partner or COO. The authority to make the decision is based on the individual's expertise, level of ownership in the business, or status in the organization. In command decision styles, the goal is to find the person who makes the decision and convince her that she should use our solutions.

Consultative: Consultative decisions are made after consulting others. Consultation may be sought for any number of reasons, but it's important to remember that there's no guarantee that the input will be utilized. In a consultative decision-structured organization, it's helpful and important to determine who will be consulted and if possible, the nature of the consultation. This way, we can seek to influence the person making the final decision and those who will be consulted.

Consensus, Collaboration, or Other Group Method: In many organizations, some sort of group-based decision-making style will be used formally or informally. Typically, this is the case for political reasons, considering the least amount of flak emerges when many people have been consulted, heard, or given the opportunity to influence. Although consensus decision-making can result in high-quality decisions, it can also delay the process. Decision-making becomes even more complex

when an organization requires a unanimous decision, which requires everyone to agree upon a solution. By understanding a group's decision-making process, we can initiate relationships and attempt to influence both the individual and the group in the most favorable manner.

Laissez-faire: This sort of decision-making is when individuals do their *own thing,* and it's fairly common in professional settings where practitioners are assumed to have the expertise and rationale to decide on their own. In laissez-faire, it's more difficult to come to a consensus because all parties must use the same product offering.

The strategic-selling challenge includes understanding how organizations make decisions and accepting that there may not be one sole decision-making process used. Where is the customer in the decision-making process? Who will be making the decision? Note the SuperSTAR selling model on page 17. We want to match our stage in the model to the customer's decision-making process.

Customer…	…Sales Rep
Interest…	…Building Rapport
Situations That Need Attention…	…Identifying Needs
Learning & Analysis…	…Presenting Product Benefits
Evaluation…	…Addressing Customer Concerns
Decision…	…Closing the Sale

SALES ACTIVITY #3: DECISION STYLES

Identify three current accounts that you have worked with at some point. Where are you and where is the customer? Is there anything you can do to improve? For example, maybe you have been trying to close, but the customer is still asking for more pricing information or product options. In that case, you might need to identify what they need, give it to them, and then close the sale.

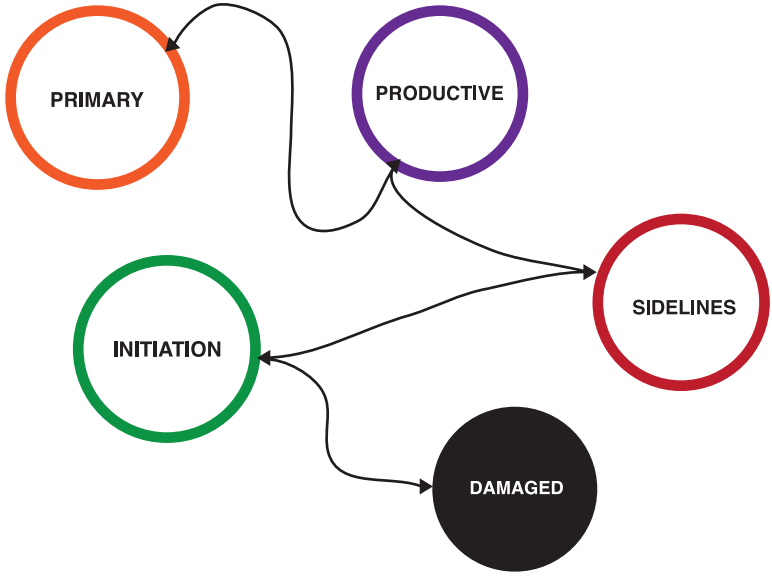
CUSTOMER & DECISION STAGE	SALES REP	IMPROVEMENT
1.		
2.		
3.		

SALES RELATIONSHIP MAP

In this section, we will discuss the five different conceptual positions that we may occupy within a customer relationship. Each position is descriptive, it references a point in the relationship, and it's instructive by addressing key factors that affect our ability to sell. The map offers guidance on how to alter our sales approach in order to achieve a more favorable status in our relationship with the customer.

We will consider each of the five positions and discuss the ease and amount of access that's implied, the areas of tension and influence, and the available knowledge we have about our customer and our company. Finally, we will use that information to identify the appropriate sales strategy needed to advance.

The Sales Relationship Map



DAMAGED

A damaged relationship can occur in various situations, but it's usually the byproduct of falling out of favor with an account. Frequent billing, product failures, delivery problems, and administration issues may be responsible for creating tension between you and the key decision makers.

When we're in a damaged position, our access to the account is very limited, if not completely restricted. This lack of access makes it extremely difficult to change

the quality of the relationship, to secure an approachable position, to generate a flow of information, and to influence effectively. At the same time, the negative feelings and lack of communication make it challenging to change the account's perspective of our company. Trust is minimal, so any information that's exchanged is generally held with a critical frame of reference.

To repair a damaged relationship, the enforced sales strategy must focus efforts on eliminating negative feelings and working from a clean slate. Two of the best strategies include talking about change and committing to quality assurance. After you have established some rapport, you will need new members of your company to help you. Making change must be the primary focus of the activity. Often it's necessary to uncover old wounds if you hope to discuss expectations, repair the damage, and renegotiate the relationship.

Repairing damaged relationships often requires a lot of time and energy to determine if it's worth it to pursue its repair. One rationale that encourages pursuing relationship repair is the reality that dissatisfied customers generally share their unhappiness with others. Because of this, there's a very real risk that our damaged relationship with one account might damage other existing account relationships.

INITIATION

Initiation is meant to describe a new relationship, and it's descriptive of situations where we are trying to build relationships with brand-new accounts or accounts that we have not pursued yet. Cold calling and networking are two methods of access into brand-new accounts, and sometimes access is available through professional courtesy if our company has a positive reputation in the marketplace. The key is to take advantage of these offers quickly, so that you can establish value in your relationship in order to allow for additional exploration and sales opportunities. Your influence in these relationships is minimal and arbitrary, although influence may generate from the image our company holds in the industry. During this stage, your knowledge of the customer is limited and superficial at best.

- Pursing a *new* relationship.
- You have no current business with this customer.
- You have no significant relationships in the business.
- Your ability to influence is negotiable.
- Your knowledge of the business is insignificant.
- The customer's knowledge of your offerings is suspect.

What strategy must you utilize to sell and progress in this position?

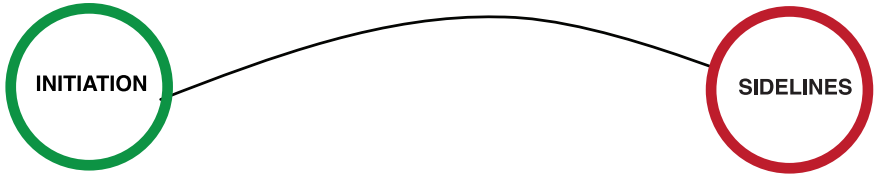
This sales strategy is one that requires fairly persistent relationship-building activity that's followed by a thorough needs identification process and an intentional establishment of trust. This strategy may involve a series of small steps before a strong relationship is possible.

SIDELINES

The sidelines position is similar to being on the sidelines in a sporting situation. Consider this: you have made the cut, you're on the team, but at this point you've been relegated to a secondary position, so you are on the bench. But your competitor has a better track run than your team, which is keeping you on the sidelines. Until you earn it, the crowd is going to support your competitor.

Since the initiation phase, your access has increased, but it's still significantly less than your competitor's. The competition may still be the vendor of choice because they have established comfortable relationships within the organization. Yet, if you persist, you can develop a stronger position of influence and advocacy. Even though your knowledge of the customer and your customer's knowledge of you are growing, you're still relatively insignificant to the customer. Your urgency or the customer's will determine the timing of the contract.

- You've advanced in the relationship.
- You have some productive relationships.
- You may have some level of advocacy in the organization.
- You have been able to learn about the business and the main stakeholders.



What strategy must you utilize to sell and progress in this position?

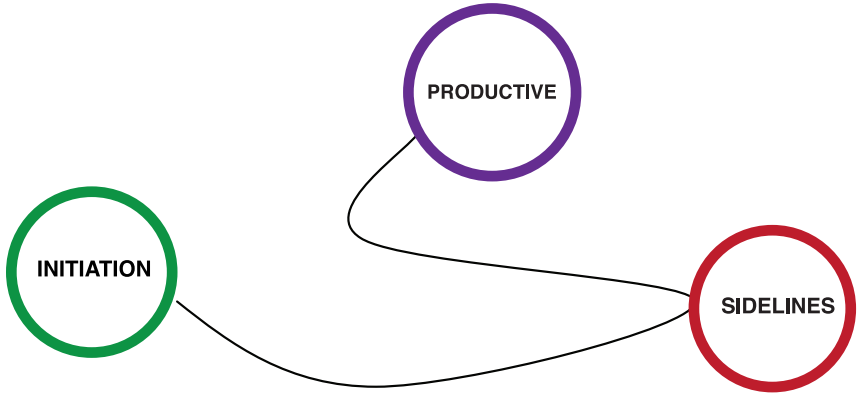
At this point, the sales strategy is to consistently call on the account, to continue to expand the access, and thereby, to expand your influence. The biggest challenge is to win the opportunity to be seen, and then to take full advantage of it. When you get in the game by winning demonstrations, building credibility with your company experts, and selling related products, the pressure to deliver increases considerably. This helps you to further increase your visibility and viability within the account.

PRODUCTIVE

You've established a productive relationship when you're regularly talking to and meeting with the client. The relationship should be growing, your access to the account should be easier, and your influence and advocacy within the organization should be expanding. At this stage, you need to use your team to solidify your credibility and trust with the account.

The increased access and strengthened relationships create a more natural flow of information between you and the key employees in the organization. This adds to your ability to influence and to advocate within the system. The significance of this position stems from taking full advantage of the access to deepen your business knowledge, both at the product and the practice level. Doing this allows you to use that information as a leverage to deliver an on-target proposal at the right time.

What strategy must you utilize to sell and progress in this position?



- You've established a relationship that's generating business.
- You are winning profitable business; i.e., five or more products per month.
- You know the right stakeholders in the business.
- The account knows you.
- You have a position that's somewhat influential.

Price may be more sensitive here than at previous stages. By this point, competitors may be awakened to your presence and determined to prevent your attempts at building the relationship. High-quality, professional presentations, legendary follow through, and prompt responses to requests are all critical at this stage.

PRIMARY

This final position is one in which you and your company maintain a prominent presence with an account. You have gained virtually all of the profitable business that you want, and information flows freely and frequently. Access is complete, so you are considered a member of the team, and it's understood that you are a key player in the organization. Your influence is high, your ability to advocate is high, and the mutual knowledge between you and your account is high.

This position's sales strategy is focused on protecting your existing position and continuing to explore opportunities with further potential. High-quality, problem-free results are crucial. Also, transitioning from sales to service in any company is essential. You must continue to follow through on your promises, communicate clearly to your company team, transition the account into branches, and anticipate organizational needs and problems. This is the ticket to maintaining full partnership; otherwise, your hard work to land the account will be wasted time if you end up like a past vendor.

Obviously, the goal is to be a primary player in all of your key accounts. If you hope to maximize territory potential, you must know your position in each account, set your sales strategies accordingly, and continue to feed the pipeline. You should always have a diverse mix of customers, some at the initiation, sideline, and productive stages, in order to support enough primary results to achieve your sales goals. You must continue to secure your position in each account, and remember that neglect can lead to competitor intrusion. One final and important truism is that it's only a short distance from any of the positive relationships on the map to a damaged relationship, unless you are continuing to manage and attend to your accounts.

SALES RELATIONSHIP MAP

1. The goal is to be a primary or secondary player in all of your accounts.
2. Know your position in the account and set your sales strategy accordingly.
3. Continue to feed the pipeline, if you hope to maximize territory potential. This requires a continual effort to initiate new accounts.
4. Strive to secure your position in the account. Any neglect gives your competitors an opportunity to intrude.
5. Without continuous management, it doesn't take much to turn a productive relationship into a damaged relationship.

SALES ACTIVITY #4: SALES RELATIONSHIP MAP

Select a current account and complete the following table.

ACCOUNT NAME:

POSITION ON THE MAP:

INDICATORS THAT YOU'RE IN THAT POSITION:

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE YOUR POSITION:

RISKS TO CONSIDER ON THIS ACCOUNT, IN THIS POSITION:

SALES RELATIONSHIP MAP DEFINITIONS

INITIATION

- Do your homework. Review annual reports, use the Internet, and read articles about the individual or company you plan to meet.
- Learn about the company, its decision-making process, culture and history.
- Build relationships. Get to know others and help them get to know you.
- Learn about their industry, business goals, and vision.
- Focus on identifying their needs and priorities.
- Present high-quality literature and/or a professional presentation.

SIDELINES

- Continue to build on your knowledge of the company.
- Continue to network your way into the organization.
- Be mindful that everything you do impacts your image and your company's brand.
- Ask, listen, and learn. Watch for obvious and subtle cues that will guide you forward.
- While you need to establish your credibility, don't be tempted to pitch too soon.
- Remember, they may give you a small piece of business to "test" your capability.
- Be consistent with your follow through.
- Send articles, emails, and updates to continue to build influence.
- If you get an opportunity to win some business, make sure that you make a good first impression by starting strong.

PRODUCTIVE

- Given you're probably competing against other major players, your price and quality of work are pivotal to your ability to dominate the account.
- Remain close to your major contacts and listen to their guidance and feedback.
- Communicate clearly to your operations team, updating them on expectations, needs and promises that you've made to the account.

- Maintain and continue building the close personal relationships responsible for getting you where you are.
- Look for opportunities to deliver the solution and to meet with key stakeholders.
- Ensure that you're well prepared to hold results-focused meetings every time you engage with them.

PRIMARY

- Quality and delivery will determine your success for the next contract period.
- Maintain contact throughout the delivery of the contract, so that you're positioned well for the next contract renewal.
- Remember, you are now the target of all of your competitors.

DAMAGED

- You have made a mistake in one-way or another.
- Relationships are damaged, and the business is in jeopardy.
- You must mend the relationships in question.
- Determine what caused the problem and seek to get the issue corrected.
- Take responsibility for your mistakes, apologize and identify an equitable resolution.
- Work to reestablish relationships and look for ways to rebuild credibility.
- Ensure that you explain what you've changed, so that the problem doesn't re-occur.
- Invest the necessary time and money required.

"We are what we repeatedly do,
excellence is not an act, but a habit."
-- Aristotle

SWOT ANALYSIS

You have identified the right customer target and have gained extensive knowledge of the prospect. You have developed relationships with the right players and have determined the roles they play in the decision-making process. You have deciphered the motivational preferences of each decision maker, and you've analyzed the organization's preferred decision style. Now, you are well positioned to do a practical analysis of the organization. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are commonly assessed to analyze a business. Initiating strengths-focused conversations with a variety of decision makers gives you an opportunity to see what strengths drive a business's success. A similar conversation focused on weaknesses, opportunities and threats will give you important data to consider when forming your sales strategy.

SWOT ANALYSIS	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

WHY USE SWOT?

A SWOT Analysis is a helpful framework that identifies the situation's strengths and weaknesses, while examining existing opportunities and threats. Completing a SWOT analysis helps you to focus your activities into areas where you are strong and where the greatest opportunities exist.

Strengths

- What advantages does your customer have?
- What does your customer do well?
- What resources are available to your customer?

Keep in mind that you may see strengths that your customers do not. Consider their strengths in relation to their competitors' strengths.

Weaknesses

- What could your customers improve?
- What do you think they do poorly?

Again, consider this from their stance, as well as your professional perspective. Do their own customers seem to recognize weaknesses that they don't? Are their competitors doing better than them?

Opportunities

- What good opportunities are present?
- What trends are you are aware of?

Useful opportunities can emerge when changes take place in technology, market trends, social systems, lifestyle preferences, and population patterns. Also, local events should be considered when evaluating potential opportunities. A useful approach is to review the strengths, and then to determine whether these strengths create opportunities. Alternatively, consider the customer's weaknesses to decide whether opportunities exist if you can eliminate the weaknesses.

Threats

- What obstacles do your customers face?
- What is their competition doing?

Are technology changes threatening their position?

Oftentimes, completing this analysis will help to identify what needs to be done and to put problems into perspective.

"*Strategic plans are often worthless, but planning is absolutely essential.*"
-- Peter Drucker

SALES ACTIVITY #5: USING SWOT IN SALES PLANNING

Complete this in-depth SWOT planning tool for your sales activities. It will help you to focus on your priority sales opportunities, so that you can make more money.

CUSTOMER NEEDS

Key Considerations:

- Past or Current Sales Products (ex. your per month per year)
- Problems/Complaints
- Decision-Making Process
- Relationship to Decision-Makers
- The Customer's Marketing Efforts
- Knowledge of Industry Products and/or Software
- Use of Marketing Support Efforts
- Business Issues/Goals/Success Measures
- Other: _____

Strengths?	**Weaknesses?**
Opportunities?	**Threats?**

COMPETITIVE REVIEW	
Key Considerations: • Top Competitors • Competitors' Strengths & Weaknesses • Market Strategies & Impact • Position With Top Accounts • Other: _____	
Strengths?	**Weaknesses?**
Opportunities?	**Threats?**

CURRENT BUSINESS SITUATION

Key Considerations:

- YTD Sales vs. Goals
- Volume of Business vs. Potential Volume
- Relationships With Customers
- The Reason Customers Buy From You
- Price vs. Value
- Product Benefits
- Other: _____

Strengths?	**Weaknesses?**
Opportunities?	**Threats?**

MARKETING SUPPORT	
Key Considerations: • Company Literature • Company Website • Customer Incentive Programs • Demonstrations/Presentations • Marketing Materials • Training • Other: _____	
Strengths?	**Weaknesses?**
Opportunities?	**Threats?**

SALES TEAMWORK

Key Considerations:

- Internal & External Sales Communication
- Job Roles & Expectations
- Problem-Solving Complaints
- Commitment Follow Through
- Procedure Effectiveness
- Training & Meetings
- Other: _____

Strengths?	**Weaknesses?**
Opportunities?	**Threats?**

STRATEGIC GOALS & PLANS
Priority Strengths (top 3-5) Priority Weaknesses to Improve (top 2-3) Priority Opportunities (top 3-5) Top Threats to Neutralize (top 2-3)
SMART goals & action steps Business Volume & Profitability Action Steps? Targeted Contacts & Marketing Strategies Action Steps? Other Goals Action Steps?

SUMMARY

Through this process, you ought to be focusing on one customer and planning how to approach her based on your planning efforts. As opposed to shooting from the hip, top sales professionals have a game plan for each customer visit. This means planning your approach For each step of the sales process. We will review this more later, too. Both the overall sales planning and sales call planning are vital steps to put yourself in a position where you can establish credible rapport with prospects.

A review of the sales process steps:

- Call Objectives
- Building Rapport
- Identifying Needs
- Presenting Product Benefits
- Addressing Concerns
- Closing the Sale
- Follow-Up and Follow Through

Finally, make sure to document what happened, taking note of the next steps that should be done in order to meet the customer's needs. With a little extra foresight and effort, sales professionals can master this part of the SuperSTAR selling model to gain an edge over the competitors that are vying for the customer's business. Today, most big companies have all of this automated through sales contact management software. If your company doesn't, you can take the lead now that you have this information.

MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGE #2:
HOW TO BE A WINNER!

Success is indeed a state of mind. Winning is a state of mind. Successful selling is a habit that can be cultivated through intentional training and positive perspective. It's similar to a farmer's attitude about his crops. Obstacles will emerge, and the farmer will face hazardous weather, pests, and market deviations; however, the successful farmer is persistent, day-by-day and season-by-season. Similarly, SuperSTAR's remain dedicated, regardless of the product, customer or market condition.

SO, HOW DO WINNERS SUCCEED?

Winners go within. They imagine the best, not the worst. They think about what they want, not what they don't want; they pre-play positives rather than ruminate over the negatives. Winners create the futures they want and don't dwell on past mistakes or lost opportunities. They practice relentlessly and act persistently to achieve perfection. Attitudes, images and commitments are pivotal to achieving peak performance.

Dick Fosbury, inventor of the Fosbury Flop, used his imagination and discipline to set a high-jump world record of 7'3" and to win a 1968 Olympic gold medal. He'd rock back and forth a few times to spur his run and jump, and then he'd run and high jump backwards over the bar. He was a world champion – a winner! All champions train intensely and imagine positively. Jean-Claude Killy won three Olympic gold medals using his technology. Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson, Gary Player, and Tiger Woods would visualize a golf shot before they would swing. Why? It refocuses them on their best form, instead of leaving their attention on previous errors.

Astronauts are some of the most exceptional examples of this discipline. Nobody really knew what the Apollo moon expeditions would be like, except maybe

Jules Verne or Ray Bradbury; however, the astronauts performed their tasks with precision. They spent thousands of hours practicing in the desert and the ocean. They replayed the desired end result with NASA simulations. In fact, Neil Armstrong even said the moon expedition was "beautiful, just like the drill."

Do you face obstacles? Sure! But, so did the POW's in Vietnam. Many spent years behind bars, deprived of physical comforts and intellectual activity. To fight boredom, they took self-development into their own hands by mentally challenging themselves.

Do you want to be a winner and achieve sales excellence? Start imagining superior results and successful sales. Continue to learn during every training session and customer interaction. Finally, remember to be persistent, to act as a team player, and to know your numbers. Now, watch your sales and income increase!

PRACTICE: SEE YOUR SUCCESS

If success is really a state of mind, how do you feel about your current frame of mind? Are you doing the internal, intellectual imaginative exercises that'll help make your success a reality? We hope so! Do you see yourself as a success? We hope so!

In order to help you get to a place where seeing yourself as a success becomes second nature, we invite you to take 10-15 minutes to complete the below meditation practice.

1. Find a quiet place that's free of loud noises, other people and distractions.

2. Pick one thing in your life [make it very specific] that you want to accomplish.

3. Close your eyes. Imagine yourself getting into your car. Put whatever "it" is in the direction of NORTH. Anything east, west or south is away from "it."

4. You start your car, you know your destination, and you begin your journey. As you head north, an intense wind heads in your direction. It's not in your favor, in fact, it's keeping your car from continuing north. You stop your car, you take a walk, you think about what "it" is that's waiting for you, and you get back into your car. *Take a moment here to imagine doing each one of these things. Stop. Walk. Think. Restart.*

5. You pull into a rental car agency that's right off the road. You swap your little two-door for a large, heavyweight pick-up truck. You know the high winds won't be able to stop this vehicle.

6. You get back on the road and embrace the winds. 200 miles later, there's a detour. You can't continue directly north, you have to head one of two ways: east or northeast. The NE detour takes much longer, but it's still heading halfway in the direction you want to go. So, you take it. It's a dirt road that's full of potholes you must dodge, slower speeds you must accommodate, and less scenery you can enjoy.

7. The journey is long. You get tired. You get hungry. And most of the ride, there's no service on your phone or your radio. You have no one to talk to

or keep you busy. You start to wonder if it's worth it. So, you stop, take a walk to awaken yourself, and get some fuel for your car and your appetite.

8. You feel refreshed; you get back on the road. After five long days, the detour finally starts to head north again. You get excited as you remember what "it" is you've traveled all this way to accomplish.

9. You are heading fully north, and you see a sign that says "'IT' – THIRTY MILES." You can't believe it; you're almost there! Five miles later, your pick-up truck dies. Something in the engine went wrong. You cannot believe that you've made it all this way, only to be left without a way to travel to "it." You sit on the side of the road, and you begin to sob. You get angry. You feel defeated. You feel lost and afraid and every other emotion, all at once.

10. You tell yourself to take a few breaths, and you do. You gather your thoughts. You compose yourself. And you decide – you haven't come this far to let "it" go.

11. You begin to walk. You know that if you keep reminding yourself of how important "it" is to you, you will find the energy to walk every single step of the next twenty-five miles. You walk for hours and hours. The daylight leaves, and you're left in darkness. Finally, you see a sign that says "'IT' – TWO MILES."

12. You start to run. No matter how tired you feel or how exhausted your body is, you dig deep to use every last ounce of energy to make your legs move as fast as they are able. And you run. You are sprinting. And then, you see "it." "It's" now within feet of you. You stop.

13. You want to take "it" in. You take a minute to remind yourself of the journey. The wind, the detour, the car exchange, the exhaustion, and the hunger. You decide that every minor disappointment was worth it – you have reached your destination. "IT" is yours.

14. You take your final steps to reach "it." And you think, "I've made it!"

15. Take five minutes to write your thoughts about this imaginative exercise. How did you feel when you envisioned yourself experiencing this journey? How did you feel when you reached your goal and achieved "it"?

BUILDING RAPPORT

You must understand and constantly review the dynamics of the sales process in order to successfully offer customers the products and services that meet their needs. While all steps are important, none is more critical than building rapport. Without rapport, your customers will doubt, resent and reject you. With it, you earn the opportunity to continue the sales process by gaining their trust, confidence and business.

To begin building a partnership and establishing rapport, get specific before you engage with the customer. For this reason, complete the *Sales Planning and Preparation* prior to your customer visit.

PROSPECTING WITH POWER

In the average salesperson's day, 75 percent of the time is spent on something other than face-to-face customer interactions. By increasing your customer time to consume at least 50 percent of your time, you will increase your contacts, appointments, sales and income. We recommend a five-step process to help you achieve this.

1. First, use a customer-management system (CMS) like Salesforce.com. Tools, such as *Sales Cloud,* help to document and track your customer activity. Today, many companies provide similar systems like ACT or Goldmine. *Sales Cloud* is Internet-based and includes sales-tracking software. It's a time saver and organizer.

2. Second, determine your metrics. Selling is a number's game and a relationship profession. The sales process helps you distinguish yourself in the relationship. The metrics help you to win with numbers. By knowing the numbers, you can predict your success by your sales activity, which you will track with your CMS.

- How much money do you want to make?
- What's your average commission per sale?
- How many sales do you need to close to achieve your income goal?
- How many appointments do you need in order to make a sale?
- How many point-of-sale contacts (by email, phone or mailing) do you have to make to set an appointment, whether that's on the phone or in person?

3. Third, you need a good list of prospects. Begin with your current accounts. In our *Strategic Planning* section of the book, you can review how to best mine sales. What types of companies are you approaching? What are others selling? Who are the top sellers selling to? What are your competitors doing? Your analysis here should help you determine who to contact. With the Internet, you can learn just about anything about any client. Put all of this information in your customer contact database. Refine your list as you progress, and start contacting them.

4. Fourth, discipline yourself by organizing your schedule to make calls and other contact efforts regularly. One of our clients uses *Dun and Bradstreet* for their prospect's list. They have an assistant who loads all of their qualified prospect data into their CMS, which saves them time and effort. They set aside a *SalesPower* day, on which they make all of their calls. They use the rest of their week to visit potential customers face-to-face. Another client of ours requires 50 daily phone calls. A study of their metrics proves that they secure 8–10 quality appointments per week. The key is to schedule your time, all of the time. Prospecting is the fuel that fires your sales engine. Without it, your sales career can't get anywhere.

5. Fifth, be persistent. Persistence separates the winners from the losers. More prospecting means more rejection; but remember, it isn't personal – it's just the way it is. Stay positive by reading the motivational messages in this book, listening to inspirational CD's or studying other self-help books. Do whatever it takes to create the sort of mindset that will be free of frustration.

At first, it will be tough, but network your way into a web. Who do you know that knows somebody you want to know? Do an informational interview with whoever it is. Or send a series of value-added dynamic letters, followed by phone calls. Always make your calls professional and courteous. To help you contact new business, the next few pages include valuable resources:

- A sample phone call to a prospect
- A sample letter to a prospect
- An agenda for the first meeting with a new prospect

Your level of professionalism will affect your rapport and credibility, so be well prepared when approaching a customer on the phone, through letters or by email. These tools will work, once the samples are modified to your industry and product.

REFLECTION: YOUR PROSPECTING POWER

Before we move onto ways of establishing rapport, it will be valuable for you to review your prospecting power. What sort of potential do you have that you should be using to your advantage? If you don't know the answer to that question, it's time to gauge just how much opportunity there is to pursue. Reflect on where you're at when it comes to the five-step prospecting process.

1. Do you currently use a customer-management system?

    a. If so, identify 2-3 features you should learn or use more often.

    b. If not, identify 2 customer-management systems that fit your budget and meet your immediate needs that you can commit to considering.

2. On a scale of 1-10 (10 = all the time; 1 = never), how often do you utilize the resources you have available to you?

    a. If you answered with a number between 1-5, identify 3 resources you need to utilize more often.

    b. If you answered a number between 6-10, identify 1 resource you need to utilize more often.

3. Do you know your numbers? Could you answer the questions asked above? [If not, go back to the questions and answer them before progressing forward].

4. Are you reviewing the numbers you ought to know, often enough?

    a. If so, great job! Keep up the good work.

    b. If not, how often would you like to review the numbers? Identify 2-3 concrete ways you can remind yourself to review them more often.

5. What percentage of your calendar is scheduled? In other words, how much time is organized into sections, time slots or windows?

    a. What's your goal for amount-of-time scheduled?

    b. What is one thing you can do immediately that will help you increase the percentage that's scheduled?

    c. What is one thing you can do long-term that'll help you increase the percentage that's scheduled?

6. Identify one positive, self-help strategy you want to start, so that when frustration, disappointment or rejection takes place, you have a strategy in mind to execute.

7. Take this last bit of space to really reflect on your abilities in the following areas: networking, discipline, organization, persistence, and metric retention. Write about where you're at, where you want to be, and how you hope to get there. Believe in yourself and set SMART goals!

RELATE, FOCUS & CHECK

You have done your homework, and now you are on the phone or face-to-face with the customer. Now what? How do you use your knowledge and plan effectively?

Whenever two people get together, a climate is inevitably created. It is not physical but attitudinal in nature. You do certain things that make it positive or negative. Many times, you are not even aware of how you affect the customer. The more positive actions you take, the more rapport and trust you will build with the customer. Three key actions help you do this quickly and professionally: *Relate, Focus and Check.*

Relate: Relating is a process that involves getting acquainted, building a working relationship, making friends, and establishing credibility with a customer. Take these steps to begin relating and building rapport:

- Be prepared.
- Be on time.
- Smile and shake hands firmly.
- Make eye contact.
- Introduce yourself.
- Be courteous and use good manners.
- Ask for his/her name.
- Look sharp, dress appropriately.
- Engage in pleasant small talk.
- Listen closely.

Focus & Check: After you have established a professional presence and connection, you need to focus on your original purpose for the customer contact. You may have already established this during prior discussions, but you need to reconfirm to verify that your agenda is the same as the customer's agenda – gain agreement early.

"Mrs. Jones, you've indicated to your Business Development Manager that you're interested in exploring a partnership with our company. With your permission, I'd like to get to know you more by asking you a number of questions that will help me learn about you and your needs. After understanding this, we can focus on the extensive product options that we could offer you through our distribution. Then, I'd like to review some market data I have for you. This way, I can identify the most effective way that I can be of service to you. Do you mind if I proceed according to that plan?"

Most of the time, if you have done your homework, the customer will agree with your plan. Your goal is to make sure you and the customer are on the same page. If you are planning to go one direction and the customer is going the other, it will be a tough appointment. Also, this simple communication technique gives your customer the chance to add an extra objective that you may need to know to successfully offer and deliver the service that's needed. Occasionally, there might be an unexpected problem to solve before you get to your agenda.

Building rapport is similar to laying the foundation of a building. Although there is still work to do after it's laid, a solid foundation provides critical support to the rest of the structure. Your main objective during this step is to reduce tension and to create a positive climate with your customer. Your thinking should be focused: What can you do to make customers feel comfortable when discussing their most pressing needs? This is often done through the simple, yet significant steps we have described. However, the steps must be crafted delicately and uniquely to fit each unique customer contact.

The biggest barrier to completing a sale is often distrust. Take time to get to know more about your customer, be sincere, thoroughly prepare and approach the customer professionally, and you will have a good start. Customers will buy from you because they like you and they feel understood by you - not because they entirely understand your products or services. Building rapport is a process of creating trust – you should constantly be working on this during the sales process. Think of how you treat your best friends, and then show your customers the same level of respect. They will be more likely to share their situation with you, to remain interested in working with you, and to develop a long-term, profitable partnership with you.

SAMPLE TELEPHONE CALL TO A PROSPECT

I. Introduction and Opening

"Mr. Jones," (*pause for yes response*) "Good morning! This is *Sarah* with *ABC Company*. I'm glad I reached you! Do you have a quick minute to talk? My (*special*) reason for calling today is…"

- Add a pleasantry before, "…reason for calling today is…"
- Be positive and upbeat.
- Use his name and give your name.
- Do not tell the prospect that you are "just in the neighborhood."
- Tell him you've done some homework.
- Tell him that you've thought about him and his particular business situation.

II. Gain Interest With a Benefit or a Hook

Do not choose all at once. Personalize the statement to your industry.

- "We are creating exciting, new programs that go far beyond what you may have with your current product or service.
- "In today's competitive marketplace, the results your employees produce can have a major impact on attracting new business. (*pause*) Our company provides incentives that attract new contacts to your office to help your business grow."
- "We have some new and unique product styles that we are really excited about, and I thought you might be interested."

III. Schedule and Ask for an appointment

- "Would (*day/time*) be convenient to meet for 30 minutes to discuss our program?"
- "Would Tuesday or Thursday A.M. be more convenient to meet for 30 minutes?"
- "Mr. Jones, could we meet for approximately 30 minutes next Wednesday?"
- "We could evaluate this in about 30 minutes. Would Monday or Wednesday afternoon work for you?"

SAMPLE LETTER OR EMAIL TO A PROSPECT

Your Name
Your Address
City, State and Zip

Today's Date

Mrs. President of XYZ Company
Street Address
City, State and Zip

Dear Mrs. President:

ABC Company has won the **Consumer Choice Award** eight years in a row as the best company in our industry*! (The goal with this sentence is to grab their attention – this heading can be up to 10-12 words).*

At *ABC,* we have worked with a number of companies in the *retail* industry, and we have successfully helped them to:

- Improve their company image.
- Enhance their safety.
- Increase their employee morale.

Currently, we are working with many other reputable companies, which include: *DEF Company, MNO Company, and RST Company*, to name a few. (*Pick other companies that would be relevant to their industry).*

Within the next three days, I will call you to arrange an appointment. During this meeting, we can clarify your priorities, review what I've learned about your organization, and highlight your potential options. *(Focus on successfully meeting their business needs and ask for an appointment).*

Sincerely,

Your Name
ABC Company

P.S. I have attached a testimonial letter from one of our key customers at *IJK Company*. *(Always provide them with a little something extra).*

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR INITIAL MEETING WITH A PROSPECT (30 MINUTES)

A. Introduction
- Relate
- Focus
- Check

B. Use The OPEN Model to Clarify Needs
- Check to ensure you have correctly understood the customer's expressed needs.

C. Make a Power-Selling Statement
- Tailor this to the customer's needs and the benefits of using your company.
  Mrs. President, we have worked with DEF Company for 15 years, and through our program, we have helped them to improve their image. They will be the first to tell you that we're highly responsive to ever-changing needs and market trends.

D. Give a High-Level Overview of Capabilities

E. Ask for Questions

F. Suggest a New Step

G. Thank the Customer & Close the Meeting

H. Follow-up
- Send a thank you note to let them know you appreciated their time.
- Send an email or letter to summarize the conversation that took place.

PRACTICE: MAKE A SAMPLE REALITY

Now that you have seen various examples of sample calls, emails and letters, it's your turn! Take 30-45 minutes to create your own call outline, email or letter for an actual client. Take your time and do it right. This is something you will want to really use with a client, so don't waste the time on something you won't apply. When you are done creating your real-life sample, answer these questions, so that you can reference them in the future when you complete this process again (and again and again).

1. Why did you choose the format you chose?

2. What are 2-3 things that you think would be important to take into consideration when putting together a call outline, email or letter in the future?

3. What's one thing you learned during this process that you hadn't previously considered?

4. How will you apply that learning in the future?

5. What was difficult when you were creating this real-life sample?

6. What did you enjoy about creating a real-life sample?

SALES ACTIVITY #6: BUILDING RAPPORT

In the space below, identify 6-8 behaviors that you want to use to make a positive impression on the customer. Also, add 2-3 behaviors that you want to avoid because they could have a negative impact on the customer.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

"All excellence is equally difficult."
-- Unknown

IDENTIFYING NEEDS

Focus on the customer instead of yourself! Just like us, customers are motivated by what they need. So, identifying needs successfully allows us to give the customers what they want, which ultimately means that we get what we want too. Focus on your customer, not your commission.

Nearly every customer's purchase is an attempt to solve a problem or to satisfy a need. This step is one of the most important because if it's done properly, it positions you to address real, viable, high-priority customer needs. If it's done poorly, your presentation will likely be scattered, disorganized and arbitrary. This step can transform an average sales professional into a consultant who's able to offer high-impact solutions instead of razzle-dazzle remedies that say all the right things but fail to deliver anything. This step is about identifying and addressing the customer's priorities.

To understand the physical and personal concerns of the customer, you can strategically ask the customer questions. An outcome is successful when a product or service is identified as the solution to a customer's concern or objectives. This step should answer the question: *How can I listen more effectively to understand the customer's real needs?*

PULL, PUSH AND MOVE AWAY STRATEGIES

As salespeople reflect on the influence they have on customers, they ought to ask: *Do I know what it would be like for me to be on the other side of my sales efforts?* In other words, can you determine how you affect others?

To have a positive influence means that your approach is constructive and respectful. This means that you don't have any hidden agendas, but that you have integrity – you believe in your goals and what they represent. There are three different modes to explain the different ways of navigating communication:

Push: Whenever you are advancing your own agenda, you are using a push strategy. You are willing to tell others directly what you want, persuade them, convince them with evidence or entice them with logic. Essentially, if you are focused on accomplishing your own agenda, you are in push mode.

Pull: Whenever you are authentically establishing common ground, actively listening or supporting areas of agreement, you are using pull energy. You are willing to be influenced by others when you're in this mode.

Move Away: We can move away for two reasons. If we temporarily disengage, we are typically trying to think, refocus, or buy time, with the intention of returning our attention at some point. Examples include: walking away from a car dealer during negotiations or taking a break when tension escalates during a meeting. The second type of moving away occurs when we are diplomatically trying to avoid something that has become a distraction to our priorities.

In the U.S., we tend to value the push strategies. We are an achievement-oriented culture, and push is the straightforward way to get from point A to B. In business situations, we tend to want to fight every battle and tackle every issue. We are not very judicious when it comes to moving away from some things to focus on other, more important issues. Typically, when we need to influence, we are more likely to be *in your face* than we are to move away.

Identifying needs is primarily a pull strategy. It works best when orchestrated with skill and authentic concern regarding the customer's needs. Without concern, the very same skill set and methodology can become manipulative and ineffective; at best, it could feel like a scam to the customer. The strategy of questions identifies and understands customers' problems, hopes, and concerns.

The most effective way to approach the identifying needs process is to initiate general conversation that focuses on isolating the priorities that need attention. Much like a funnel, the questions begin with information that you have gathered during the pre-visit planning and progress toward understanding more specific needs.

REFLECTION: STRATEGY PIT STOP

As you can see, there are advantages to each strategy, depending on the scenario, the client and the goal. So, the real question is: "What's it like to be on the other side of your sales efforts?" Find out, so that you can further your development and your success!

1. After reading the section above, which strategy resonated with you the most?

2. Why were you drawn to that particular strategy? List at least 2 reasons.

3. What strategy were you the least interested in using?

4. What about your personality or experience do you believe influenced your lack of interest in that particular strategy?

5. What is one thing you can do now that can help you become more comfortable with the push strategy?

6. The pull strategy?

7. And the move-away strategy?

QUESTIONS

When initiating the identifying needs process, there are two types of questions that are very helpful: open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Open-ended encourage customers to share additional information and to expand upon already-stated information. Generally, these cannot be answered with a brief *yes* or *no.* Open-ended questions give customers the control; they can take their responses in whatever direction they choose. Examples include: *Can you give me an idea of how you feel about your advertising? Can you tell me more about that particular need?*

Closed-ended questions require brief answers (*yes* or *no).* They are used to limit the customer's response, but when they're overused or used improperly, customers can feel manipulated or shut down during the conversation. Closed-ended questions give the question asker most of the control, which is why they are helpful to define and clarify facts. An example would be: *Does category A need improvement*?

Fact questions allow sales professionals the opportunity to gain objective background information, which can lay the foundation for identifying customers' priorities. Fact-based questions are terrific tools that shed light on a customer's situation, previous experiences, and general areas of concern. Once understanding the background, you have a much better chance of understanding the real need and right solution. But be careful, inexperienced professionals can run into the trap of trying to influence merely with factual information, which can come across as impersonal and generic.

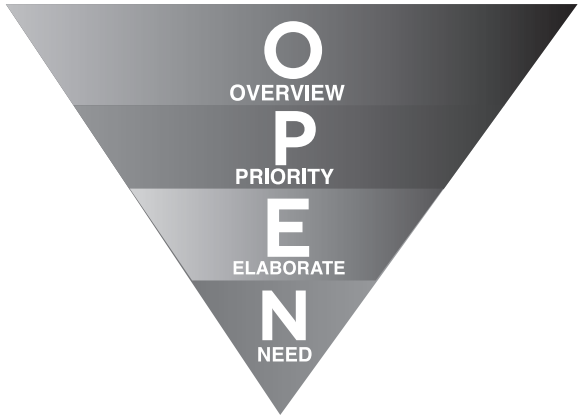
Priority questions encourage customers to provide their subjective feelings, opinions, preferences, priorities, problems and objectives. Skillfully used, the question-asking process enables the sales professional to separate the trivial from the vital, by sifting through many different facets during the course of one meeting. After identifying the real need, you can proceed by exploring other customer concerns and priorities. Your consultative questions may serve a specific purpose or may just be used to move the conversation into varying directions.

THE OPEN MODEL

On the next page, you will find an overview of the OPEN model, which provides guidance during the identifying needs process. The model is designed to encourage a flow of questions that progresses along a continuum of customer information, from general concerns to specific problems. Questions should emerge naturally as you respect and assess the customer's comfort level.

There is a list below that includes key questions and examples of customer concerns. It's important to remember that each customer experiences problems

uniquely, so it's not acceptable to stop once you understand that the customer is concerned about the organization's loyalty – you must go deeper. You must make an effort to see the experience through the customer's eyes.



TYPES OF QUESTIONS & EXAMPLES

Overview Questions

- Tell me about your company's advertising efforts?
- How do you execute in-store promotions?
- What steps do you take to ensure minimal product waste?
- How do you currently train employees on new products?

Priority Questions

- What results have your advertising efforts produced?
- What sort of responses do your sampling programs generate?
- What are your expectations for a supplier?
- Last year, what key business objectives did you miss?
- This year, what are your success factors?
- How do you want us to help you the most?

Elaborate Questions

- Can you tell me a bit more about your category reports? Let's look at one, okay?
- Please explain the decision-making process you referenced.
- Can you talk more about your company's campaign to improve its image?
- Can you share a few examples of situations when you lost business?
- What I hear you saying is that your advertising helps to distinguish your business from your competitors, is that right?

Need Questions

- I hear you saying that increased efficiency is your top priority, am I on track?
- What impact would it have on your business if we improved this?
- Bottom line: What are your top two priorities to improve business this year?
- Your key priority is to provide a cost-effective, high-quality product mix, is that correct? If we achieved this goal, how would you be affected?

Remember that the identifying needs process is customer-centered, so you should:

- Transition from general information to more specific, focused information.
- Earn the right to ask the sensitive questions.
- Strategically attend to your pace, tone and sequence matter.
- Build questions upon each other by preparing plans, reviewing previous discussions, and having a sense of direction.
- Facilitate a mutual understanding around the key objectives by asking questions.
- Avoid proposing solutions – this is not when they should be introduced.
- Remember OPEN (Overview, Priority, Elaborate, and Need).

SUMMARY

The identifying needs process may take more than one visit, it will all depend on the customer's needs. Some situations may be complex, requiring a series of meetings to unfold the information gradually, while others may be simple and straightforward. The degree of difficulty and depth in this process will vary primarily because each customer is different and each salesperson is different. Some customers may be completely candid about their concerns, whereas others may not even know the root cause to their problem, or even be aware of their problem at all. In a case like that, a skilled sales professional may use consultative questions to uncover priorities, so that over a series of sessions, mutual realization can happen. The key steps include asking questions, listening, and raising awareness – all of this must be done skillfully, competently and effectively.

One of your responsibilities is to help customers discover opportunities they would not have considered, recognized or pursued without your involvement. Inevitably, this will involve the finances of your business. This is how you deliver value, not only from the products and services you offer, but also from the expertise and

experience you possess. If you complete any part of this process without genuine concern, your behavior could appear manipulative or futile. With the right intentions, you won't waste anyone's time.

The final step involves recapping and transitioning the process, so that you can request the opportunity to present the suitable solutions. The goal is to effectively summarize and recap in a way that accurately reflects the customer's need from the customer's perspective. This is a complex, yet subtle process that separates the amateur salesperson from the SuperSTAR. Beginners often make the all-too common mistake of discounting prices before they fully understand needs – this approach won't get you anywhere. To be successful and effective, you must:

- Master the application of the various types of questions.
- Be mindful of the impact different questions and styles have on the customer.
- Generate dialogue by using the OPEN model.
- Highlight relevant areas of need and opportunity.
- Capture the customer's attention by exhibiting genuine intentions.
- Initiate and increase the customer's motivation to do business with you.

"*The best product must be sold.*
People don't come to you and take it away from you.
You must go to them."
-- Edna Newman

SALES ACTIVITY #7: IDENTIFYING NEEDS

On the left, list your customer's key needs. On the right, list specific questions that will help you to explore those needs. Remember to consider the OPEN model.

KEY CUSTOMER NEEDS	QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE THOSE NEEDS

PRESENTING SOLUTIONS

Once you have effectively identified the customer's needs, captured the customer's attention, and expressed the powerful area of opportunity that exists, you are well positioned to present a solution. Identifying needs is based on listening and understanding, whereas presenting solutions is based on giving. So, when presenting solutions, one must make it a dialogue rather than a monologue. During this step, we will focus on three key areas:

- Clearly presenting the right product and service solutions.
- Developing powerful influencing statements.
- Focusing on the information that was illuminated during the identifying needs step.

The question you want to answer during this stage is: *How can I best align a solution to meet the customer's needs and priorities?*

PRESENTATION COMPETENCIES & FAB

Some of the competencies that are required to effectively present solutions include:

- Acting in a persuasive manner, which includes utilizing the influencing techniques we discussed earlier. Also, balancing the different communication modes (push, pull and move away) is essential to presentation effectiveness.
- Presenting in ways that are suitable to both individuals and groups. In many instances, you will need to influence a committee.
- Using marketing materials competently will help to compel the audience, while increasing the impression the content can make. In fact, the solution itself will be constructed in the FAB format. FAB = features

+ advantages + benefits. Proper use of the FAB format allows you to describe your solution in a way that directly connects the solution to the customer's high-priority needs. FAB enables you to maintain balance amongst the different modes of communication.

Features: Features describe or define a characteristic of the product or service. For example, "Our business provides financing for in-store purchases." The feature defines the solution. Features are usually tangible – something you can see, feel or measure.

Advantages: Advantages describe how the feature works or explains its purpose. An example would be, "The advantage of our financing is that it allows you to find the right option for your financial situation." It's important to note that in order for the feature/advantage to result in a benefit, customers must be able to clearly see how that aspect addresses a high-priority need they have experienced and acknowledged.

Benefits: Benefits explain the value of the product or service to the customer by directly addressing the customer's objectives that were identified during the identifying needs stage. Benefits focus on the outcome and demonstrate how the solution addresses the customer's objectives. For example, "Our performance-driven plan that we discussed will help you combat your competition and increase your revenue."

There are a number of areas that can be adapted using the FAB format, including:

Increased sales	Increased data credibility
Better reporting	Upgraded quality
Improved customer service	More convenience

Feature – Advantage – Benefit Statement Areas:

- Quality
- Products
- Services
- Systems
- Ideas
- Yourself
- Your Company

Feature/Advantage/Benefit statements should be carefully selected and highly customized to meet the specific needs you've identified with your customer. The focus of each statement should be as precise and detailed as possible, while

answering the question *what's in it for me?* Benefits can be experienced in various categories and across a wide variety of personal and lifestyle needs.

ABOUT STYLE

A highly focused and well-organized solution is only one element of the salesperson's success. Your style and presence can add a captivating quality to your presentation prescription. Let's face it, we've all been bored by the uninspiring speaker that presents what would otherwise be an effective message. Instead of a stellar speech, the result is a *so-so* experience.

As you tell the story of your solution, your ability to compel your customers and capture their interest is what separates standard skills from sales success. Pay attention to the style you bring to the solution process. Here are some quick pointers:

- Keep your customer engaged. Remember, it's not a monologue; it is about maintaining a dialogue. If you notice customers' eyes glazing over, you can be certain they've lost interest and quit listening. The best way to reengage your customers is to ask questions.
- Appropriately balance push, pull and move away behavior. Maintain an awareness of the impact your presentation is having; if you aren't sure of its impact, the equation to an effective prescription is: adjust your style, ask questions, and determine your next push statement.
- Distinguish yourself from other professionals by ensuring your style is unique and personalized.

Effective interpersonal communication and powerful presentations have the following things in common:

- Appropriate eye contact and other nonverbal cues.
- Voice alterations, tone adjustments and a positive presence.
- Genuine concern and care for the customer.
- An interest in listening to the customer.
- Excitement around the message.
- Varying paces to set different cadences to the message at different times.
- Authentic and good intentions.
- A smile.

SUMMARY

An effective presentation involves aligning your solution to your customer's high-priority needs, creating high-impact influence statements with the FAB format, and developing an engaging style. Also, by using displays and other physical

resources, the customer can tangibly interact with the features by seeing, feeling and touching the product. With discipline and practice, you can significantly improve you presentation delivery. SuperSTAR salespeople don't settle for their current level of performance, but rather, they constantly look to improve their customer care and sales skills. Use the next two activities to help you achieve a higher level of performance.

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"
-- Robert Browning

SALES ACTIVITY #8: PRESENTING SOLUTIONS – FAB

Identify one of your products and list its FAB. Review this with a peer or manager.

PRODUCT NAME:		
FEATURE	**ADVANTAGE**	**BENEFIT**
Ex. Computer – its hard drive, the memory.	Ex. A smaller computer, but a larger memory.	Ex. Less space and weight are needed.

SALES ACTIVITY #9: DEMONSTRATION ASSESSMENT

At this point, it's important to take some time to review your strengths and areas of improvement. Continually ask yourself, "*How can I help my customer more effectively?*" Distribute 5 points in each section. If you cover every area, give yourself a 5. If you miss most of the areas, give yourself a 1.

NAME: _____
PLANNING: Organizes material Understands the demo Knows how to show the demo
SHOWING: Explains the goal, process and outcome Shows the customer the product Reviews how the product works with the customer
TELLING: Remains focused on the customer's needs Allows the customer to use the product Is helpful and considerate Reviews one benefit at a time Empathizes with the customer
ASKING: Asks the customer for input Specifically responds Listens intently Maintains an appropriate pace Gains commitment
STRENGTHS: **AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGE #3:
WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

CUT THE ROPE THAT HOLDS YOU CACK!

Throw a rope around a calf's neck and it's caught. It may struggle and kick to get away, but it can't because someone else is in control, holding the other end of the rope. Have you ever felt like you have a rope around your neck? Have you ever felt like you weren't making any progress in your job? Have you felt like the rope pulls you back every time you try to move forward? Let's face it, customers complain, sales are missed, your friends don't support you, the competition is rough, your company changes, there are quality problems, and so on. You become frustrated, confused and tired.

RIGHT & WRONG FORCES

In every person, there's an odd combination of right and wrong thinking. For the purposes of this message, *right* means what works and *wrong* refers to what doesn't. For every dream, there's darkness; for any ounce of confidence, there's an equal amount of doubt; for every mountain of hope, there's a valley of despair; for every mile of determination, there's the same amount of apathy. Too often people let the wrong thoughts dominate their thinking, or they let the right thoughts pass by unnoticed. Which pattern will control one's life? Which will prevail? Each person experiences this struggle that never ends. Right living is like the game of golf. Hit a few good shots, and you feel great, but once you flub a few, your concentration and confidence slip.

Right living has to be worked at, again and again! In business, there's an unlimited opportunity to do well. Yet, many well-intentioned people fall short of their potential. Sometimes, the idea of doing business with integrity and providing excellent customer service can seem foreign to people in business, particularly when it comes to applying these principles daily. *It is one thing to talk it, and it's another thing to walk it everyday!* Their negative habits and poor images from the past stop them in their tracks. Yet, there are a few enlightened leaders that are propelled toward success. In spite of obstacles, their vision of professional service is brilliantly executed, which attracts customers and attention from all angles. Think of the salmon that swims upstream every year to spawning waters. The trip is difficult and often fatal, but an inner echo drives them forward to their goal. Isn't every experience in life a possible victory or failure? As Shakespeare said, *it's your choice*: "Nothing is good or bad, except thinking makes it so."

CHOOSE RIGHT THINKING!

Think of a time in your life when you did your best work, closed your largest sale, cared for a friend, laughed hysterically, or romanced your spouse or significant other. How did you feel? How did time pass? You might have been elated, satisfied, happy and energized. Time most likely passed without notice. Now, think of a time in your life when you did poor work, neglected your friends, cried mournfully, or argued with someone? How did you feel? How did time pass? You might have felt rejected, disgusted, sad or exhausted. Time most likely moved at a snail's pace. Any of the situations recalled have a number of common characteristics. First, your mind was filled with thoughts about each experience. Second, you experienced feelings. Feelings are just there, they don't need to be good or bad. Third, the passing of time was as constant as the heavens, although you may not have experienced it that way. And fourth, you responded in each experience. *What did you do during and after each experience?* That is the key to success in providing great sales and service and the key to a successful life.

Did you reach up and pull down the best there is to offer, or did you curl up in a ball and let the world push you along? When things didn't work out, you may have focused on the problem and took minor action, if any. But, when things triumphed, you probably envisioned all of the possibilities and let the creativity flow. You had right thoughts about the experience, and then you took action to make positive things happen, rather than lashing out in fear or frustration. What you think – you become! It's always pure choice.

Professionally and personally, your greatest gift is your ability to choose your thoughts and actions. We must do this in good times and bad to be true cham-

pions in life. How? Take a break and think, review your goals, remind yourself of your purpose in difficult situations, and remember to focus on the customer's point of view and needs. By learning to think right, you'll do what's right more often. Once you do, you possess the ability to cut the rope that holds you back from achieving excellence in sales.

TAKE RIGHT ACTION!

A prophet was on a hill one day. He told his followers, "I quit." They were aghast and cried out that they needed him; they would do anything for him, they would die for him. The prophet smiled and requested, "Live joyously." But the followers put their heads down and walked away slowly. That was too hard to do. All they wanted was to talk and dream about it. If you're not willing to take action, you're no better than the man who starved in a kitchen full of food because he didn't have the sense to cook it.

Our customers define what's right for them. By listening and paying careful attention to them, you'll know the right actions to take. That's the only way to overcome objections, rejection, complaints and dissatisfaction. Do your work with a smile. Be polite and say thank you. Think innovatively about how you can help customers. Solve problems, quickly and kindly. Work cooperatively. Give customers the value they deserve.

You make a difference! You can generate premier results by choosing the right thoughts and actions. A frog once let a scorpion hitch a ride on his back to get across the stream. Somewhere along the way, the scorpion stung the frog. The frog cried, "Why did you do that, now we'll both drown?" The scorpion replied, "I don't know, I guess it's just in my nature." What's your nature? Is it to be tied up, negative about your efforts to sell? Or is it to satisfy customers and do your best? The choice is in your thinking and your actions. Cut the rope that holds you back – *today*!

EXERCISE: IDENTIFY YOUR ROPE

If you don't know what your rope is, it's going to be pretty hard to cut it. So, first things first, identify your rope, so that you can take your scissors to it! Don't let it hold onto you anymore. Reflect on your feelings, thoughts and actions to be freed!

First, read the last few pages again. This time, as you read, answer each question that's asked above. Use the space below to journal your answers and thoughts.

Now, really use this space to focus on your *feelings* as they relate to feeling held back.

Now that you know how the rope makes you feel, *identify* your rope(s).

Now that you have an idea of what your rope is and how it makes you feel, list 3-5 steps or actions you can take in the next week to minimize the rope's grip (if not cut it completely).

ADDRESSING CUSTOMER CONCERNS

Oftentimes, salespeople can set the tone for their own success by handling customer objections and concerns professionally. Research indicates that 80 percent of sales are made after the fifth point of contact; however, 80 percent of salespeople quit trying after the first or second attempt. So, despite challenges they might face, SuperSTAR salespeople continue to give themselves another chance for the business. The number one reason salespeople fear objection is because they lack problem-solving skills, so they avoid confrontational situations, quit too early and derail their sales success.

So what are the objections you get from customers?

- The price?
- The quality?
- The technology?
- The responsiveness of customer service?
- The customer doesn't need or want the offer?
- The customer is happy with his current product or service?
- The customer wants to think about it?
- The customer needs to talk to a manager or group?
- Other: _____?

Remember, if it weren't for valid customer objections, selling wouldn't be that hard, right? Wrong! Without customer concerns, you would be an order taker; in that case, anyone could do your job. Resistance means you're approaching the real matters, where the rubber meets the road. It takes a professional to engage the customer on these issues. That's why selling is considered the lowest-paying easy work and the highest-paying hard work. The sooner you get to the objections, the closer you are to the sale.

You are a sales professional. Professionals understand the dynamics of making a decision for a customer. Sometimes, what customers actually object and what they say they object are two different things. Most of the time, it's the fear of making a decision that drives customers to delay saying *yes* to a professional. This is why common concerns are: *it will cost too much, I have to think it over, I need to see if we have room in the budget,* and *I think your product is more than we need.* The key question to solve this issue is: *How can I positively deal with customer resistance?*

The sales process is not a contest, a battle, or even a game – it's not a win-or-lose scenario. Obviously, it could be if you don't care about your potential customers. It's really a relationship-building process, and your goal is to help your customers solve problems, meet needs, and enjoy satisfying and successful lives. SuperSTAR Selling is about creating win-win relationships through integrity, positive performance, and genuine care and trust, in order to form profitable and mutually beneficial long-term partnerships. Anyone can sell something once. But, a professional can sell the same product repeatedly to loyal customers, while turning current customers into great references for future business opportunities.

EXERCISE: OBJECTIFY YOUR OBJECTIONS

So, if you've been a sales professional for more than a day, the chances you've been given an objection – are greater than the chances you've made a sale. That's just the reality of sales. That's not meant to discourage you; it's meant to normalize the selling environment, so that you don't take things personally when it's not always about you.

Objections have great potential because once we understand why we're getting them, what kind we're receiving, and how we're reacting to them – we can develop strategies to respond more effectively and professionally. Answer these next few questions to look at your objections objectively.

1. List 5 objections that you have received at one point or another (ideally, you would list the most common objections you hear).

2. How do you feel when you're given an objection? List at least 2-3 emotions.

3. On a scale of 1-5 (1 = highly unlikely, 5 = highly likely), how likely is it that your customer knows your feelings (in Question 2)?

4. What do you think when you're given an objection? List 2-3 thoughts that come to mind in that moment.

5. On a scale of 1-5 (1 = never, 5 = always), how often do you share your thoughts with your customer (in Question 4)?

6. If you have a hard time keeping your thoughts or feelings from your client, what is one thing you believe you can start doing now to minimize the amount that seeps through during the sales process?

7. In your opinion, is there any benefit to sharing your feelings and thoughts with your customer(s)? If so, list the benefits you believe exist.

8. When reviewing your own answers to Question 1, brainstorm a list of reasons that your customers could have when raising the objections they do. In other words, dig deep into the reasons behind their objections. Why might they be saying what they are saying?

9. After making a list of possibilities in Question 8, do most reasons involve you?

10. In this space, document any thoughts you have after completing this exercise.

THE LEAD MODEL

So, how do you address customer concerns? First, you need to change objections into concerns, as the above perspective discussed. If someone objects, she is building barriers or opposing views; whereas, if a person has a concern, he needs help with an issue. That's where the SuperSTAR selling process intersects with the LEAD model. There are four key ingredients to the model:

- **L**isten – Are you really customer-centered?
- **E**xplore – Do you know what the customer is trying to communicate?
- **A**ttend – Is your attitude and behavior demonstrating that you care?
- **D**eliver – Do you have a customized solution that addresses the customer's needs?

Sales professionals seek out concerns by checking in periodically during the sales process instead of waiting until the end of their sales presentation for the inevitable objection. It's about understanding the customer's position in the buying process: interest, clarity of concerns, learning and analysis, evaluation, and decision-making. A customer-centered focus ensures that you understand: *are we on track? Do you have questions so far? And does this make sense or seem helpful?*

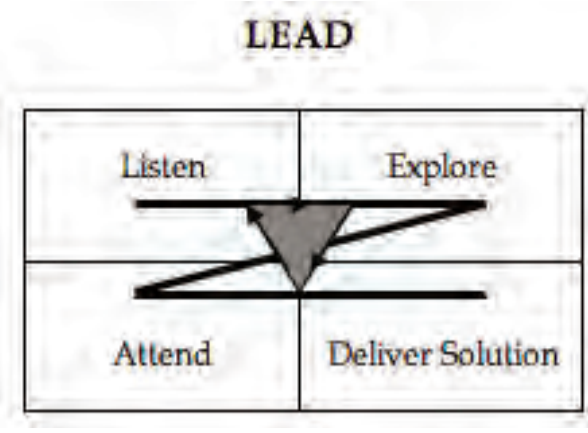
As you experience reactions, clarify misunderstandings, defuse emotions in difficult areas, handle objections, and resolve differences that emerge – are you accurately and appropriately addressing concerns by maintaining an open dialogue?

Listen: Are you really customer-centered? Your goal is to focus on the customer's needs and objectives, rather than your need for a sale or a quick resolution. This is a pull process to understand the concern and to extract your level of engagement:

1. Do you want to listen?
2. Do you make appropriate eye contact?
3. Do you use verbal cues (e.g., *yes, I see, okay, I understand*)?
4. Do you use nonverbal cues (e.g., *take notes, nod, use relevant body language)*?
5. Do you paraphrase or summarize your understanding of the issue (e.g., *If I understand you correctly, you mean…)*?

Explore: Do you know and understand what the customer is trying to say? Use questions to gain better perspective from the customer's point of view.
This could include pull or move away behavior.

1. Do you maintain your composure and act professionally?
2. Do you ask open-ended questions (e.g., *what, how, where, why)* to gather information?



3. Do you use closed-ended questions (e.g., *yes or no)* to gain agreement or closure?
4. Do you use directives to obtain additional information (e.g., *Tell me more about that.)*?
5. Do you paraphrase for understanding?

Attend: Is your attitude communicating that you care? Positive pull communication is a result of three things:

- Words– use constructive, conversational and non-confrontational language; this equals 7 percent of your communication's impact.
- Tone of voice– maintain a similar volume and tone of voice as the customer; this equals 38 percent of your communication's influence.
- Physiology– ensure that your actions and body language are congruent with a real desire to be of service; this equals 55 percent of your communicative power.

1. Do you maintain your focus on the customer by withholding your response until you have gained an accurate and complete understanding?
2. Do you pay attention to the customer's demeanor and emotions?
3. If needed, do you ask more clarifying questions?

Deliver a Solution: Do you have a customized solution that is customer-centered? In other words, are you ready to respond based on understanding the customer's

perspective of the situation or problem? This is push behavior.

1. Do you summarize your understanding?
2. Do you specifically respond?
3. Do you seek agreement on the issue, address next steps and ask for the business?

The LEAD Model includes a balanced understanding and an appropriate presentation of your product solution. But, it begins by understanding: listen, explore, and attend. This will decrease the customer's resistance because it allows you and your customer the chance to unpack emotional responses constructively. Finally, it ensures a focused response that's more likely to address the customer's actual concerns. The LEAD model is visually represented below. You'll notice that the process is iterative, with repetitive *Listen, Explore* and *Attend* steps. This is to ensure that the customer's concern is correctly identified before attempting to deliver the solution.

USING THE LEAD PROCESS – EXAMPLES

SP = sales professional; C = customer

Example #1: I think I can get along a little longer with my current vendor.

SP:	It sounds like you have a concern about making a change? Can you tell me about it?	Listen – Explore
C:	Yes, I'm just not sure it's worth it to make the switch.	
SP:	Can you tell me more about what you mean by *worth it?*	Attend – Listen – Explore
C:	This seems so complicated – so hard. I just don't know if it's worth it for me to go through all the bother and effort to switch.	
SP:	It sounds like you're concerned about whether the value of our service outweighs the effort to change your process, so you're questioning whether it makes sense to switch. Is that right?	Attend – Listen – Explore
C:	Yes, that's exactly how I feel.	
SP:	Is there anything in particular that you're concerned about, as it relates to your service we've been discussing?	Explore
C:	I'm afraid we won't be a priority, and that it will be too pricy.	

SP:	You're concerned that you won't be able to afford the change, and that you won't be important to us, is that correct?	Attend – Listen
C:	Yes.	
SP:	That's why I'm here to help. We have an array of options to ensure the transition happens as efficiently and effortlessly as possible. Also, with the size of our distribution network, all of our customers are a priority. Why don't we review the process and some affordable options, so that I can get you what you need in a timely manner?	Attend – Deliver Solution
C:	Yes, that sounds good. Let's do it!	

Example #2: Your price is too high.

SP:	Ms. Jones, usually when customers are concerned about prices, they are questioning the value of the product or they're concerned about their budget. Can you share a bit more about your pricing concerns with me?	Listen – Explore – Attend
C:	I know I can get the product at a better margin than you are offering.	
SP:	So, your prices from another supplier give you a better margin. Is that what you are saying?	Attend – Listen – Explore
C:	Yes, I've talked to the competition, and they can beat your price.	
SP:	So, you have a proposal from them that is guaranteed and comparable to the parameters I recommended?	Attend – Listen – Explore
C:	Not yet, but their price is 10-15 percent better in the long term than your offer.	

SP:	Based on initial discussions, I can understand how you might think our price is high. We're aware of the other supplier's offer and emphasis on price. We want to provide you the right product mix to meet your needs and to help you build a profitable and successful business over time. If you'll work with us, we'll carefully determine a business plan that's right for you. We're confident that you'll find our price to be very competitive, and even more importantly, we're convinced that our plan will help you meet your customer's needs more effectively. May we proceed on that basis?	Attend – Deliver Solution – Explore
C:	Sure. But, I still need a great price.	
SP:	Great, may I ask you a few more questions to determine what the best options are?	Attend – Explore
C:	Yes.	

SALES ACTIVITY #10: LEAD CHECKLIST

Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 based on how well you do with objections. What do you do well? Where do you need to improve? Ask your manager to observe one of your sales calls, and then request feedback on how you handled objections. This sheet can be used to record the feedback.

Listen:

- ☐ Wants to listen
- ☐ Makes eye contact
- ☐ Uses verbal cues
- ☐ Uses nonverbal gestures
- ☐ Paraphrases the concern

Explore:

- ☐ Maintains professionalism and composure
- ☐ Uses open-ended questions to understand
- ☐ Uses closed-ended questions to focus
- ☐ Uses directives to gather more information
- ☐ Paraphrases again, if appropriate

Attend:

- ☐ Remains focused on the customer's needs
- ☐ Pays attention to the customer's demeanor
- ☐ Asks additional clarifying questions if needed

Deliver a Solution:

- ☐ Summarizes understanding of the concern
- ☐ Specifically responds
- ☐ Asks for the sale

STRENGTHS	AREAS TO IMPROVE

CLOSING THE SALE

ASK FOR THE BUSINESS!

When closing the sale, the key question is*: How can I help my customer make the right decision that addresses her needs and priorities?* You do that by presenting product benefits, providing appropriate pricing options, guiding the customer to an understanding of the solution, reviewing the key elements of a solution, and asking for the sale.

If you want your sales to grow, you need to summarize the needs and product benefits, gain agreement, and ask for the business! Some salespeople are reluctant to close a sale or to offer specific solutions. That's not surprising – for a couple of reasons:

- *People are taught not to ask for what they want.* Instead, they're supposed to wait for an offer, direction, or an inspiration. Being direct is often looked at as being pushy or insensitive. But when appropriate, **it's important to ask**. The customer knows why you are there, so unnecessary pressure is created if you leave him wondering.
- *People fear rejection.* It's like asking someone on a date and getting turned down. Who wants that sort of pain or embarrassment? Salespeople often worry that if they present specific solutions, the customer will offer an objection or say *no*.

Unless you present a solution and ask for the sale, you'll never know what the customer thinks. Presenting and closing gives customers the chance to improve their business by saying *yes* to the opportunity that meets their need. Objections imply that the customer needs more information to proceed or has a concern that

needs to be addressed.

Although there are a number of best-selling books that teach selling techniques, all of that advice isn't necessary. Sales professionals don't need to wear extravagant clothes to sell effectively; they simply need a genuine desire and honest attitude to be of service. You need to help your customers meet their needs, solve their problems and feel good about the business solutions you're proposing. If you tenaciously follow the SuperSTAR selling model and remain customer-centered, these four steps will help you close sales, so that you can gain the business – again and again:

- **Present Product Benefits**– You are a trained professional. And, if you have worked closely with the customer, you know the right solution that addresses her needs.
- **Options**– When multiple options can meet the customer's needs, be sure to offer all alternatives to the customer, so that she can consider which she prefers.
- **Review**– Evaluate the information you have gathered about the customer in order to come to the right solution.
- **Assume**– Pretend that you know the customer wants it, and then ask him. If you approach the solution tentatively, the customer will see your uncertainty as doubt, which may force him to question your recommendation.

Here are four ways to ask:

1. Action Close– *Can I get your approval?*
2. Assumptive Close– *Do you want to add this feature once it becomes available?*
3. Alternative Close– *Do you want to meet Tuesday or Thursday?*
4. Added Step– *Let's also meet next month, what works for you?*

STEPS TO CLOSE THE SALE

Effectively selling and closing is a process more than it is a single act of influencing, which is why so many sales professionals aren't good at it. It begins before the initial meeting, continues during the identifying needs stage, and requires superb follow-up service and care.

- What can you do to better prepare the customer to make a commitment?
- What shortcuts do you take? How can you avoid taking these?
- What will you do today to improve your closing ratios?

Use this checklist for better closing and increased sales success!

1. **Before the Sale - Prepare**
   - Understand communication preferences and personality styles of customers.
   - Prepare for potential questions or objections.
   - Arrange your tools, samples and materials, so that they are ready and accessible.
   - Remember that your goal is to meet a need and to solve a problem.
   - Know the FAB of your solution.
   - Practice different closing approaches.
   - Mentally rehearse a successful sale.
   - Thoroughly understand the customer and her market: website review, company market data, possible referral information, financial analysis, etc.
2. **During the Sale – Follow the SuperSTAR Selling Model**
   - Take the time to build trust and rapport.
   - Ask probing questions to identify needs and priorities.
   - Listen carefully and summarize by paraphrasing.
   - Present your solution benefits effectively and honestly.
   - Demonstrate your product. Help the customer to buy wisely.
   - Avoid judgmental or defensive behavior especially when addressing concerns.
   - Use LEAD.
   - Ask for the sale!
3. **After the Sale - Follow-up**
   - Check that you and your customer are in agreement on the idea.
   - Follow-up in a number of ways at different times, examples include: thank you notes, letters, phone calls, emails and personal contacts. Satisfied customers will give you more business and refer other business your way.
   - Deal with problems directly, promptly and professionally.
   - Keep your commitments. If you can't, call, explain and reschedule.
   - Ask for referrals.
   - Continue to add value through newsletters, consumer and industry information, new ideas, personal interest and the unexpected recognition.

CLOSING SUCCESS

Experience indicates that if you do an excellent job during the sales process, as we have discussed in each aspect of the SuperSTAR selling process, 50 percent of customers will ask you how they can buy the product. Essentially, they will close

their own sale. So, sales professionals just need to follow through. And when they don't close their own sale, salespeople need to ask for the order. Yet, research still shows that salespeople only ask about 10 percent of the time. Can you believe that? With all the work it takes to secure a customer opportunity, salespeople still don't ask. Instead, they say things like:

- Do you have any questions?
- Do you have my card?
- Do you understand the features?
- Can I give you some additional resources?
- You may want to look us up on the Internet.
- If you're interested, just give me a call.
- Oh, um, let me know if you need anything else.

One professional consultant that worked with us just couldn't look someone in the eyes and ask for the sale, yet he was good at every other step of the process. So, why don't more salespeople do this? It's fear – fear of rejection, resistance and even success. It's very similar to what we discussed when addressing customer concerns and objections. Remember the LEAD Model when closing. Closing is about the ability to guide someone to a decision. We have found that the entire SuperSTAR sales process centers around closing, yet with preparation, practice and perseverance, you can learn to close more effectively.

"Winning isn't everything...
the will to prepare to win is everything."
-- Brian Tracy

SALES ACTIVITY #11: GAINING COMMITMENT

Answer the following questions: *What are you doing well? How can you improve*?

1. Why do many sales professionals avoid saying the words that close the sale?

2. What mistakes do sales professionals often make in gaining commitment?

3. What must sales professionals do better to close more effectively?

4. What does the following quote mean? *"Don't oversell. If you do, it's like knocking on a turtle shell trying to get him to stick his head out."*

PRACTICE: SALES CALL PREPARATION

Use this as a guide to plan a sales call. Or use any of the accounts you've used in other sales activities. Remember, winning isn't everything, the will to prepare to win is everything. You plan so that you're prepared to think on your feet. So, take 30-45 minutes to plan an actual sales call with a prospect to get an idea of what things to ask, consider, and do when conducting a real live call. Practicing this plan *will* prepare you!

ACCOUNT	**BUILD RAPPORT – RELATE, FOCUS & CHECK**	
IDENTIFY NEEDS – EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS		
PRESENT SOLUTION		
FAB:	Reinforcers:	Extra-Value Benefits:
ADDRESS CONCERNS		
Potential Concerns:	Potential Response:	
CLOSE THE SALE – RECAP THE NEEDS, REVIEW KEY BENEFITS, & ASK FOR THE SALE.		
Post-Call Review – Objective Achieved?		
Opportunities Identified:		

SUCCESS PRACTICES & PEAK PERFORMANCE

YOUR MENTAL MODELS

Eight decades ago, Dr. Evan O'Neill Kane of New York's Kane Summit Hospital felt doctors were losing too many patients during appendectomy surgery, many because of the effects of general anesthesia. He felt that local anesthesia would be better for the patient but, not surprisingly, no volunteers opted to test his hypothesis. Until, February 15, 1921. That's when he finally performed an appendectomy with local anesthesia – on himself! During the procedure, he changed the way this surgery was practiced in medicine. To be your best, you often need to change too – sometimes that change requires operating on yourself! Begin analyzing your mentality by counting how many times the letter *F* appears.

FEATURE FILMS ARE THE RE-
SULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTI-
FIC OF STUDY COMBINED WITH THE
FORMAL EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

How many did you get? 4? 5? 6? 7? There are a total of eight! If you missed any, why did you? Why would anyone miss an *F* or two or three? It has to do with our mental model or the way we perceive things and act on them. This little exercise illustrates that what you are missing in terms of performance improvement is most likely right in front of you. Sometimes the solutions to your challenges are there, but you just don't see them. Why? Because of deep-rooted habits, perceptions and beliefs. In fact, when you make efforts to improve, it can seem as futile as trying to lose weight with fad diets.

So, what's the key? How do you break through? Dr. Charles Garfield of the Peak Performance Institute has discovered exercises that help individuals reach their personal best performance levels. Garfield experienced these techniques himself as a world-class weight lifter and researcher. Garfield explains, "In the process, the researchers discovered that mental training techniques not only combated negative reactions, but also threw open the doors to hidden reserves of energy and endurance." In his own work with Olympic athletes and business people, Dr. Denis Waitley found similar peak-performance strategies. To begin, remember these important principles:

- Self-development is self-management. There is no self-improvement; it's about increasing your ability to be all that you already are. You can't change others, but you can change yourself.
- If you hope to sell more effectively by managing yourself, you must be willing to change some habits to increase your productivity.
- A basic self-management principle is to respond to all events based on your goals and priorities, rather than reacting to spot urgencies, problems or needs.
- Mind and body are intertwined: to control what you do, control what you think.

Just like a champion systematically, physically and mentally prepares to win the gold, SuperSTAR salespeople do the same. Know your product, learn selling techniques, become customer-centered, and prepare yourself mentally to handle setbacks. We call it *emotional resiliency*. In the following sales activities, you will learn four success practices that will inspire you to SuperSTAR selling excellence.

REFLECTION: SELF MANAGEMENT & RESILIENCY

Before starting the next few sales activities, it's time for some self-reflection. You can't fully comprehend all you can be, if you don't know what you think about yourself now. So, are you prepared to take a peak into your perspective on your potential? Rate yourself 1-5 (1 = not true at all; 5 = very true) on each of the questions. Be honest about what you currently believe about yourself.

1. Most of the time, I think good things about myself. ____
2. I am open to feedback, even if it's constructive. ____
3. My feelings and my thoughts are typically congruent. ____
4. I tend to do what I think I should do. I am consistent. ____
5. I know I have more potential than I'm utilizing right now. ____
6. I get disappointed on occasion, but eventually I regain my confidence. ____
7. It's easy for me to see the positive in a situation. ____
8. When I'm not feeling 'at my best,' I do whatever it takes to get there! ____
9. I look at what I can do differently before I look at the faults of others. ____
10. I tend to respond more than I react. ____

Review your answers. The higher your answers, the more positive you are about who you are, what you offer, and the potential you have. The lower your answers, the more time and attention you might need to give to develop a more positive self image. How you think about yourself and your abilities will inherently affect your interactions with customers, your reactions to objections, and your resiliency over time.

Mentally, you have the potential to model your best! It's up to you!

SALES ACTIVITY #12: BEST OF THE BEST EXERCISE

Think of a time during your sales career when you did your best work. Choose a situation that exemplifies your highest performance. Get a clear mental picture of the event. As if it were a movie, replay it in your mind. Think of the details: the people, problems, sounds, feelings, and surroundings. Mentally review what happened, how you behaved, what you felt and achieved. Capture your thoughts in the space below:

Briefly describe the situation:

What was your motivation to succeed or act?

How did you feel?

What key behaviors or strategies did you use?

What lessons can you learn or relearn from your peak performance experience?

By learning to replicate that experience and improving the results, you'll become a sales leader. To be the best you can be, make a commitment to personal development and excellence. If you want to be exceptional, do exceptional things. The difference between sales winners and losers is that the winners do what losers won't do. Never forget that success is not accidental.

SALES ACTIVITY #13: GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

The best salespeople are goal achievers. They are meticulous about their numbers and what they have to do to achieve them. Goals become realities when you act on them; therefore, nothing great in sales has ever been achieved without action. "The great end in life is not knowledge, but action," declared Thomas Henry Huxley. Goals are the motivators behind your actions. When you are discouraged or disappointed, review your goals to remind yourself of who you are, what you want and what you are becoming. Remind yourself what you have to gain by taking action, and what you will lose if you don't.

Effective goal achievement involves writing a specific and realistic goal. Then, you must separate the goal into smaller steps that you can take action on. The first step is the most important, since it's where you start. Many goals are unachieved because people fail to begin. Remember, the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. And then, follow through. Just as you wouldn't start a car and expect to go anywhere without putting it in gear, you shouldn't expect your goals to be achieved without taking action.

Finally, successful goal achievement includes reviewing your progress. People rarely grow from experience because they don't choose to learn from it. After each action you take, you must evaluate the results. In summary, close the GAP on goal success by:

G – writing the goal
A – establishing action steps
P – proactively reviewing progress regularly

You won't need a detailed plan for every goal. For example, let's say your goal was to buy a puppy for a family pet. By talking with your family, you could determine the kind of puppy wanted and decide on a budget. The final step would be purchasing the puppy at a pet store, through a want ad or the Humane Society. You could record this process, but it may be simpler to think it through. However, some goals require more details. For example:

GOAL	ACTION STEPS	PROGRESS REVIEWED/ RESULTS
To be promoted to Regional Sales Rep by the fall of this year.	• Make 3-5 extra calls a day. • Open 2-3 new accounts each week. • Write a proposal for a new advertising theme by April.	• Each extra call has increased my income by $100 a week. • 5 new accounts opened in two weeks. • First draft completed.

Getting a promotion is a more complex goal and will require more attention, time and effort than buying a puppy. Apply these steps on the next few pages for your goals. Include at least one work-related goal. If you need more, feel free to copy the pages.

GOAL STATEMENT	
ACTION STEPS	**TIMELINES**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
PROGRESS REVIEW	

GOAL STATEMENT	
ACTION STEPS	**TIMELINES**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
PROGRESS REVIEW	

SALES ACTIVITY #14: POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Henry Ford said, "If you believe you can or you can't, you're right." All salespeople talk to themselves. It's called self-talk, and it's done in your thinking. Most of the time, it includes negative thoughts. Affirmations are deliberate thoughts, declarations, images or feelings aimed to produce a desired result. Affirmations help you reprogram your mind; they are positive and often start with "I am." Affirmations are peak-performance statements you say to yourself to remain positive and on track toward sales success.

Examples:

- I am a loving parent and spouse.
- I am an excellent cook, and people enjoy my meals.
- I am filled with joy because I'm achieving my goals.
- I am in excellent shape.
- I am achieving and exceeding my sales goals.

STEPS:

1. Write three affirmations (each) related to business and personal situations.
2. Get comfortable. Take a few deep breaths. Think of your job. State your affirmations.
3. Repeat your affirmations at least three times a day. Say them at times when you think about them and when you feel discouraged.
4. Know that affirmations are changing you now. It will take time to change old habits into new results. Add to your affirmation list.

BUSINESS	PERSONAL
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

SALES ACTIVITY #15: MENTAL REHEARSAL

Visualizing includes mentally picturing your desired result. Mental rehearsal is another name for it. Carpenters use blueprints, advertisers use television, and a business uses a strategic plan – people use visualizations to imagine an idea's reality. *It's the master skill of peak performers*. In sales, mental rehearsal is a great technique to prepare for a sales call, to visualize goal achievement, or to stay positive after a lost sale.

STEPS:

1. Get comfortable and relax in a pleasant place.
2. Close your eyes and think about one of your goals.
3. Imagine achieving that goal.
4. Picture a movie going on in your mind. The title is, *Success in Achieving My Goal.*
5. Note your feelings at the time of success. Notice other images, scents, sounds or details in your mind.
6. Repeat your affirmation with enthusiasm and excitement.
7. Say thank you.
8. Record your observations on the following page.

FEELINGS?

SNAPSHOT OF THE PICTURE? IMAGES?

SOUNDS? SCENTS? DETAILS?

PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS?

ATTITUDE?

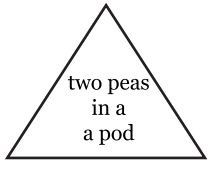
"Think big, act big and believe big."
-- Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

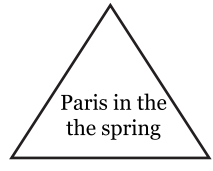
A REVIEW: SUPERSTAR SELLING ACTION PLAN

LEARNING	APPLICATION
What did you learn or relearn about being more customer-centered?	How will you apply this to your sales activities?
What did you learn or relearn about SuperSTAR selling strategies?	How will you apply this to your sales activities?
What did you learn or relearn about pre-call planning and sales documentation?	How will you apply this to your sales activities?
What did you learn or relearn about emotional resiliency?	How will you apply this to your position?
In summary, identify 4-6 selling strengths.	How will you apply these strengths more?
In summary, identify 2-3 areas to improve.	How will you take action on these?

MANAGING TIME FOR SUPERSTAR RESULTS

Talent, information, and desire are not enough to be successful in sales. Change in self-perception and behavior is required, especially when implementing new techniques and ideas. But, don't worry – big changes aren't usually required. It's the little things that make a difference. Everyone has comfort zones and blind spots. Sometimes, we miss the obvious. Read the sentence aloud in each illustration below.





Did you just read the sentences as you remembered them? Notice each has an extra word – a, the, the. Most people don't see this the first time. This is another example of our mental models. What are you missing that's right in front of you? Sometimes, it's an idea, a solution to current problems, or an answer to future sales. What you need is often in front of you, but you don't see or use it. Why? It happens to everyone. It has to do with the blinders you have on, which are caused by the beliefs you've accepted over the years:

- I can't change!
- I am what I am!
- I'm not that kind of person.
- That's just me.
- I always do it this way; it has worked before.

Excellent salespeople have their own problems; however, they are more willing to change and try new things to get different results. When it makes sense, they shed old habits and beliefs as naturally as leaves fall from trees in the autumn. You can't really manage time because it's constant, but you can manage yourself! Successful self-management requires you to continue learning as you have in this book and to:

- Expand your comfort zone.
- Establish positive beliefs.
- Increase your productivity.
- Be satisfied with your life.

Over the next two days, there will be four exercises that will help you bring these four concepts to life. For today, expanding your comfort zone and establishing positive beliefs will be the two discussed.

Expand Your Comfort Zone: All of us have self-imposed limitations. Don't stay a creature of habit. To expand your potential, you need:

- Feedback – positive and negative; ask for it!
- New Ideas – try different methods; brainstorm!
- Failures – Andrew Carnegie said the way to succeed is to fail more often.
- Change – make a new habit and stay with it for 30 days.

Establish Positive Beliefs: Don't you want to increase your sales performance, energy and success? Never forget that talent, knowledge, and desire aren't enough to achieve what you want. You have to change your beliefs. Your beliefs shape your attitude. Your attitude determines how you use your talent, knowledge, and dreams– all of which determine your action. Here's how to establish positive beliefs:

- Maintain a positive focus. Sounds simple, but psychologists tell us that 85 percent of our thoughts are negative.
- Mentally rehearse. Pre-play positive results on sales, goals, and customer contacts.
- Try self-talk and positive affirmations. Take time to put positive words in your mind. Positive IN, positive OUT (PIPO) – not garbage in, garbage out (GIGO).

Try affirmations like:

- I am an excellent salesperson!
- I am healthy and fit!
- I communicate well and with sincerity!

Review your own affirmations regularly. Make them personal, present tense, positive.

PRACTICE: EXPAND & ESTABLISH

To apply these two concepts immediately, complete the following activities and write about your experience in the space provided.

- Solicit feedback from a coworker; specify that you'd like him/her to give you at least one positive point of feedback and one constructive point of feedback.

- Brainstorm a list (5) of things you could change in your daily work routine.

- List 2 failures you've had in life that led to great things.

- Identify 3 habits you would like to change. Choose one that you want to focus on doing differently for the next 3 days.

- List 5 things you would like to think about yourself. Choose one that you will repeat to yourself at least five times today.

- Write about your experience doing these activities here.

Increase Your Productivity: Many salespeople spend most of their time responding to fires and chaos. Not enough time is spent talking to customers, planning, learning and following-up. Your payoff activities involve these functions. Be a pro and find time to complete these activities. Eliminate the word *can't,* and in the words of Winston Churchill, "never give up, never, never give up."

Implement these peak-performance techniques:

1. Follow a personal-management system for organizing, scheduling, goal tracking, and time-managing purposes. Suggested programs are *ACT, Day-Timer, Palm, Microsoft Outlook*, and *Time Design*. Each includes key elements:
   - Annual & Monthly Calendar Overview
   - Daily Calendar (to-do list, calls, and appointments)
   - Telephone Log
   - Notes Section
2. Find one planner and use it. Don't use two or three, you'll be ineffective. Also, if it's important, write it down (meeting, idea, activity, goal). Test this concept in a personal planner, and you'll truly save an hour a day.
3. Write goals and action plans. Again, if it isn't written down, it's not important to you. All great achievers are great planners. Opportunities prefer the prepared mind.
4. Keep learning. Read, listen to tapes, and take courses on management. No matter how successful you are now, you will only limit yourself if you stop learning.

Be Satisfied With Your Life: Live each moment to the fullest. It's important to plan for the future and to get things done; however, it's easy to get trapped by a whirlwind and never enjoy or appreciate who you are or what is really important. While we want to succeed in sales, what is the success really for? Remember these five great ideas:

1. Nurture your relationships.
2. Take care of your spiritual needs.
3. Help others in need.
4. Find alone time.
5. Do nothing sometimes.

"Does thou love life?
Then don't squander time.
It's the stuff life is made of."
-- Benjamin Franklin

PRACTICE: INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY & SATISFACTION

To apply these two concepts immediately, complete the following activities and write about your experience in the space provided.

- Identify the peak-performance technique you currently use the most, or determine why you don't currently use a technique.

- Identify the peak-performance technique that might make more sense for you personally, and review why it makes more sense for you to use.

- Determine 3-5 steps you will take to put your peak-performance technique into practice. In other words, determine what you will need to do between now and then to implement a technique successfully.

- Brainstorm a list of 10 things that are important to you.

- List 5 things you would like to devote more time to enjoying.

- List 5 things you currently make time to do that you would like to reevaluate.

FINAL REFLECTION: YOUR SUPERSTAR SELLING EXPERIENCE

Use this space to reflect on your experience reading, engaging and interacting with the stories, activities and information in *SuperSTAR Selling Skills*. Pay special attention to your feelings, thoughts, goals, or ideas. This is a valuable page to reference from time to time. It can serve as a reminder, a motivator, a passion-starter or proof that you always had the potential to be a SuperSTAR!

ABOUT RICK CONLOW

CEO & Founder of RCI

Rick makes your goals his goals – his ***servant leadership*** consulting skills inspire engagement and drive change.

There aren't many who'd argue the fact that Rick is one enthusiastic guy. Even the titles of his seminars and speaking training programs reflect his drive and positive energy.

A quick glance at his professional resume leaves you with a strong impression that effort and optimism are a winning combination. Case in point: With Rick by their side, clients achieved double-digit and triple-digit improvement in their sales performance, quality, customer loyalty and service results over the past 20-plus years and earned more than 30 quality and service awards.

In a day and age where optimism and going the extra mile can sound trite, Rick has made them a differentiator. His clients include organizations that are leaders in their industries, as well as others that are less recognizable. Regardless, their goals are his goals.

Rick's life perspective and extensive background in sales and leadership – as a General Manager, Vice President, Training Director, Program Director, National Sales Trainer and Consultant – are the foundation to his coaching, training and consulting services. Participants in Rick's experiential, "Live Action" programs walk away with insights, inspiration and skills they can immediately put to use.

These programs include: *The 5 Dynamics of Servant Leadership, "BEST Selling!", "Moments of Magic!", "Excellence in Management!", "SuperSTAR Service and Selling!", "The Greatest Secrets of all Time!", and "The SuperSTAR Leadership Model: Good Boss, Bad Boss – Which One Are You?"*

Rick has also authored *Superstar Leadership, The 5 Dynamics of Servant Leadership, Excellence in Management, Excellence in Supervision, The Superstar Leadership Model, and Superstar Customer Service.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

"Each time our management team works with Rick, the intended outcome is achieved. We develop as a team and as professionals in ways that are truly remarkable. Rick's programs are clear, customized and powerful. I highly recommend Rick Conlow as a consultant, trainer, presenter and coach; there is none better."

PATRICK MALONEY, DPD PRINT DISTRIBUTION

"It is with great pleasure that I recommend Rick. Rick is an energetic and charismatic facilitator that really knows his subject matter. He brings a wealth of eclectic knowledge and translates this to your specific need. He's a specialist in sales analysis, training and implementation. Through him, we were able to set and exceed our goals, all while learning and having fun along the journey. I highly recommend Rick."

PAUL MARTIN, CHIEF AQUISITIONS OFFICER, HBC

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ABOUT RICK CONLOW INTERNATIONAL

Goals Exceeded, Results Achieved

Our #1 priority is you. We are experts in helping you discover and implement performance improvement changes, while paying attention to the three interrelated pillars of change: your purpose, processes and people. Our years of results-based experience will help identify and execute your strategy so that you strengthen sales, attract and retain more customers, and build quality leadership; while boosting employee productivity, engagement and loyalty.

PROVEN PATH TO SUCCESS

We are not a business consulting company that merely writes reports and leaves all of the implementation up to you. We help you to create sustainable change and improvement in your company and your team.

AWARD WINNING LEADERS

We have won 48 quality and customer service awards, the Ford President's Award, Canada's Consumer's Choice Award and the JD Power award for customer service.

DIVERSE CLIENT BASE

From ***3M to Meijer, Costco to Lueken's Village Foods to Northern Power Company to AmeriPride*** our clients come from a wide variety of different industries. We pride ourselves on our ability to dig into the business, identify unique needs and build a customized strategy to help you achieve your success!

POWERFUL PROGRAMS

Through our years of experience we have developed three powerful leadership programs including the SuperSTAR Leadership Performance Plan, the SuperSTAR Leadership Video Training Series and SuperSTAR Leadership University.

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RICK CONLOW INTERNATIONAL

Check out our RCI resources!

Click the pictures for details.

Reach out to us if we can be of service!

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