

Master the Five Principles of Growing Sales Now!

Two Wolves

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all."

"One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

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303.462.1277



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1

Attitude, Confidence, Courage, and Adventure

Confidence, conviction, resilience, goal orientation, and other terms that describe a good attitude are numerous, and it is inevitable that even the best salespeople or sales team will experience one of them and slip into self-doubt or a slump. Arnold Palmer's father said, "Whatever game you play, ninety percent of success is from the shoulders up." Sales are often considered a numbers game. To some degree that is true but more than a numbers game it is a head game. Selling is largely conceptual and in this author's opinion attitude is the most important.

You might not be responsible for events that bring you down, but it is your responsibility to bring, and keep yourself up. If confidence weakens, you must do something to address it. If you are managing others, you must give encouragement and strokes for the small successes they do achieve. Here are some things you can do to ensure you or your team stays strong:

1. Get an accountability partner to touch base with everyday. Share activity goals and reward each other for those little day-to-day successes, be it getting a difficult appointment, making a specific number of new contacts etc.
2. Talk it out with someone who can objectively review events related to your sales. Because we are emotionally involved with our business, it is difficult to self analyze and clearly see events.
3. Be aware of your self-talk. You know that little radio station that plays in your mind and says things like, "What were you thinking? Maybe you are in the wrong profession. You could do better in a different industry. Selling is not a great job, etc." Remember, if you tell yourself something long enough you will start to believe it regardless if it is true or not. The mind is like computer software. You have to program it. When the radio starts with all the negativity, ask yourself, "What is the evidence?" Change the self talk to positive present tense self talk. For instance, say, "I am good at my job and I am on the road to closing more business!"

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4. Journal at least 3 or 4 times a week. Journaling keeps you in touch with your real self and that is where you will be most productive. Start journaling by writing down everything that upsets you first. Then write everything down for which you have reason to be appreciative. Next write positive self-talk thoughts and one or two positive things you are doing in the next day or two.
5. Make humor your constant companion; learn to laugh at yourself and the world.
6. Understand that risk involves some loss. You cannot get to second base with one foot on first. Every baseball fan knows Ty Cobb held the record of 96 out of 134 attempts in one season. But who was Max Carey? Max Carey was successful stealing second base an amazing 96 percent. But he only attempted 51 times. Get in the game and try more.
7. Understand courage and be courageous. Be an adventurer. Successful people usually are not any more courageous than the rest of us. They just use their existing courage a little longer. They are stronger five more minutes on a call to ask the tough question. They spend five more minutes a day making new contacts.
8. Separate who you are from what you do. Selling is just one more activity in life that people take upon themselves. Realistically you cannot sell everyone. Realistically you cannot golf par every game. Understand you are not a bad person because you made a bad sales call.
9. Build a personal fuzzy file and visit it often. Remind yourself about past successes. This is anchoring. Revisiting past success before calls reestablishes confidence and customers buy confidence.
10. Do lessons learned every call. Take a few minutes and revisit what went well and what you would want to be different or should have done differently. Write it down so that your mind will remember it longer and be more likely to use it next time.

Maintaining the right attitude is so important, no manager or company should keep any seller who is not resilient and capable of working to maintain a positive attitude. And every seller should avoid whining and look for new ways to make sales. Nothing can help someone with the wrong attitude, but no one can stop someone with the right attitude.



2

Ideas are a dime a dozen, but action is priceless!

Keep the axiom, "Ideas are a dime a dozen, but action is priceless," in the front of your mind at all times. Write it where you can see it several times a day. Every seller and manager must recognize and accept that more effort will be required in the coming months. A good rule of thumb is to try to double your sales activity. Make twice as many prospecting calls, ask for twice as many referrals, ask more questions, and participate in twice as many networking events. Shoot for twice as many appointments. Don't fall into the trap, however, of just doing twice as many proposals and presentations. Remember that you are increasing activity to find more prospects that are qualified. Don't waste resources giving proposals and presentations to buyers who are not ready to buy. Dramatically increasing activity means you must get organized, set priorities and stop letting email and other distractions manage your day. It also means that you spend time making contact with your universe of prospects when they are generally available even if you must do administrative work, proposals and record keeping at night or at other non-productive times. You will reap two major benefits. First, you will have greater success and behavior improves attitudes. It is like working out. You may not want to do it, but you always feel better afterwards.

Regardless of how good you are, market conditions will reduce most sellers' closing percentage. Do this exercise:

AVERAGE ORDER SIZE

- Take the total revenue YTD _____ = $\frac{\text{total \# of order/clients YTD}}{\text{(a) average order / client size}}$
- Take last year's Sales Goal _____ = $\frac{\text{total (a) Average order size}}{\text{(b) \# of orders / clients needed to achieve goal in one year}}$

What is your estimated closing percentage? (National average is about 20% yours will most likely be higher.)

If your closing percentage is 35%, you will need approximately three times as many prospects in your funnel as you need to meet your goals based on your estimated closing percentage.

BUT, in a recession, you will probably need EVEN more prospective clients in your funnel because your closing percentage may drop to 25% through no fault of your own. What are the revised numbers you need in your funnel?



Top Players Only



You must bring your A-Game. Nothing less will do. It is not business as usual.

Do not go the extra mile on behavior, bring a great attitude, and risk failure with weak skills. It is survival of the fittest in tougher times. Great athletes watch game tapes to get better. Likewise, every seller should pre-brief and debrief sales calls. Work on every single step of your sales process and selling tools. Strengthen existing relationships with appreciation, added value, and honest and direct communication. Don't assume your relationship will keep the business. Many decision makers will have little choice but to cut costs, so have those discussions before it is too late to reverse their decisions. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Gain real evidence of stated needs and identify decision criteria as clearly as possible. Be thorough in qualifying budgets and decision processes. Sharpen those presentation skills so your presentation has stickiness, and will be more memorable to separate you from competitors. Bring value and credibility by knowing your customer's business and market place as much as possible.

Run this exercise: List the steps of your sales process:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. Etc.

Now consider, does your process include identifying who ALL the decision makers are?

Does your process provide for obtaining evidence of the likelihood of the prospect taking action? Have you discussed their ability and willingness to pay your pricing structure? Have you answered these questions BEFORE doing a proposal, quote, or presentation? If not, how will you change your process?

How good are you at handling these objections?

- We have put this on the back burner.
- We have no budget.
- We are no longer able to fund this.
- Your competitor is less money.

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Hint: Seek first to understand before seeking to be understood. What questions can you ask to clarify or diffuse these statements?

What can you do to refresh and sharpen your skills? Professional athletes do it. Doctors, engineers and other professionals do it. What can you do? What books can you read? What courses can you take? What trainings can benefit you? What NEW skills could you obtain? A-Game, attitude and activity should be the mantra for everyone and every team who wants to be successful now.



Awesome Account Management

Just as good business sense mandates conserving cash and minimizing expenses, averting lost customers by minimizing competitive activity on existing customers is a must.

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Even though customers most often say the reason they leave is because of cost, third party research shows the following:

- 1. 66% of accounts leave their current vendor because of lack of appreciation**
- 2. Less than 18% leave because of cost even though that is the reason given**

Ensure you are expressing and showing with action your appreciation of their business.

- Are you clear on your current relationship with your customer? Ask your customers what their expectations are of you and your company. Do not take vague, "You are doing just fine." answers. Gently probe and uncover specific expectations about deliveries, placing orders, handling billing issues and mistakes. How can you make your client look good? Ask how often they expect to see you without being a pest. Ask key accounts what they want you to keep doing; what you are doing you that you should stop doing, and what you are not doing that you should start doing? One seller discovered that the buyer actually felt annoyed being contacted in person every week and preferred personal visits be interspersed with phone calls and emails.
- Prepare questions about new needs for new products or additional uses of existing products. Inquire about problems and concerns, because things continually change. Ask about other users in the organization and become a virus, spreading your knowledge, and broadening your contacts and relationships within the organization.
- Asking if there are any problems that may stimulate a canned non-thinking answer. Asking, "What will it take to lose the business?" will stimulate thought and is more likely to generate discussion. A good account is likely on the radar screen of your competitors. It is better to have these discussions before a customer makes a decision to change, than try to reverse a decision they feel the need to defend. Continue to coach them on the differences and benefits of your product over the competitors even when you have the business and stay informed of new competitor initiatives and products. The old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." is sage advice here.

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- Regardless of the quality of your product or service, mistakes and problems can occur. When a problem or mistake happens, have you coached the customer how to handle it? Do you have a backup contact for your customer if you are not available? When you are not available who is your backup, and does your customer know them? Knowing key people in a smaller vendor can provide security when decision makers have to choose between a large known company and a smaller company.



Activate Active Listening

Pay Close Attention to What Customers Are Saying

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Talk to your clients and really listen to what they are saying. Market changes force internal changes in many clients. Clients change strategy, change personnel, and change offerings to name a few things. Information is king. Wars were fought and won in the past by soldiers fighting on their belly. Currently, wars are won by the amount and accuracy of intelligence gained. Selling has changed too. In the past sales were often won by giving the best presentation and giving the best information. Now sellers win sales base on the amount of information they gain. Think about that. How many sales did you lose because you had incomplete information on needs, decision processes, competitive activity, or a myriad of other reasons?

What should you be asking clients? Here are some to start your thinking. Compile a list and update it often.

- What are your challenges? How can we help? Listen!
- What are your goals? How can we help? Listen!
- What are our competitors telling you? Don't defend. Listen!
- What are we not doing we should be doing? Listen!
- What are we doing you like? Listen!
- What are the changes you expect in your industry? Listen!
- What are the changes you expect in your company? Listen!
- What changes would you like to see in:

Our product | Our service | Our billing | Our personnel | Other?

Customers often hesitate sharing negative information whether related to a vendor, the industry or their own company. Listen carefully. Clarify all statements and answers.

Use phrases like, "Say more, can you explain that? Could you expand on that? You feel that way because...? Could you be more specific? Etc." Classic listening tools are:

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Stamping Stamping is acknowledgement such as nodding your head, not interrupting and saying things like, “I hear you or I understand.”

Paraphrasing Paraphrasing is simply rephrasing into different words what the customer has said. By doing so, they know you heard them and paraphrasing often provokes customers to say more or correct and clarify your feedback

Parroting Parroting is simply repeating back what the customer has said, word for word, but using only the last few words or phrase.

By following the ***Five Sales Strategies to Fuel Revenue Now*** you can ensure you and your team stays strong.



About Leadership Connections:

Leadership Connections, Inc. (LCI) knows the consultative sale. LCI also knows that consultative selling requires leadership. Our mission is to grow your people and your revenue by developing the selling, and leadership skills in all levels of your business development team: the sellers, the managers, and the sales support teams. LCI coaches and trains confidence, selling skills, sales process, sense of mission, action plans, communication, and leadership.

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