

SALES AND SERVICE Excellence

THE MAGAZINE OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

JUNE 2012

Sharon Parker
Consultant

**Smile,
Name, Golf**

**Good Liars
and Good Lies**

Selling With Soul
Employ Empathy and Integrity

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Sales and Service Excellence

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SALES/LIARS

Good Liars and Good Lies

Learn how to spot them and learn how to tell them.



by Carol Kinsey Goman

YOUR BOSS TELLS YOU THAT “this change is for the best,” but as she speaks, you notice her stiff body posture and forced smile. Is she being honest with you?

Your co-worker says he’d be happy to help you with your project, but he seems to pause before answering and his eyes wander. Can you trust what he says?

For most people, lying triggers a heightened stress response that is obvious, if you know where to look. The mind has to work harder to generate a false response. To tell a lie, the brain first has to stop itself from telling the truth, create the deception, and deal with the guilt, anxiety, and fear of being caught.

Spotting deception begins with observing a person’s baseline behavior under relaxed conditions so that you can detect meaningful deviations. Observe speech tone, gestures, and blinking patterns over time. You can then detect shifts when her body language is out of character.

One body language myth about liars is that they avoid eye contact. In fact, many brazen liars overcompensate (to prove that they’re not lying) by making too much eye contact and holding it too long.

Don’t rely on any one signal—look

for three or four body language cues that reinforce one another:

1. A fake smile. It’s hard for liars to give a real smile while seeking to deceive. Real smiles crinkle the corners of the eyes and change the entire face. Faked smiles involve the mouth only.

2. Unusual response time. When the lie is planned (and rehearsed), deceivers start their answers more quickly. If taken by surprise, however, the liar takes



longer to respond—as inhibiting the truth and creating a lie takes extra time.

3. Verbal cues. When lying, a person’s vocal tone will rise; or they may ramble, select words to avoid answering questions exactly as asked, stammer, and use qualifiers “To the best of my knowledge” and fewer contractions: “I did not have sex with that woman . . .”

4. Under or over production of sali-

va. Watch for sudden swallowing in gulps or the increased need to drink water or moisten lips.

5. Pupil dilation. The larger pupil size that most people experience when telling a lie can be attributed to an increased tension and concentration.

6. Change in blink rate. A person’s blink rate slows down as she decides to lie and stays low through the lie. Then it increases rapidly after the lie.

7. Foot movements. When lying, people often display nervousness and anxiety through foot movements. Feet fidget, shuffle and wind around each other. They stretch and curl to relieve tension, or kick out as if to run away.

8. Face touching. When someone is about to lie or exaggerate, he may rub his nose or cover his mouth or eyes.

9. Incongruence. When a person believes what she is saying, her gestures and expressions align with her words. When gestures contradict words—such as a side-to-side head shake while saying yes or frowning and staring at the ground while saying she is happy—it’s a sign of deceit or inner conflict between what the person thinks and says.

10. Changes in gestures. In trying not to let their gestures give away the lie, deceivers hold their bodies unnaturally still. Or, after being asked a search-

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ing question, liars accelerate pacifying gestures—biting their lips, rubbing hands, fidgeting with jewelry, touching their hair.

11. Micro-expressions. If you spot a fleeting expression that contradicts a verbal statement, *believe what you see, not what you hear.*

12. The quick-check glance. After a deceitful response, liars will look down and away, then back at you to see if you *bought* it.

Unless you're dealing with a pathological liar or a superb actor, you can usually spot those who try to deceive you!

10 Good Ways to Lie

We *behave differently* around people of high status and power. We observe them more intently, display *exaggerated interest* in all they say, suspend judgments about them, mimic their body postures, and laugh at their jokes. We do this *automatically* because we feel intimidated or pressured to please them.

I advise *honest and transparent communication* in all relationships—except when the boss appears and you slip helplessly into psychological bunker mode, at that point I advise telling *good lies*.

- **Bad lies** are meant to deceive: to dodge responsibility, to gain unfair or unmerited advantage over colleagues, to shift the blame for mistakes onto others, to cover dishonest/unprofessional behavior. They are *destructive* to teams.

- **Good lies** are meant to outfox that bunker mentality so you can *be yourself* with the boss when all instincts are telling you to hide; let you display your genuine competence and professionalism. Good lies can be good for your career—and using them well springs directly from good body language skills.

Here are **10 ways to project confidence and credibility** when you feel uncertain:

1. Examine your body language through your boss's eyes. The impact of your *nonverbal signals* lies less in *what you really mean by them*, and more in *what your boss believes you mean*. So, your boss will interpret *crossed arms* as a sign of insecurity, resistance, or deceit. If you hold your arms at waist level, your boss will perceive you as assured and credible.

2. Become a method actor. Trying to display confidence when you feel tentative is tricky. Method acting draws on *real* but *past* emotions: Think of an occasion where you were enthused and certain; identify the right emotions; then picture that past event clearly in your mind. Recall the feeling and how you looked and sounded to help you embody the emotion as you interact with your boss.

3. Prepare for action using a power pose. Holding your body in expansive, *high-power poses* (leaning back with hands behind the head and feet up on a desk, or standing with legs and arms stretched wide open) stimulates higher testosterone (power and domi-

nance) and lower cortisol (a stress hormone). *People are more often influenced by how they feel about you than by what you say.*

4. Maintain steady eye contact. Maintain eye contact 50 to 60 percent of the time. If you look down or let your eyes dart, you *nonverbally indicate that you don't want to be there*, that you aren't committed to your message, or that you have something to hide. To improve your eye contact, make a practice of noticing the eye color of everyone you meet.

5. Lower your vocal pitch. When you are anxious or nervous, your vocal pitch tends to rise. Before talking with your boss, allow your voice to relax into its *optimal pitch*. Don't lower volume when you lower your pitch. When you speak too softly, your boss judges you as tentative and uncertain.

6. Take a belly breath. Stress and anxiety can cause you to tense up, breathe shallowly. So, sit with your weight *centered*—evenly distributed on both feet and sit bones. Look

straight ahead with your chin level to the floor and relax your throat. Take several deep breaths. As you exhale, allow your hands, arms and body to relax.

7. Talk with your hands. Gesturing as you talk can power up your thinking. When you incorporate gestures into your deliveries, your verbal content improves. The act of gesturing helps you form clearer thoughts and speak in tighter, declarative sentences.

8. Smile. A genuine smile stimulates your sense of well-being and signals to your boss that you are cooperative and trustworthy. When you smile, others smile in return. And, since facial expressions trigger corresponding feelings, the smile you get back will influence your boss's emotional state.

9. Dress for success. People do judge you based on your appearance—your clothing and grooming. If you want to be seen as *the consummate professional*, dress the part!

10. Let your body speak for you. Power and status is displayed through *height* and *space*. When standing, you look *more powerful* to those seated. Standing tall shows confidence. And when you widen your stance, you look more *solid* and *sure* of yourself. If you move around, you add to that impression. When seated, you can look more assertive by putting both feet flat on the floor, widening your arms away from your body, and spreading out your belongings on the table.

Experiment with one idea at a time. Your body language impacts the impression you make. Like good manners and good grammar, *body language is a tool for expressing your best self and a valuable tool for all good liars!* SSE

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ACTION: Master nonverbal language.



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Service Calls

Stop making sales calls.



by BJ Gallagher

EACH WEEK I MEET WITH business owners and entrepreneurs—men and women from different fields who share a common vision of self-employment. Among the group are doctors, accountants, attorneys, real estate agents, writers, architects, artists, actors, PR agents, personal trainers, professional speakers, headhunters, musicians, construction contractors, literary agents, photographers, landscapers and more.

Recently we addressed the topic: *What are you doing to keep your business going?* Several people said they've increased the number of cold calls they make; others talked about creative ways they're using social networking. Some are revamping their web sites and blogs; a few are exploring new business ideas.

What I Learned from Chuck

When it was my turn to speak, I said, "I've stopped making sales calls. I make service calls instead."

They looked at me in confusion, curiosity, disbelief, or disdain. So I explained what I learned from *Chuck Chamberlain*.

Chuck was a successful commercial real estate developer who gave a series of lectures and wrote a book entitled *A New Pair of Glasses*. He explained how he became successful and very wealthy. He said he did not make sales calls—he made service calls. He helped others be successful in their businesses. When Chuck called on a potential customer, he viewed it as no different from helping a neighbor with a project, visiting a friend in the hospital, or reaching out to help someone struggling with a serious personal problem—it was a chance to be of service.

"How can I help you?" Chuck would ask. "How's your business doing? What's working? What isn't working? Tell me about your challenges and problems." He would listen with no agenda. He would listen with an open mind and an open heart—with a genuine desire to help the other guy build his business.

If Chuck could help the other guy, he would. If he didn't have the right

service to offer, he would do his best to think if he knew anyone who could; then he'd refer the prospective customer to that other person.

In his lecture, Chuck related how, on two or three occasions, he had a different motivation in calling on prospective customers . . . he was broke, and desperate to make a sale. "Whenever I went on a call feeling like 'I NEED this sale; I HAVE to make some money today; I HAVE to close this deal'—I came away empty-handed. I never once made a sale that way."

When Chuck called on people in



order to GET something from them, he failed. When he called on people in order to SERVE them, he always got the sale. That was his *secret to success*.

People Read Your Intent

People are smart and intuitive. They can pick up on your energy and they know when you're trying to get something from them. When people resist sales pitches, it's because they know the real agenda is all about YOU.

And people also know when your intent is to help, to be of service, to contribute, or to assist them in achieving their goals. When you approach them with that intent, they welcome you. They trust you and give you their business.

I knew exactly what Chuck was talking about. For many years, fear had been the co-owner of my business. I ran scared, worried about where my next check was coming from. I did tons of PR, built several websites, chased down leads and curried favor with important people I thought could help me. I was always strategizing and scheming about how to become rich and famous. When I did get a big chunk of money or land on a national

TV show, It made me happy—but not for long. The euphoria quickly wore off and I had to *start chasing again*—almost like an addiction. What's more, in the chase for fame and fortune, I generated enormous stress, unhappiness, frustration, and anxiety for myself . . . as well as resentment toward those who had what I was chasing. This was a *no-win game*, for sure.

I always said that my work was about service and contribution—and my mission statement said so, too. But it was only partially true. I did want to help others—but I often wanted *recognition and money* even more. My motives were mixed at best. I ran my business from a place of fear and scarcity . . . the same place millions of business people are operating from today.

The Goal of Business

Chuck Chamberlain's "new pair of glasses" reminded me of something I used to know, but had forgotten. The goal of business is to provide products and services that others need and want. The goal of business is to serve and contribute to others' well-being. Money is the happy by-product. Money is one of the ways (but not the only way) we measure how well we're doing. But in our culture today, it's easy to lose sight of the true goal of business and get seduced into pursuing only money. I'm as guilty of this as anyone. Fear makes us chase after what we think will keep us safe. Fear makes us turn money into our god.

When I stopped looking for what I could get and started looking for what I could give, everything changed. The recession didn't go away, but my stress and anxiety did. Money started to flow in, often from unexpected places. I heeded Chuck's example and followed his lead; it made me feel good about my work and optimistic about the future. Chuck taught me to build my business on a foundation of service and contribution. When I do my work well, the result is not just freedom from want but also freedom from fear.

After sharing Chuck's ideas with my group, I wondered, *What would business be like if everyone made service calls instead of sales calls* and adopted an attitude of "How can I serve?" instead of "What can I get?" What would Wall Street be like? What would Main Street be like? *What would the world be like?* **SSE**

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ACTION: Start making service calls.

Smile and Dial

People can hear a smile.



by Debra Benton

SMILE WHEN YOU PICK UP OR click on the phone and continue as you talk regardless of who's calling or what the conversation is about. The other person can hear a smile (or frown, smirk, or eye roll). Your articulation improves when your jaw is loose; your voice intonation and cadence is more appealing; and you're less likely to be dull.

Your telephone voice is like the in-person body language people use to size you up. They hear your sincerity, passion, enthusiasm, conviction—your personality—in your voice. Their positive reading of you prepares you for a more positive outcome.

Have a calm-intensity tone and tempo when speaking in person, on the phone, or on video: That's an audible, modulated, matter-of-fact tone of voice; steady and even-keeled without useless filler words (*ah, uh, umh, okay*). I call it a *pass the salt* tone of voice. The expression is just a mnemonic device to remind you to *speak like you'd like to be spoken to*. Fast, high, shrill, studiously slow, sing song, brusque, too quiet, or too loud—each sends its own emotional message—generally a negative one.

When you talk on the phone to someone new, you form a picture in your mind about what the person looks like. He or she is doing the identical thing about you at the same time. Since you cannot look him in the eye to show you're paying singular attention, he has to hear it over the line. He can tell when you are fidgeting and not giving undivided concentration. Using one wrong word, phrase, or tone because you are speaking too fast or are not concentrating will damage trust.

In a heated conversation, slow your pace and volume. Regain the small smile. You'll calm yourself and others and have a productive conversation.

You don't need a wide smile, snapshot pose, a big rubber beam, or a wolfish grin, but rather just a slightly open mouth with a friendly upturn of the lips—a *gentle smile*. The demeanor I'm promoting is an undaunted, comfortable-in-your-skin, shiny-business-game-face. Consider the following:

- A shiny face from your attitude transmits well across cultures.

- Smiling isn't about *happiness* but about *confidence* and taking responsibility for *the energy* you bring.
- Your smile makes you look awake, alert, alive, implacable, approachable.
- You can have a determined jaw but still have a gentle smile—it enhances the keen intelligence in your eyes.
- If you smile you can't as easily chew gum, eat or drink.
- Non-smiling causes inaccurate responses to you.

Maintain your smiling expression while *talking or listening* on the phone, driving, walking the hall, eating, texting—regardless of whether you're mad, glad, scared, tired, or stressed. Keep your gentle smile regardless of the other person's attitude. If you shift your attitude because the person appears unresponsive, you are letting him control you. Besides, you don't

know what he is thinking. Maybe he is receptive but hasn't notified his face, which would then notify his voice.

When you use a gentle smile, you're more approachable. *People are more likely to tell you what you need to know* than when you jut your jaw, have a frown or a dead, droopy, long disapproving face.

If your mouth turns down from habit, laziness, focused-attention, lack of awareness, age, or weak facial muscles, you look and sound bored, uninterested, and uninteresting.

Keep the gentle smile. Maintain the awake, alert, alive facial expression when you're *talking and listening*, even when you're not physically in front of other people (it indicates *confidence*). **SSE**

Debra Benton is founder of Benton Management Resources and author of The Virtual Executive (McGraw-Hill). Visit www.debrabenton.com.

ACTION: Show a gentle smile.

SALES/SOCIAL

Social Selling

Extend your sales reachability.



by Al Campa

BUSINESS IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS—who you know, who your friends know, who your colleagues and *their* friends know. The best salespeople *leverage their contacts* to generate new business, forge partnerships, and drive revenue. With new tools come new ways to extend social and professional networks and new capabilities that allow enterprises to put the power of social media behind sales initiatives.

Reachable is an online solution that enables you to leverage all contacts and relationships and extend professional networks to get your solutions in front of the right people and close business faster. This enables *social selling*, a new way to convert cold leads into warm ones by making *hidden* social connections *visible* as a comprehensive *social graph* that can be leveraged to drive sales and make new connections.

Social media tools were adopted worldwide to enhance personal relationships and facilitate communication between friends and family with astonishing speed. Businesses have adopted social media tools to drive commerce and expand their spheres of influence. However, until recently, they lacked online tools to enable them to fully leverage the power of social media.

Reachable enables you to leverage your personal connections and those of your friends, colleagues, customers and channel partners. It makes *previously invisible connections* between all parties in a transaction evident, connecting the dots between sales reps and prospects, account managers and clients, hiring managers and applicants, suppliers and logistics pros, software vendors and IT managers—the possibilities are endless.

Revealing connections between business contacts is complicated because it's a broader network. To make the invisible visible, the *Reachable* platform com-

bins *all known contacts from multiple sources*—social sites like LinkedIn and Facebook as well as work histories and other enterprise data—and ranks contacts by relevancy, using factors like the number of common connections and how recently connections were made. The result is a

powerful *social relationship management tool* to make enterprise contacts *more reachable*, helping you extend your reach and leverage your relationships.

Since business is all about people, in the future work will be assigned based not on *territory* or *industry* but on *social graphs* to leverage *interconnected networks*.

Reachable helps salespeople streamline prospecting, target the right people and leverage the power of the collective network. It helps you to find and manage contacts and influence key decision-makers, and extend your reach. **SSE**

Al Campa manages strategy and operations at Reachable. Visit www.reachable.com.

ACTION: Extend your reach to leverage contacts.

Selling with Soul

Overcome all the stereotypes.



by Sharon Parker

EVERYBODY SELLS, REGARDLESS of job title, from the preacher in the pulpit, to the teacher in the classroom, to the first line manager in a business or the staff member wanting a promotion. We sell ourselves, our ideas, programs, products and services. If you have ever discussed *vacation plans* with your spouse or tried to get your kids to do better in school, you have sold—maybe not successfully, but you have tried. Yet, everybody hates being sold, fears selling out, and worries about sounding *salesy*. The negative stereotype of selling in our culture is an obstacle to salespeople doing their work with satisfaction and pride, despite the fact that the work they do is vital to the success of any business. This phobia causes good people to avoid the profession, start-up businesses to fail, and successful sales people to go home stressed and feeling disrespected.

When I ask my clients to shout out the first words they think of when they hear the word *salesman*, I hear *pushy*, *self-interested*, *sneaky*, *manipulative*, *dishonest*, *fast-talking*, and more—and *these are coming from salespeople themselves!* Everyone has had at least one negative experience with a salesperson and that feeds the stereotype. When they have a good experience, they write it off as an *exception* to the rule. This is how stereotypes persist. As a result, no mother tells her child, “Sweetheart, if you grow up to be a salesman, I’ll be so proud.”

But *sales* is not pushing people to buy things they don’t need. It is not manipulating people to make hasty decisions. And it is not self-serving and exempt from ethical considerations. Those descriptions better fit the job of *con-man* and explain why such people keep moving from town to town.

Selling is connecting with the people who need what you have to offer. It is *matching customers to the products and services that will help them achieve their goal or solve their problem.* And selling is the lifeblood of our economy.

Selling is the only job that creates more jobs. Good product engineering can result in a warehouse full of

unsold inventory. Good manufacturing processes can fill that warehouse faster. Nothing happens, no one benefits, until something is sold.

The best salespeople are *professionals*, and like other professionals they are dedicated to practicing their skills to the highest level possible. They are committed to lifelong learning. They practice good listening, build their reputation on integrity, and provide accurate information and good service to their customers. They match products and services to customer needs, and they work with the buyer to ensure a successful implementation. They think beyond winning a sale and are more concerned with winning a customer over the long-term.

Many programs and books teach sales techniques, but too many rely on scripts, or closing methods like the forced choice, or they use fear to drive a decision before the buyer is ready, ultimately triggering buyer’s remorse. What all successful salespeople understand is that *people buy from people*. Even with the overwhelming information on the internet and the introduction of electronic catalogues, on-line purchasing and auctions, *we must establish the human connection first.* The better we are at asking questions and drawing out the stories that help us understand a customer’s goals or concerns, the better we can *converse with them* peer-to-peer, share knowledge and experience, and brainstorm ways they can achieve their goal or solve their problem. *People make decisions emotionally first, and then they justify them later.* Without developing the *human connection*, salespeople remain in the stereotype penalty box and the barriers between buyer and salesperson remain, preventing cooperation.

This is not an argument for *relationship-selling*. Customers are not looking for *new friends* but for *someone they can trust* to bring them the benefits of the knowledge and experience they don’t have time to acquire for themselves. While the internet is a rich source of information, sifting through the data and testing what you learn about

products against the reality of your business is time-consuming, and customers worry that the information they glean from their Google® search may be incomplete or misleading. They may have the same doubts about what they read on the internet that they have about *pitches* they hear from salespeople.

To create an emotional connection, you must demonstrate competence by the preparation you bring to a meeting, the quality of your questions, and the follow-up you provide. Once you gain trust, your job is to *remain in alignment with the customer’s needs or goals*, neither pushing nor dragging, but working *hand-in-hand* to identify the best available product or service to help the customer reach their desired outcome. The skills needed to preserve and build on this alignment are emotional ones.

Selling with soul employs empathy and integrity. Empathy requires understanding the reason the customer



agreed to meet with you. Why did he or she agree to take time to meet with you? What is motivating him to consider what you offer? What does she hope will be the result? We tend to resist or procrastinate change until the pain of remaining the same, *stuck in our problem or behavior*, is greater than the pain involved in

changing. We only step toward change and invest the time and effort needed to create new circumstances when we believe it will benefit us. The value we expect to receive has to be clear. A salesperson needs to see what current problem or situation has reached a point that motivates a customer to look at alternatives, then help develop the vision with the customer of how life will be better after changing.

Integrity is doing what you say you will do and being honest with customers, including telling them when you don’t have the right product or service for them. It’s *doing the right thing*, as well as *doing things right*. Without integrity, any career in selling will be short-lived and will require changing jobs regularly.

So let’s smash that old stereotype. Sell with soul, put the customer first, and work in harmony with your core values, knowing that your work helps people solve problems, provides jobs, and keeps our economy growing. **SSE**

Sharon Parker is a sales executive and consultant and author of Selling with Soul Version 2.0: Achieving Career Success without Sacrificing Personal Integrity and Spiritual Growth. Visit www.sparkercounseling.com.

ACTION: Start selling with soul.

Creating a Dynasty

Three styles you need at the top.



by Jack Stark

WINNING BUSINESSES FOLLOW the *championship formula*: People + Personality + Process + Purpose = Dynasty.

People are the first element needed to be in place in order to build a sustainable business. It is the people at the top—plus their personality traits along with processes and their purpose in life—who provide a more complete answer to identifying companies and teams that are successful over time and reaching dynasty status.

The championship formula model identifies *three core leadership staff* (*Thinker*—or idea person, *Promoter*—a marketer and communicator, and *Coordinator*—a day-to-day manager) and *an action-oriented support staff*.

Thinker. This is the brains behind a Team who comes up with cutting edge innovation that propels and maintains the group's success—Steve Jobs with Apple or Tex Winter and the Triangle Offense with the Bulls and Lakers. They are brilliant people who can conceptualize and apply their vision with incredibly successful outcomes. In the corporate world, professional sports, and collegiate sports, the thinker is typically embedded in the roles of Board Chairman, Star Player, and Chancellor or President respectfully.

Promoter. This is the person who promotes, sells, or markets the team or company and the person the public most readily associates with it: Jack Welch, GE; Warren Buffett, Berkshire Hathaway; Payton Manning with the Colts or Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr. with NASCAR. In the corporate world, professional sports, and collegiate sports, the coordinator is typically represented by the CEO, General Manager or Owner, and Athletic Director respectfully.

Coordinator. This is the day-to-day coordinator who is responsible for running an organization. This is often the COO or the general manager of a team such as the brilliant GM of the Colts, Bill Polian. Most often, the qualities of a coordinator are embedded in the role of a COO in the corporate setting, and Head Coach in professional and college sports.

Action-oriented support staff. These are the key CEOs, board members,

division heads, assistant coaches, or administrative staffers who carry out daily functions that ensure the ongoing success of the organization.

Of the three types of leader, there is always an *Influencer*, a person who has a major impact on the life of the key leader of a team—the *person most identified as a primary leader*. The *Influencer* impacts the culture, thinking, and behavior of the Leader whether he or she is in the role of Thinker, Promoter, or Coordinator. *Influencers* are mentors who may be a parent, coach, teacher, boss—anyone who helps to shape the head coach or CEO.

These roles aren't always locked in forever. As brilliant thinkers build a talent base at the top, they can switch to promoting the organization—and become the face that people identify with. For example, Warren Buffett

moved into the Promoter role, with Charlie Monger and previously David Sokol helping with the Thinker duties. There needs to be flexibility in this shifting, with contributions clearly spelled out for long-term success.

You need these three leadership styles at the top. Leaders who don't surround themselves with the other styles tend to fail. Many charismatic leaders lack substance and bounce from one rousing speech to the next. They are a mile wide and an inch deep. By studying the people who mentored and shaped a leader, you learn a great deal about the essence of a championship leader. **SSE**

Jack Stark, Ph.D., is an Olympic trainer, clinical psychologist, director of Performance Enhancement Group, and author of The Championship Formula. Visit www.ChampionshipFormula.com.

ACTION: Surround yourself with supportive styles.

MANAGEMENT/DELEGATION

Why Managers Derail

Are you your own worst enemy?



by Doug and Polly White

MANY PREVIOUSLY SUCCESSFUL AND growing businesses reach a point where growth stalls. The primary constraint to growth is seldom capital (with a good business plan and persistence, you can obtain financing), or lack of good products or services or market opportunities. What often limits growth is *the inability or unwillingness of the owner to let go, to stop doing the primary work of a business*.

If the principal can delegate the primary work of the business to others, the business will grow. Sustaining further growth will depend on the principal's ability to relinquish day-to-day decision-making responsibility and the management of front-line workers. Once the principal allows his managers to do their jobs, the company grows exponentially. But if the owner insists on making every decision, the business will *plateau*. To break the bottleneck, decision-making must be delegated. Going from managing workers to managing managers is the *Big Chasm*. For many, it's more difficult than allowing others to do the primary work. The reason—delegating decision making to managers means giving up a



measure of control. Of course, that's scary. The only thing worse than not delegating when it's needed, is delegating before you construct the proper infrastructure. Doing so can be disastrous. The business can veer off course without the owner knowing it. Many companies fail because the owner trusted the wrong people or lacked the proper systems to support delegation.

Delegation requires three things:

- **Right managers.** Delegating before the right people are in place is a recipe for disaster. This requires difficult decisions. It can mean layering or replacing loyal employees who simply do not have the skill set to become managers.
- **Documented processes.** No one will pay more because you have well-documented processes. Even so, once the business reaches the point where you can't be personally involved in every transaction, good process documentation is the best way to communicate to people how things are to be done.

- **Robust metrics.** This is how you can know what is going on in the bowels of the business without being there. For example, tracking the number of late shipments can let the owner know if there is a problem before customers are lost. Good metrics are what allow a business owner to sleep at night.

With infrastructure in place, you can *safely let go and let the business grow*. **SSE**

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ACTION: Delegate effectively to grow.

Hiring Top Players

Attract the best, avoid the rest!



by Patrick Valtin

ANN IS A FRUSTRATED BUSINESS owner who has been trying to hire a Marketing Manager for eight months. Her last attempt was disastrous: over \$6,200 spent on recruitment ad placements and 63 resumes screened. After 27 interviews in one week, four applicants were selected for a second meeting. Not one of these finalists was offered the job.

What went wrong and why was Ann so upset? Simply stated, the company had been attracting the WRONG people! An analysis of the job placement ad revealed too much emphasis on job-related hard skills and experience, as well as a strong promise of an attractive salary. But it was lacking a clear description of vital job-related soft skills needed to excel on the job and in Ann's company environment. Most importantly, the ad was "selling" the wrong benefits to the wrong people—no clear mention of the most important selection criteria top players are looking for!

If you want to attract top players, you need to understand that your challenge is not to find them, but to attract them! Hiring is like marketing—if you do not know what top players are looking for, they will never show up. You have thousands of competitors when it comes to attracting the best, knowing that the war for talent is raging and that every business like yours is willing to over-pay, compromise and sacrifice in order to attract top players.

Use Four Selection Criteria

You can always evaluate an applicant against four levels of motivation in finding a job. The first two criteria are quite logical and your margin of negotiation is rather limited. The last two criteria are more irrational and emotional and have proven to be so much more important to top players. The good side of it is: you have ample room to compete on these last two. As a matter of fact, the four criteria are presented in increasing sequence of importance:

1. Nature of the job. Top players look at doing what they like to do. No matter how tough the job market conditions might be, you want to detect and attract those who would not compro-

mise too much on their life-long aspirations. Communicate clearly in your job ad that you are looking only for those who are passionate about what they do. Always give priority to those applicants who demonstrate a good persistence in their professional orientation.

With young applicants, it is important to detect why they decided to take a specific academic orientation. Were they purpose-driven or merely going through school without any specific future intention? Watch out for the purposeless applicants who mostly look for a job "to make a living."

2. Salary and other benefits or compensations. Qualified applicants know how much they are worth. Even if the current job market is a "buyer's market," make sure you offer your selected players an attractive package which will motivate them to work for long-



term rewards. But if you really want to attract top players, offer performance-based rewards, such as bonuses or profit sharing. Reduce the fixed part of the salary and provide larger performance-based rewards that drive *personal and organizational efficiency*—and also reward commitment to the future.

Watch out for the skilled or experienced applicants who try to sell you their talent at a higher fixed salary with no desire for performance-related rewards. The coming years will be bright for you and your business, provided you are able to surround yourself with able, group-dedicated and future-driven collaborators!

3. Work culture and environment. While your employees will say that they want a *new job for better pay*, reality might be different. People do not leave their company, they leave their boss. Nearly three out of five employees feel that their bosses frequently fail to honor their promises and 37 percent say they do not give credit when due. Another

23 percent said their supervisors blame others to *cover up mistakes or minimize embarrassment*. Most employees leave because of a difficult relationship with a supervisor rather than dissatisfaction with the salary. Over 77 percent of them find a new job with no higher pay.

Top players will first judge your company through the same irrational criteria as any potential customer would with a supplier. The recruiter's attitude, employees' friendliness, the smile on the receptionist's face are factors which will attract—or scare away good applicants. So be clear in your message: you will only hire someone who wants to have fun on the job, enjoys great team work and contributes to others' as much as he/she will be contributed to.

4. Challenges and future. Many applicants primarily search for job security. Top players don't care about it. They mostly want to face challenges and meet their potential. They are future-oriented and they want to prove that "they can do it." They instantly respond to those "mission impossible" types of assignments. They buy a bright future to which they feel they can contribute. Being part of a future-oriented team is a major reward by itself; financial reward comes on top of it.

The key factor is: *does the applicant want to take an active role in the expansion of your business?* Is he/she responding positively to your challenges? Many employers tend to be too nice and too promising during the hiring process. Scare your applicants by being clear and totally transparent about the current challenges or difficulties. Then, and only then, show them the future.

Top players will love it. Other applicants will naturally shy away, which is exactly what you want! If you don't present challenges first, you will indeed attract the wrong prospects for the job. Job security should be the reward of creating and contributing to a bright future, not a God-given right that you, the employer, must assume for every *challenge-shy* employee. *Challenge* is the keyword. A bright future is the reward!

So, in order to attract the best and avoid the rest, put all your attention on developing your competitiveness on the last two criteria. While the first two do not give you much room to beat the competition, these two irrational, emotional criteria offer unlimited possibilities to show—and *make the difference!* **SSE**

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ACTION: Attract and hire the top players.

Make Your Impact

Avoid your boss's mistakes.



by Esther Francis Joseph

AFTER YEARS OF HARD WORK, you've received the recognition and promotion you deserve. Now, after years of being overworked and under-appreciated by managers, you vow, "As the boss, I won't treat people how I was treated."

How's that working for you? Suppose you've just been promoted to *office manager* and now supervise those you used to work with. You know what it's like to take on duties outside of your job description, to perform and deliver under unreasonable deadlines and conditions, and to not receive credit for successful outcomes. You know how the skills of lower-level employees are *under-utilized* and *under-valued*.

You want to recognize employee's strengths and potential and apply them to benefit the company. You don't want to blindly follow past examples, yet you don't want to entirely reject them simply to be different. You seek to apply style and strategies that will work for your team and the company.

Of course, you want to avoid the managerial and professional mistakes of your predecessors, but that's hard to do when the culture is entrenched, when you've been with a company for years, and manage your former peers.

How can you gain the respect of your coworkers—some of whom have long been with company and become your close friends—without resorting to the old style of leadership your predecessors exercised? Can you balance the two, being an effective and impartial *professional supervisor* while maintaining friendship with your staff?

During your transition from *employee to manager*, you have to *lead by example* and *grow a thick skin*—accept that some former peers will understand these changes, while others will hold on to the old ways. Your old friends will now look at you differently and possibly resent you, but you can't allow this to deter you from your new managerial goals. Instituting a new office culture, where everyone is treated fairly, where managers do what is in the best interest of the company will be tough. You'll need to be *forceful*, yet *considerate* in making desired changes.

The number one mistake that some

bosses make is trying to be friends with their people. Set the foundation of your new relationship with your staff on day one, addressing the new situation in a staff meeting, openly sharing your new vision and expectations and outlining the new direction and policies you want to establish moving forward. Maintain your new focus and disposition no matter what.

These new changes might cause tension since some will test your new authority. You must remain resolute, while remaining respectful. If you behave fairly and openly, insisting on being treated with the same respect and professionalism, people will support your endeavors. They'll realize that the changes you advocate are in their best interest since they would be the ones to gain the most from them.

Employees should trust their boss-

es and know that they can come to them for help, but as an authority figure. They need to know that bosses set the rules and standards and administer disciplinary measures. Both bosses and employees need to set and abide by professional boundaries at all times.

The way businesses are run must change. Those in positions of authority need to be prudent. New managers should take the best of what they've learned along the way and reject what no longer works while injecting their own style and values, in an effort to create a respectful harmonious working environment that will achieve both the company's mission and bottom-line. **SSE**

Esther Francis Joseph is author of Memories of Hell, Visions of Heaven, her personal story of survival and perseverance. Visit www.estherfrancisjoseph.com.

ACTION: Make your impact as a manager.

MANAGEMENT/TIPS

First-time Managers

Start with these 10 trusted tips.



by Bud Haney

IF YOU ARE A NEW MANAGER, take these 10 tips:

1. Accept that you still have much to learn. You have worked hard for your promotion and have ample expertise in your field, but you may lack self-confidence in your ability to lead. Learn from your team.

2. Communicate clearly. Keep your team informed of project goals, priorities, and deadlines to build credibility and gain the support of your team. Provide clear direction and welcome questions and feedback to ensure your people are *invested* in your goals!

3. Set a good example. Demand from yourself the same level of professionalism and dedication that you expect from others. If you expect the team to be upbeat and friendly, then make sure you are! If you expect written reports to be error free, then double check your work!

4. Encourage feedback. Have an open door policy! Some people won't speak up about certain issues unless they are prompted. Canvass for opinions on hot issues so that your team knows that you'll listen to their concerns and ideas and help provide solutions to problems.

5. Offer recognition. By recognizing the efforts and achievements of your team, you build their confidence, and

encourage future contributions. Praise need not always be formal—just take an extra minute to offer praise or criticism, and ensure instructions are understood.

6. Be decisive. Make decisions and stick to them; don't change your mind on a whim. U-turns cause people to lose trust or confidence in you.

7. Help your team see the big picture. Explain to your team how their assignments and projects fit into the company's goals. Show that every task they complete can impact the company reputation, success, and profit.

8. Create a culture of constant learning and development—and include yourself in this process. Encourage your team to explore new methods for reaching personal and company goals. Let them make—and learn from—mistakes and reward new and innovative ideas.

9. Provide professional guidance. Be a mentor. Make yourself available to staff members and show interest in their career development. Don't overlook the motivational power of positive reinforcement—your staff will appreciate your commitment to their progress.

10. Be patient with yourself. Developing managerial skills takes time. Seek guidance from colleagues, your line manager, or your professional network when you need it. In doing so, you will enhance your leadership abilities.

Take these tips as a new manager. **SSE**

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ACTION: Apply these basic management tips.



Remember Me

What are the real brand drivers?



by Laurence Vincent

BEING REMEMBERED IS THE biggest problem for most brands; not being memorized. Our brain is quite good at storing information for later use. It's the recalling part that proves to be our Achilles heel. This cognitive shortcoming is best illustrated by a morbid statistic cited in an essay by Gary Marcus in John Brockman's recent book, *This Will Make You Smarter*: Skydivers have been known to forget to pull their rip cords, accounting by one estimate for about 6 percent of diving fatalities.

If 1 in 16 skydivers plummets to his death because he cannot remember to perform the most basic, life-saving function inherent in his sport, you can be certain that *a far greater percentage of your potential customers will fail to recall your brand when making a purchase decision*. Most branding and marketing programs fail to address this problem because *they over-emphasize brand identity*. They falsely believe that a brand that stands out with cool creativity will be remembered better on a purchase occasion. Sadly, I've seen enough data to know this is untrue.

My First-Hand Experience

Several years ago, I was brought in to consult for a global brand that was well-known because of an award-winning advertising campaign. The client was frustrated because, despite the fact that they were recognized as one of the world's most powerful brands, they hadn't gained any market share since launching that campaign. They were still #3 in their category. What was wrong? We commissioned new research to analyze the problem. First, we surveyed consumers prior to a purchase occasion. Then, we captured actual purchasing data. Finally, we surveyed the consumers again after a purchase occasion. In both pre and post surveys, the consumers overwhelmingly stated their love for the brand and its iconic campaign. However, their purchase behavior told another story.

Even in the segment of surveyed consumers who professed great admiration and preference for the client's brand, we saw a high share of competi-

itive brand purchases. When we interviewed some of these customers, they told us they simply forgot about the client brand. Some said *they purchased the competitor brand out of force of habit*. "I didn't really think about it," they often said. Others recounted more practical reasons. "The other brand has never let me down . . . I didn't feel a need to switch." And the smoking gun may have come from one respondent who said it with a finer point, "I love their ads but I guess I don't think about those when I go shopping." Instead, this respondent described her past experience with the competitor's brand and the value it provided to her time and time again. When she made a purchase decision, the first thing that came to her mind was *her experience with the other brand*.

If you think I'm writing an indictment of advertising, what we learned on this client assignment was that *behavior mattered more than identity when the brand needed to be recalled at a moment that mattered*. The other brand had built a reputation for consistency, reliability, and service. In contrast, as I dug deeper into the operations of my client, I discovered a trail of product and service missteps. The client was by no means a failure, but most of their new product introductions were less captivating than their advertising. They didn't seem to know what they wanted to be.

One employee I interviewed said, "every time we have a great idea someone comes along and adds another idea to the mix and then we end up with a mediocre mutt." While the leading competitor's advertising was a little tired, they were remembered as the brand that was better at delivering on what it promised. Sadly, even though my client said they recognized they had a problem with focus and service delivery, they have remained #3 in the category and they have recently suffered negative press for an unfortunate service failure.

Could the competitor have benefited from a refreshed brand identity

and marketing campaign? Perhaps. Could my client have benefited from a fresh retooling of their product and service offering? Absolutely. The brand that delivers on its brand promise at the most critical touch points is the brand that is more likely to be remembered in moments of choice. That's why there are several brands that are leaders in their category despite having a mediocre brand identity (i.e., General Electric is not the most exciting name and Facebook's logo and graphic identity is rather plain).

Focus on Three Questions

If your brand is having a hard time being recalled, focus your attention on three questions:

1. What are we promising? Don't think about how to *position* your brand. Focus on your *promise*. Think about what your brand is committed to deliver, no matter what the obstacle. A

promise is a covenant. It stands for the value you will deliver to customers. You should use it to rally your employees and focus your activities. A promise can provide you with a compelling way to ensure a great brand experience, and it can be a strong source of differentiation.

2. What are we choosing to omit? This one is hard for business managers, yet it is essential to being recalled. We remember brands for what they don't do as much as we remember what they do. People know that Southwest Airlines doesn't have assigned seating. It hasn't prevented them from becoming the #1 domestic carrier. It's a choice that supports their promise of low fares and reliable service.

3. What's the story of our experience? Advertising might earn your brand a parking spot in a consumer's memory bank, but their own personal experience is going to earn the privilege of recall. How well does your brand align itself with the story of your consumer? In their experience, how does your brand make them think, make them feel, and influence their behavior? Context matters. The more your brand provides context that resonates with your consumer audience, the more it will be the brand that is *top of mind*. SSE

Laurence Vincent develops strategies for brands as head of The Brand Studio at United Talent Agency and is author of Legendary Brands and Brand Real: How Smart Companies Live Their Brand Promise and Inspire Fierce Customer Loyalty. Visit www.laurencevincent.com.

ACTION: Answer these three questions.



Seven Secrets

Be an 'overnight sensation'.



by Denise Michaels

WHAT DO REALITY STAR Kim Kardashian, Warren Buffett, and Gloria Allred have in common (besides being rich)?

They're all media darlings. When they want the world to know what they are doing—people listen. When they have a new offering, or want you to know about something they're doing, the headlines flash, the video cameras roll and within hours everyone knows what they want us to know about them.

Wouldn't it be great to be able to command headlines to tell people about your business? Knowing how to build your platform of fans and customers is part of *creating a business people notice*.

Here are seven secrets to help you get noticed and be seen as influential:

- **Build your presence on social networking platforms.** Connect with *movers and shakers* you want to know you. You can add comments, start a group of followers or develop a fan page. Share what you're doing in a compelling way. There's only one degree of separation with social networking. Post daily and build a fan base.

- **Conduct business with integrity and honesty**—not for a quick buck. In this new era of citizen media, disgruntled customers can spin out of control and destroy your reputation faster than you can say "Twitter." Trust is critical to your success. Take care of customers and let them go online with a positive story about your business.

- **Get comfortable with media**, including radio, television, print and online sources. On radio you can tell listeners how to connect with you. Print can be powerful, too. Professional trade journals seek fresh articles for their eager readers. Every day you own a business is like the biggest kick-butt seminar you'll ever attend. Be willing to stretch.

- **Use public speaking to position yourself as an expert or an authority in your field.** The minute you stand in front of people you're automatically seen as an expert. Develop a sense of humor or at least memorize a few jokes. People are more open to new ideas right after a good chuckle. If speaking makes you uncomfortable consider joining a Toastmasters group for practice and constructive support.

- **Discover ways to keep your energy level or 'chi' up.** You can work 24/7 and never get everything done. Learn to delegate things to others who are better suited and love to do the tasks. Building up your success only to crash and burn later is no fun. Plus, you never know when someone has a camera and captures you being you.

- **Use short videos (five minutes) to share tips and ideas about your expertise and how you help customers.** Or, tell people about exciting events coming up in your business or life. Don't be afraid to share your successes when they happen. Let your enthusiasm and passion for what you love shine. Upload them to a platform like YouTube and share all over the Web.

- **Share your story of success in a way that's emotionally compelling and helps people relate to you and what you're**

all about. If you're a positive person, you want to forget the tough times. But that's where your ideal customer is at now, in need of your product/service. Craft your story to come across as a person who has overcome obstacles and who can relate to their concerns.

These seven keys provide the ways to become an overnight sensation. Of course an *overnight sensation* is really a person who's worked hard for years then it appears they suddenly burst upon the scene. When you harness and leverage these secrets, you'll be well on your way to commanding the influence and positive attention that will help your business grow successfully. **SSE**

Stacey Hall and Denise Michaels are co-authors and co-creators of *Occupy Your Life . . . NOW!* Visit www.DeniseMichaels.com/seminar.

ACTION: Become an overnight sensation.

MANAGEMENT/TIPS

Recession Resolution

Take 44 tips for dealing with it.



by Tom Peters

WHEN ASKED FOR STRATEGIES/secrets/tips for surviving the *persisting downturn* (Great Recession), I try to appear wise and informed—but what's going through my head are *these 44 items*:

1. You come to work earlier.
2. You leave work later.
3. You work harder/smarter.
4. You may work for less but smile more.
5. You volunteer to do more.
6. You dig deep—and bring a good attitude to work.
7. You fake it if your good attitude flags.
8. You practice your game face in the mirror each day.
9. You give new meaning to *visible management*.
10. You take better care of yourself and *encourage others* to do the same.

11. You shrug off shit that flows in your direction.
12. You forget about the *good old days*—nostalgia is self-destructive.
13. You think *this too shall pass*, but not anytime soon.
14. You make *the best* of what you have now—your character is determined by your reaction to adversity.
15. You work the phones more—and stay in touch with, and on the mind of, positively everyone.
16. You frequently invent breaks from routine.
17. You eschew all forms of personal excess.
18. You simplify.
19. You *sweat the details* as never before.
20. You raise to the sky and maintain—at all costs—



21. You are maniacal when it comes to responding to even the slightest screw-up.
22. You find ways to be around young people who are not members of the *sky is falling* school.
23. You learn new tricks of your trade.
24. You pass old tricks on to others—mentoring matters.
25. You invest heavily in your computing skills.
26. You remind yourself, this is the Final Exam of competence, character, and *leadership*.
27. You network like a demon *inside* the company to know the folks who "do the real work," and who can be your most dependable allies in getting things done fast.
28. You network like a demon *outside* the company.
29. *You offer thanks to others if good things happen—and take the heat if bad things happen.*
30. You don't sugarcoat or hide the truth.
31. You celebrate small successes.
32. You shrug off losses and try again.
33. You avoid negative people to the extent you can.
34. You read the riot act to the gloomsprayers.
35. You give new meaning to *thoughtful*.
36. You buy more flowers.
37. You walk in your customer's shoes.
38. You mind your manners.
39. You are kind to all.
40. You keep your shoes shined.
41. You leave the blame game at the office door.
42. You call out those who play *office politics* games.
43. You become a paragon of personal accountability.
44. *And then you pray.*

This list is relevant any time. **SSE**

Tom Peters is co-author of *In Search of Excellence*. Visit www.tompeters.com.

ACTION: Take these 44 tips to heart.

Why Interviewing Fails

Five questions to ask in an interview.



by Brad Remillard

DO YOU HAVE OTHER PEOPLE interview candidates who will end up working directly for you? Just about everyone answers *Yes* to this question. The follow-up question is, “Have you ever sat in the interviews with these co-workers and assessed whether or not they are competent interviewers?” Not *co-interview* with them, but specifically be there to *assess their interviewing abilities*. Most answer *No* to this question.

You are relying on their opinion to hire someone that will play a role in your success, yet you don’t even know if they are competent interviewers. So you cross your fingers and hope everything works out. Crossed fingers and hope make a poor hiring process.

Why Interviews Often Fail

Two reasons interviewing fails:

First, incompetent people are conducting the interviews. This is by no means a knock on those people. The fact is, a few people are naturally good interviewers, just like only a few people are natural at music, sports, or math. However, most people are not good interviewers, just like most are not good at music, sports, or math. Most would be considered amateurs when it comes to interviewing. Do you want to have your success based on amateurs conducting the interviews?

The vast majority of people learn to interview from the people who interview them. So then, where did the people that interviewed them learn to interview? You guessed it, from the people that interviewed them. And so it goes all the way back to Moses. This is not a training program.

Interviewing is a skill that needs to be developed and honed. Since few people ever receive any training on how to properly interview, most just aren’t good at it. Most people have either had no training or it was one short class years ago and they’ve long forgotten what they learned. How can anyone expect their managers to be competent interviewers? Skills need to be practiced or at least kept up to date to be effective. Asking the same questions you were asked 15 years ago in

an interview is not up to date.

Lack of training and practice creates one major flaw which poor interviewers make over and over again. They don’t probe deeply enough into what the candidate tells them. The interviewer tends to just accept or reject what they are told. Few really probe for facts, time, data, outcomes, challenges, team issues, names, etc. They may ask one or two follow-up questions, but even these are pretty superficial. Teaching interviewers how to probe deeply is the biggest challenge to overcome when training people to interview. Not that the person doesn’t want to probe, they just don’t know how or are uncomfortable asking these deep questions.

Second, vague questions equal vague hires. This is often because those in the second or third round of interviews really don’t understand the position. They interview every candidate much the same way regardless of position. It is the one size fits all interviewing syndrome.

Since the other interviewers don’t really know the details of the job, they ask vague and generic questions, just like they were asked way back when. The problem with this is that once the person comes on board the job expectations by their new manager are rarely vague and generic. Nobody has asked the probing question as to how the person will do the job once they come on board.

Less than 10 percent of hiring managers review the details of the job description with the co-workers who will be interviewing the candidates! The other people interviewing simply assume they know what is important in the job, what specific issues need to be probed, and what questions they should ask to determine if the person is qualified for the job they themselves don’t even understand. Is it any wonder interviewing fails?

Interviewing doesn’t have to be complicated. It doesn’t have to be so sophisticated that a person needs to go through extensive training every time they have an interview. In fact,

interviewing should be simple, thorough, and easy for all to understand.

Ask Five Core Questions

Well-trained interviewers can get 80 percent of the information they need to decide whether or not the person can do the job with just *five questions* and six words. If they can’t pass these *five core questions*, then all the other questions are irrelevant, so why ask them? In fact, for most manager hires, if the candidate can’t get past the first three questions, you should move on.

1. Give me an example where you demonstrated high initiative. Just about every position requires initiative. The degree of initiative may change based on the position, but if they don’t have it at the level you need, do you really need to continue?

2. Give me an example where you successfully executed on a critical project. If you have critical tasks you need done and they can’t execute and get them done, you may not have the right person.

3. Give me an example where you lead a cross functional team on a complex project. Leadership is something managers must possess. Cross functional is important, because motivating people that you do not have authority over is

just one key difference between managing and leading.

4. Give me an example where you have done X in your current company. Aligning past experiences and accomplishments with regards to scope, size, and organization is important.

5. When you come on board how would you accomplish X within X period of time? Getting them to describe how they will do the job in your company, with your resources and your culture demonstrates their ability to adapt to your company.

Once you, the interviewer, ask each of these questions, then simply probe deeply with who, what, when, where, why and how. Simply ask follow-up questions that start with one of these six words. If the candidate really did what they claim to have done they will be able to describe in great detail what they did. Probing deeply is what will separate those that did it, from those that claim they did it. **SSE**

Brad Remillard is a speaker, author, trainer, co-founder of Impact Hiring Solutions and coauthor of You’re NOT the Person I Hired: A CEO’s Guide to Hiring Top Talent. Visit www.bradremillard.com.

ACTION: Use these five questions in interviews.



Cut Through Clutter

Utilize Precision Marketing.



by Sandra Zoratti

TODAY'S SATURATED MARKETING messages leave little room to be heard and an even smaller window to leave an impact. Each new marketing message is shouting to be *louder* than the next, but louder doesn't mean a message is *being heard*, or even welcomed. As leaders, we face a new era, as customers are in control and lead the way. They demand more personalized service to leave feeling *fulfilled*, not *fooled*.

How can leaders and marketers combat this *oversaturated era*? The solution can be found by applying the principles of *Precision Marketing (PM)*—leveraging data to drive rich customer insights and use them as the foundation of your marketing and messaging.

PM is a *journey*. To get you started, we developed a *six-step process* to adopt, refine, and expand the use of data to drive better marketing results as measured by revenue, response and ROI. Among the companies that have implemented the *PM Framework*, *Tesco*, a low-price grocery store, is among my favorites. *Tesco* saw a big increase in customer loyalty and customer spend.

In its early days, *Tesco* struggled to fend off its competitors from stealing away customers. As competition grew, *Tesco* realized that its low-cost strategy was insufficient to stay sustainable. Its executives had to retain customers and adopt principles that would put customer growth and customer reactivation at the forefront.

To retain its customer base, *Tesco* knew it had to survey to understand its loyal customer base (who was shopping in its stores). *Tesco* strove to understand its customers, what their profiles looked like, who should be targeted, and with which offers. To gather such insights, *Tesco* created the *Clubcard* service to offer customers special vouchers and reward points, while capturing the customer's name, address, and phone number. The *Clubcard* queried applicants to define the number of people living in the household and their dietary preferences. *Tesco* gained a competitive edge by making offers that met customers' specific needs. Then, *Tesco* offered six optional *Clubs* such as, a wine club, a greener living club, a healthy living

club—giving *Tesco* more data, with richer insights on their customers' wants needs, likes and dislikes. It was a win-win: *Tesco* received information, and customers earned points and deals for products that interested them.

Next, *Tesco* gathered data-rich information on its customers' behaviors at the register. Here, *Tesco* could uncover the real-life behaviors of shoppers.

In an average week, over 200 million purchases were recorded from *Clubcard* use, generating immense data. In turn, *Tesco* generated the appropriate sales and products to a specific customer base. *Tesco's* strategy and implementation was brilliant and leading edge.

Tesco engaged a marketing predictive analytics firm for analyzing what they found. They discovered that it

was not necessary to analyze each piece of information. By analyzing only 10 percent of the data, results were generated with up to 90 percent accuracy.

Marketers can draw customers closer to their brand by applying the targeted methods that make up the *PM Framework*. *PM* allows brands to combat messaging barriers that block the pathway to consumers, allowing for a deeper, more meaningful connection. This is what today's consumer requires: attention, personalization and relevance. Business is all about the customer and our customers prove that to us *daily* with their attention, dollars and voices. **SSE**

Sandra Zoratti, VP/Marketing, Ricoh, launched the Precision Marketing practice, and is author of Precision Marketing. Visit www.precisionmarketingbook.com.

ACTION: Try using Precision Marketing.

SALES/LISTENING

Who's Listening?

Is listening now a lost art?



by Robert Withers

THE RECENT RESIGNATION OF Goldman Sachs banker *Greg Smith* begs the question, who's listening? *Smith's* resignation letter discusses the *culture-gone-bad* at *GS*. He cites his disillusion with management and their obsession with profits. He bemoans the *sales culture* in which salespeople are unable or unwilling to ask proper questions of their customers.

While the resignation letter of *Greg Smith* shocked many, I wasn't surprised by what he wrote regarding the *culture* at *GS*. I deal with salespeople daily and constantly remind them of the value and art of *listening to the customer*.

The thought that so much money is changing hands without a proper *customer needs-assessment* is discouraging. But, this mentality continues every day on Wall Street and Main Street. Billions of dollars are risked daily on investments sold by *salesmen* who do not take the time to understand their clients' real needs or their *actual risk aversion tolerance*. That's if, as *Smith* asserts, they were even provided with any real truth about the investment's risk at all.

It happens daily, across industries, within the public and private sectors, with products and services involving millions, if not billions, of dollars. *Salespeople* are rarely trained to ask questions

first, or to dig deeper into the client's goals and objectives in the original sales encounter. Instead they often spew out features, before any meaningful conversation or true listening. There is little *fact-finding* by salespeople (maybe only a question or two) before they launch into a sales pitch.

I am all for great sales results, profits and capitalism (I consult in sales and marketing to the financial services industry), but I'm against *selling something for the sake of the sale* where the only objective is profit for the company, not servicing of the client.

If you are a *seasoned sales professional*, you may be thinking, "*Is this guy joking?*"

Tell that to my management!"

But if more time were spent asking questions about the client's needs, their objectives, what they were trying to achieve, and a real understanding of their responses took place, the end result could be a bigger or better sale, resulting in a greater

dividend to the company and client. But let's say after listening, the result was a good solution for them and NOT as much money for you or perhaps not a sale right then. Is that a loss, really? Or have you earned the client's trust?

Start doing business for the sake of the customer. Today, the customer has little tolerance for gimmicks or sales pitches. So, incorporating a comprehensive needs-assessment process into sales training and ultimately, the sales process is a strategy for success, and will earn customers for life. **SSE**

Robert B. Withers is a speaker, coach, sales strategist, president of Withers & Company and trusted advisor to clients. Email rwithers@withersco.com.

ACTION: Start listening to your customers.

Meaning of Stories

Marketers can learn five things.



by Jim Signorelli

STORIES ARE POWER TOOLS IN our communication arsenal. Since the beginning of language, they continue to inspire, motivate and engage us like no other form of communication can. There are good reasons for this. And some of those reasons provide lessons for marketers. Here are five worth noting:

1. Stories clothe facts with Big M-Meaning: All stories have meaning or some reason for being told. Consider this story: The young athlete who trained by doing 100 leg squats every day ended up winning the marathon. In effect, this is a story about the functional benefit of leg squats for runners. Now, consider this revision: The young athlete who trained by doing 100 leg squats every day ended up winning the marathon. He has a prosthetic leg.

The first story conveys *meaning* in the form of *useful information* (leg squats build running endurance). However, the second story is more inspirational. By contrast, it has *Meaning*—big-M Meaning. The additional 5-word sentence makes the second story about the same runner far more significant.

One key question marketers need to ask about their brand is whether it conveys *meaning* or *Meaning*. Facts about unique features and benefits may be useful, but are not *Meaningful*. To go for *Meaning*, brands have to associate with personal values like *exploration*, *determination*, *hard work*, or *ingenuity* just to mention a few. And if the communication of those values provokes an emotional response, all the better.

2. We are more drawn to stories that leave the meaning to us. Andrew Stanton, creator of *Toy Story* and *Wall-e*, refers to his “unifying theory of 2+2” as our desire to come to our own conclusions. We do not want to be told the answer is 4. We’d rather figure out the problem for ourselves. This is one of the principles of story that attracts us to them as a communication device. Movies, novels, poems or songs do not explain the meaning behind their messages. *Meaning* is left to *audience interpretation*.

This is very unlike much of what we see in advertising. Advertising often gets

in its own way when it sets out to convey *Meaning*. By telling us what values to associate with brands, or by telling us how to think about a given brand, we often resist or put up our protective BS shields. Consumers don’t need or want to be told your brand believes in caring about its customers or that your brand works hard for its money.

Taking a lesson from stories, it is far more engaging and believable to pull *Meaning* from the mind of the consumer than to push from the voice of the brand. Notice in the second story, there was no mention of what to think or feel. If you thought or felt anything about the winning marathon runner with the prosthetic leg, it was because of your interpretation, not mine. Storytellers cause you to see what you see,



but do little to cause the way you think or feel about what you see. Doing so would be like the comedian explaining the punch line of his joke.

3. Audiences gravitate to meaning that arouses identification. Another reason we’re drawn to stories is that they help us see ourselves. *Identification* is a story’s ability to help us feel recognized for who we are and what we value. Besides helping us realize that we are not alone, identification also helps us examine what may be *unconscious beliefs that motivate our behavior*.

Too often, brands that set out to create their identities ignore the benefits of creating identification. Creating a brand identity involves telling or purposefully positioning a brand to help consumers see what makes it different or better vis-a-vis alternatives. By contrast, creating brand identification is about helping the prospect relate to what the brand stands for, or its cause. It’s about helping prospects see that

your brand is for people like them. Creating a differentiated brand identity may influence buying. But creating strong brand identification will influence joining. It’s always better to have joiners than buyers. Joiners are the ones who stay buyers and wear your logos.

4. Storywriters don’t use focus groups to decide what their Meaning should be. Storywriters don’t manufacture meaning on the basis of what will sell to the greatest number of people. Rather, they start with an authentically held core belief that they want to share and express it in their own way.

Lack of authenticity is one reason why consumers have become cynical about advertising. Today’s consumer is just too smart to fall for forced intimacy. They know when you are trying too hard to fit into their lives. They want and need brands to be true to their own causes. And, if you think what you say or even imply about yourself is enough, think again. *Your brand’s truth will be revealed more through actions than advertising.* Trustworthy people don’t tell you they are trustworthy. And friendly people don’t put you on hold for 30 minutes. Use consumer research to compare expressions of *Meaning*, not to derive *Meaning*. *Meaning is an inside job.*

5. For great storywriters, Meaning is expressed in a similar fashion, from story to story. Best-selling books often consist of many narratives written by recognized authors. Having enjoyed their previous works, we clamor for their newest work. And we do this out of an affinity for both their interesting perspectives and their individualized expressions. We are not only drawn to messages they want us to read, but also to the way they consistently write them.

The reason some people will camp out in front of the Apple store the night before a new product launch is simple: The new product is from Apple. As their thinking goes, if it’s from Apple, it’s got to be something worth having.

Each new product Apple produces is recognizable linked to the one it updates. The new offering may provide improvements, but more importantly, it remains a continuance of Apple’s Big-M *Meaning*. Just as writers remain true to their voice, Apple, takes great pains to make sure its products deserve a rightful place within its family.

The parallels between *good stories* and *strong brands* are rich. SSE

Jim Signorelli is CEO of ESW Partners and author of StoryBranding: Creating Stand-Out Brands Through the Power of Story. Visit www.eswpartners.com.

ACTION: Apply these five lessons in marketing.

Smile, Name, Golf

Here are three ways to influence.



by Zig Ziglar

SMILE. TO SMILE IS TO LOOK joyous, to have an appearance to excite joy; to contract the features of the face so as to express pleasure, joy, or love and kindness. The first thing we notice when we meet a person is the smile—or absence of smile—on their face. A favorite compliment is, “You have a beautiful smile.”

Few things yield more influence for the good and give more encouragement than a sincere smile. Henry Miller said, “There is power in a smile.” Joseph Addison said, “What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. The good they do is inconceivable.”

In one study conducted at Yale Univ., researchers tested the appearance, personality and attitudes of people and their influence on others over time. They discovered that a smile is the single most powerful force of influence. That’s good news, since all of us can generate enough energy for a smile.

A smile is a “little curve that sets a lot of things straight.” If you see someone who does not have a smile, you should give them one of yours. However, you must do more than smile to have a long-term impact and influence on other people. So, after you gain favorable attention with a pleasant smile, you must communicate with sincerity and honesty who and what you are.

Name. When I sign books, I include the name of the person who buys the book. What difference does a name make? A big difference! The Bible says, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.” I agree. Every year in Yazoo City, Mississippi, we have our family reunion. My wife and I usually fly to Jackson, rent a car and drive to Yazoo City. Since it’s difficult to fly “home cookin’” to the reunion, we stop at a store and purchase our food.

One year we bought a smoked ham, smoked turkey and some canned soft drinks. My wife wrote a check for the food and pulled out two credit cards and her driver’s license, saying, “I imagine you will want to see these.”

The cashier looked at the check and said, “No. In Yazoo City, the name Ziglar is all the ID we need.” Since I’d been gone over 40 years—she wasn’t talking about me but about my mother,

who was educated to the fifth grade and widowed during the great depression with 11 children, six of whom were too young to work. She built a reputation for integrity that enabled her, even in the declining years of her life, to go to the bank and borrow tidy sums of money on her signature. The bankers knew that if she signed her name to a note, the loan would be repaid.

I resolved to leave my children something of real value—a good name—so they could enjoy the benefits that have been mine because of my mother.

The chief cause of failure and unhappiness is trading what you want most for what you want now. My mother never made that trade. Live with integrity; make your word your bond and your name your badge of honor!

Golf. Imagine that it’s Friday afternoon, and you’re exhausted. Your

sales numbers are down and customer complaints are up. You stagger in the front door to be greeted by your enthusiastic wife who reminds you that *today is the day that you’re cleaning the garage.*

You protest that you’re tired and that you just don’t have the energy.

At that moment, the telephone rings. You mutter “Hello.” The voice at the other end is your golfing buddy. He tells you that he has a tee time at the country club in 30 minutes. You assure him that *you can make it.* Where did that sudden burst of energy come from?

To make more sales and have more positive influence, smile more, make your name your badge of honor, and act as if you’re always going golfing. **SSE**

Zig Ziglar, aka America’s motivator, is the author of 30 books, including Born to Win. Visit www.Ziglar.com.

ACTION: Influence others for good.

SALES/LEADS

Bumper Crop

Plant plenty of seeds.



by Howard Partridge

AFARMER WENT TO SOW HIS good seed. Along the way, he got distracted by the other farmers who said his seed would not grow. “Don’t plant. It doesn’t work. We tried it. It didn’t work for us.”

After seeing his discouraged friends, he realized that his equipment needed work, so he worked with his tools for a while. Then considered all the ways he could plant seed, assessing what worked. Soon, he recalled that he had to do some things around the house and then pick up his kids from school. So, he planted no seed today. “Maybe tomorrow.”

The next day, he avoided all distractions but as he started to plant some seed, he noticed that *the soil was not prepared.* So, he worked the day on that.

The next day he intended to plant the seed, but he had corn in another field that was about to go bad. So, he spent the day harvesting corn. The problem was that the core was small—barely enough to get by on.

Things went like this for months. He planted a few seeds here and there. A plant or two came up, *but still no crop.*

What is this farmer doing wrong? His mistakes are many. First, he was distracted by all kinds of activities. His seed was not the best seed around. The

soil was the wrong soil. He forgot to nurture the little bit of crop he had.

This farmer is like many sales and marketing professionals—we expect to get a good crop without consistently planting good seed in good soil.

Seeds = Leads. How many do you need? When it comes to marketing your business, the seed is your message (your story, presentation, ad). The soil is the audience—the prospect (those who need your service or know people who do).

There are only two ways to get seed in the ground: 1) pay someone else to plant the seed (pay for ads or sales);

2) plant the seed yourself. **If you aren’t getting enough leads, you aren’t planting enough seeds—or you’re planting in the wrong soil!**

Some people plant the wrong seed (wrong message), but those who have a good message simply don’t get it out to enough people. When **net-working**, you have to make a lot of contacts at first and plant plenty of seed.

Determine how many new customers you need. Then estimate how many seeds you need to plant. Of course, you can’t know in advance how many seeds will sprout. So if you need a lot of sales, you need to plant a lot of seed. Most salespeople **dramatically underestimate how many seeds they need to plant** (how much networking they need to do).

Network effectively to grow your business. Remember: **Successful people DO what unsuccessful people won’t do.** **SSE**

Howard Partridge is author of 7 Secrets of a Phenomenal Life! Visit www.howardpartridge.com.

ACTION: Harvest a bumper crop this year.

Grow or Die Lie

Adopt six enlightening truths.



by Ed Hess

FOR DECADES, MANAGERS have boldly followed what they think they know about business growth. And for decades, they've folded under the pressures of improperly managed growth. I debunk some popular myths about growth to help you grow your business successfully.

You've oft heard the mantras: *All growth is good. Bigger is better. All businesses must either grow or die.* You may even agree with each one. After all, it's what you've been taught. In fact, these axioms are routinely lauded on Wall Street, at business schools, and by many respected consultants. Few question their validity. I do! At best, these beliefs are *half-truths* and at worst they're *pure fiction*. Growth can be good and bad. Bigger can be good and bad.

The *grow or die* belief has no basis in research or reality. When not approached carefully, growth can destroy value as it outstrips managerial capacity, processes, quality, and financial controls, or dilutes customer value propositions.

I present a framework for how to approach business development—and manage its risks and pace—exploring when the time is right to grow, how to do it, and how to manage the reality that *growth requires the right leadership, culture, processes, controls, and people.*

To see the downside of growth, look at well-known public companies. Between 2005-07, *Starbucks* aggressively opened new store locations and made operational changes that diluted its customer value proposition, diluted its high-engagement culture, violated its real estate site selection controls, and weakened its *high value-added experience* business model. *Toyota's* quality issues leading to multiple recalls resulted from too much growth too quickly.

In my study of 54 high-growth companies, I learned that several successful owners were repeat entrepreneurs who had *imploded* their first business with *too much growth too quickly*, overwhelming people, processes, and controls. In their second venture, they *paced growth*.

I call this the *gas pedal* approach to managing growth—*let up on the growth gas pedal as needed to give your people, processes, and controls time to catch up.*

Instead of *grow or die*, be motivated by this motto: *Improve or die.* You must continually improve the customer value proposition to stay viable.

Here are six truths about growth:

1. Growth is change (and change isn't easy). There are limits to your ability to process change. Growth requires you to install more *processes, procedures, controls, and measurement systems* and to teach them to employees.

Also, the right information needs to reach the manager regarding variances from processes and controls so mistakes can be fixed quickly and do not escalate. Growth also requires that you change what you do. *Sustainable growth* requires the right leadership and culture.

2. Growth is evolutionary—tough decisions are needed to keep up. Growth requires the evolution of the management team and more sophisticated processes and controls. Often, the *business model* and *customer value proposition* evolve, too, continuously. Anticipating and responding to it can require making dramatic—and difficult—changes. You may need to upgrade the management team, if managers who operate effectively at one revenue level can't manage effectively at a higher revenue level. The jobs outgrow their skills.

3. Growth requires continuous learning and improvement. You must be constantly open to learning and adapting and improving in an incremental, iterative, and experimental manner. No matter how big you get or want to get, *continuous improvement is required.* All organic growth companies focus on *being better.* It underpins every growth initiative whether it is top-line, bottom-line, or developing new concepts. *Continuous improvement is the DNA of growth.* Improving your product/service, how you deliver it to your customers, and every customer touch point is necessary to grow the business. Continuous improvements lead to more *loyal customers* who can be *your best advertising.*

4. Growth requires disciplined focus and prioritization. You must strategically focus the business on a compelling differentiating customer value

proposition and achieve daily operational excellence and consistency. Since you have limited resources and time, *you must prioritize the focus.* Any growing business has resource constraints: limited people, time, and capital. So, you need to spend your time on the few areas that drive success. These priorities may vary with the type of business or the phase of growth. To set priorities, you need useful data about the business, communicate the priorities to your people, and implement processes to ensure that these priorities are carried out.

5. Growth is process-intensive. Processes are the step-by-step instructions for *how to do a task.* They are necessary

to hire employees and train them, to minimize mistakes and institutionalize quality standards, and to deliver products and services on time, 99 percent defect-free. *Controls* are necessary to set boundaries on allowable behavior and alert management to deviations from processes.

6. Growth creates business risks that must be managed. *Growth stresses*

people, processes, quality controls, and financial controls. Growth can dilute the culture and customer value proposition and put the business in a different competitive space. *Knowing these risks is vital to managing the pace of growth and preventing growth from overwhelming the business.* To get a better handle on growth risks, consider how your strategic space will change as you get bigger. You'll likely enter *new competitive space*, facing bigger/better competitors who may be better capitalized and engage in price wars, driving down your margins.

You can minimize risk by planning for growth, pacing growth, and prioritizing what controls and processes you need before taking on growth. I call it *what can go wrong* thinking. Aggressive, untimely, or poorly managed growth can destroy value and lead to failure. Don't make *growth for growth's sake* your goal. If not properly managed, growth can undermine business strengths.

Consider whether you have the right people, processes, and controls in place to manage the growth and take your business to greater heights. SSE

Edward D. Hess is author of Grow to Greatness (Stanford Univ. Press) and Smart Growth (Columbia BSP). He is professor of business administration and Batten Executive-in-Residence at the Darden Graduate School of Business, University of Virginia. Visit www.EDHLTD.com.

ACTION: Use this framework for growth.



Pitch Your Product

5 Steps to the Apple Store way.



by Carmine Gallo

WALK INTO ANY APPLE Retail Store, and you'll be greeted by a nice, friendly employee who'll ask you questions and point you in the right direction. It's the first of *five steps* on a *credo card* that employees are given on their first day.

Make sure *every member of your staff* follows these steps in *every interaction*. They're coded in the acronym APPLE:

1. Approach warmly. Greet customers with a personalized, warm welcome. Customers who are greeted warmly within 10 feet or 10 seconds of entering a store perceive their wait time to be shorter and are more inclined to say they had a great experience. Also, they are more likely to recommend the store and its products to friends and family. Ensure *customers are greeted* by a friendly face that makes eye contact, uses a customer's name, and is committed to creating a personalized and meaningful experience. This makes sense in digital interactions as well. When you ignore customer complaints on Twitter, you miss a chance to deepen the brand relationship with prospects/customers.

2. Probe politely to understand all of the customer's needs. Apple Store employees ask many questions. Early in the Apple Store history, executives learned that *former teachers make the best salespeople* because they ask both closed- and open-ended questions to find the product that *best suits the customers' needs*. Open-ended questions include: "What brings you in today?" or "What will you be using this computer for?" Closed questions are more specific and often elicit a yes or no response: "Will you be using the iPad to take video or store photographs?"

3. Present a solution for customers to take home today. Apple employees present such a *solution*. It need not be a new product. It might be something that enhances the customers' relationship with the brand. For example, a customer who isn't sure about buying an iPad might be encouraged to sign up for a free class. In a restaurant, rather than tell customers, "Sorry, we're full tonight," an employee might say: "Since that great review ran in the newspaper, we're booked three days out. However, we have a fantastic new

dessert menu. I can offer a complimentary dessert for you and a guest. May I schedule a reservation next week?"

4. Listen carefully for unspoken concerns and resolve any issues. For example, a customer who is new to Macs might be concerned about learning a new operating system. A specialist might say, "Don't worry about learning something new. The Mac is simple and intuitive. I just started using a Mac two years ago, and now I work on the sales floor." Specialists take special care with PC customers who have never owned a Mac. They slow down the pace of the conversation, speak in simple terms, and demonstrate ease and confidence in their tone, manner, and body language.

5. End with a fond farewell and an invitation to return. Apple sees a direct

correlation between *how people feel when they leave the store and how likely they are to return to recommend the experience*.

Make your customers feel special and give them a reason to return. For example, you might end the conversation like this: "Doris, I can't wait to see the first photo album you create on your new Mac. Please bring in the album—I'd love to see it." Doris might not do it, but she'll remember the invitation to return.

These five steps of service build a customer for life. Customers will reward you with their wallet and loyalty if you make them feel *appreciated, confident, and happy* when they walk in and out. **SSE**

Carmine Gallo is a keynote speaker and author of The Apple Experience. Visit www.appleexperiencebook.com or email carmine@gallocommunications.com.

ACTION: Try taking these five service steps.

SALES/PITCH

Ditch the Pitch

Shift from features to results.



by Joanne Black

WHAT ARE YOUR PROSPECTS and clients *thinking* as you are making your sales pitch? "I don't care about *you*. I only care about *what you can do for me, my team, and organization*." I assure you—that's what they are thinking, even though it's probably not what they are saying (at least not to your face).

Your clients don't care about you—they care about what you deliver. Top salespeople deliver *true business ROI* (since that's what clients care most about). Do you?

Standard Sales Response

When salespeople tell me about their companies and what they do, and why I should work with them, ***why do they talk in these terms: We are experienced. We are professional. We've been in business for 25 years. We have long support hours. We are local to you. We have multiple industry awards. We understand your business. We do all we can to help you succeed. We provide solutions that help your company grow. We do business with integrity and commitment. We volunteer in the community. We take out the guesswork and leave you more time to run your business. We take the time to listen to your goals. We are your one-stop shop.***

These are all exact quotes from my clients—before we worked together to build a *referral-sales organization*. The common word in these responses is *We*.



Drop the 'We' Perspective

Is your sales pitch rife with *We* and *Me*—personal pronouns that shout "*this is all about us—not about you, the client?*" Clients don't need to know more about *your* experience, or *your* expertise, or what *you* think. Clients want measurable, positive results for *their* business.

So, change the way you talk about what your company offers—whether it's products or services. Ditch the pitch and shift your sales perspective. *Differentiate yourself* from your competition. Frame your answer to the question, *Why should I buy from or work with you?* from the customer's perspective. What business results do you deliver? What's the impact of your solution? Here's your litmus test: If you can say "so what" after your statements in your sales pitch, you haven't described a business result.

Work with a colleague and keep saying *so what* until you can't say *so what* any more. That's when you'll have the answer that your sales prospects and clients really want to hear. This is hard work, but if you leave it to your prospects to figure out what they'll get from your solution, you will have already lost the deal to the competition.

Learn how to *position, set, and deliver your sales value* in your sales pitch—*seal the deal with real-life results*. Remember: it's not about *you*. Identify your big *So What?* Challenge—and resolve it. Talk in terms that convince your clients that *you care about them and solving their problems* with your products/services. **SSE**

Joanne Black is the founder of No More Cold Calling. Visit www.nomorecoldcalling.com.

ACTION: Drop the we perspective in your pitch.

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