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Break out of your comfort zone to achieve better results

Denver Business Journal - by [Garry Duncan](#)

The thesaurus offers "happy," "easy," "secure" and "relaxing" as alternatives for the word "comfortable."

We like being comfortable in our jobs. It gives us confidence and reduces stress. Therefore, we become stuck in our comfort zone, doing things the same way and becoming complacent.

It's ironic that while comfort is a goal many of us work hard to achieve, comfort and complacency are the enemy of consistent selling success.

Sales success means doing things that other people aren't willing to do. Top sellers who consistently excel aren't married to their comfort zones.

The question is, "Are you willing to leave yours, and how often?" Leaving your comfort zone means taking some degree of risk, and risk means change. Organizations are full of fading stars resistant to new and changing demands of the market.

First understand that leaving your comfort zone is going to feel uncomfortable. Comfort and pleasure are closely related. This attachment to comfort is like an addiction, because the less often we experience discomfort, the less tolerance we have for it.

Comfort creates a pattern of avoidance. Prospecting is a great example. For those who avoid prospecting, it becomes increasingly uncomfortable with time. Those who do it regularly may not like it, but are more comfortable doing it.

How do you step out of your comfort zone?

- You must be confident. Know that you can accomplish anything with the right attitude and effort. Every day, remind yourself about what you did well and summarize your accomplishments for that day, regardless of how small.

Nothing builds confidence better than accomplishing something. Doing something for someone else is an easy and quick way to accomplish something and feel good about yourself.

Surround yourself with inspiration by reading great biographies and stories about others who overcame great odds. Learn from their efforts and mistakes. Stay away from negative people. Positive people build confidence by finding the unseen benefit in disappointment, reducing the

pain of loss.

- Get in the habit of doing things that you do not find easy. Identify three or four things about selling that make you uncomfortable. Pick one and take the first step. Remember, ideas are a dime a dozen -- but action is priceless.

Your first step can be small. One seller always hit the edge of her comfort zone when negotiating pricing. Her first small step was to raise the floor of the profit margin she was willing to accept by two percentage points. Within a few weeks, she raised her minimum acceptable profit margin by seven percentage points.

- Understand that taking risk is really about safety. Selling isn't about physical safety, but rather intellectual, financial or relationship safety. The subconscious mind views things through this filter of safety. It asks itself, "If I do this, will I be safe? Will I sound uninformed? Will this cost me the sale? Will I lose this relationship?"

The mind compiles the answer by reviewing previous experiences as a gauge. When you keep repeating things you want to change, it's probably because your mind still is telling you it's "safe" to do it the old way.

The subconscious overrides behavior because it prefers comfort and safety of the known. Studies report most people would rather keep their own comfortable problems than trade them for the problems of others, even if the new problems are less significant.

In reality, you can't be sure new actions are going to be better than old ones. It takes courage to move forward and grow. Even if the potential is there for more money, success, promotion or happiness, the guarantee isn't.

Evaluate risk by considering not only the best-case scenario (the gain) but also the worst-case one. If you can't live with the worst case, don't take the risk. Should you find yourself stuck in a rut, remember this: You'll appreciate comfort more if you first deny yourself a little, so put away the self-pity and take a little risk.

- Develop an abundance mentality and a full sales funnel. You can't take risk without giving up something.

Investment always precedes return. Knowing there are other opportunities and chances for goal achievement reduces the perception of risk. The more opportunities in your sales funnel, the easier it is to take risk. When only a few opportunities exist in your funnel, your subconscious wants to protect them and could inhibit your taking the right actions.

So where and when are you going to resolve to be uncomfortable? Is it making contacts, standing on your price, asking for a referral, asking that tough question, confronting that stall or asking for a decision?

After you take action, problems seem smaller than before, and you have the experience of successfully breaking out of your comfort zone.

The next time you have a difficult task ahead, don't let the fear of the unknown be the controlling factor.

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