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101 Ways to Succeed in Selling by Greg Gore
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101 ways to succeed in selling

“Everyone lives by selling something.”
—Robert Louis Stevenson

greg gore

About the Book

One common denominator of successful people is that they know how to sell themselves. In this brief, to-the-point book, you'll learn 101 ways to be successful in selling yourself, a product, service, or an idea.

The ideas, methods and techniques presented are so easy to apply you can start using them today. And, they're so effective you'll want to continue to use them for a lifetime.

101 ways to succeed in selling is small enough to keep in your briefcase or on your desk. Review the ideas often and apply them at every opportunity. Remember, the ideas will only work when you apply them.

About the Author

In a sales career spanning more than thirty years and fifteen thousand sales calls, Greg Gore has sold a wide range of products and services. After being successful selling household products door-to-door as a college student, he decided to make sales his career. He went on to sell textbooks, technical seminars, and software programming for advanced weapons systems. Along the way, he was national training director for a direct selling company where he trained thousands of sales representatives.

Greg Gore has written this book with the hope that others will be able to benefit from the lessons he learned during his career as a sales representative, sales manager, and sales trainer. In short, in *101 ways to succeed in selling*, Greg Gore gives you the best of thirty years of sales experience distilled into a small gem of a book.

101 ways to succeed in selling

greg gore

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CONTENTS

Prologue	4
Part One: Personal Qualities	5
Character	5
Attitude	6
Self-discipline	8
Part Two: Selling Skills	11
Planning and Focus	11
Prospecting	12
Leveraging Your Referrals	12
Cold Calling	15
The Telephone	16
The Internet	17
Building Rapport	18
Presenting	21
Closing and Handling Objections	24
After the Sale	28
Part Three: Life Skills	30
Epilogue	32

PROLOGUE

Over my thirty year selling career, I have read, re-read and studied dozens of books on “how to succeed in selling.” While many of these books admirably cover the what, where, why, and how of selling, they do not discuss the essence of success in selling.

What do I mean by essence? Consider that a sales representative can do and say everything recommended by these authors and yet fail where the authors succeeded. Why? Because the “essence” of what made these authors sales superstars is not revealed in their books.

Essence is our fundamental nature or who we are as human beings. This book is based on the premise that personal qualities (our essence) are the foundation for success in sales. Part One therefore discusses the personal qualities of character, attitude, and self-discipline. These qualities separate the truly “successful” from the “also-ran.”

Part Two covers selling skills with emphasis on building rapport and trust. I have included ways to be vulnerable, because vulnerability is one of the least documented, yet most important, pillars of building rapport.

Lastly, Part Three discusses life skills—achieving happiness and fulfillment in life along with success.

Some of the specific ideas presented will be new to you, some you may have read or heard before and forgotten, and some you will already be doing. If any of the ideas in *101 ways to succeed in selling* lead you to new heights of accomplishment then the book will have achieved its purpose.

I hope you will keep me informed of your progress by emailing me at gvg@ccil.org.

Part One: PERSONAL QUALITIES

CHARACTER

1. Be Honest and Ethical

“I would rather be the man who bought the Brooklyn Bridge than the man who sold it.”

—Will Rogers

Being honest and ethical is good for your customer, good for your organization, and perhaps most of all, good for you. Knowing that you are and have been honest and ethical with those with whom you deal makes you feel good about yourself. Don't let the temptation of any short-term gains by being dishonest or unethical ruin the chance of any long-term relationship with others.

2. Have Integrity

Having integrity means being whole—that is, being the same person on the inside as on the outside. Integrity is being truthful to yourself and others about your values and beliefs. In sales terms, when you have integrity, you believe in yourself, you believe in your organization, and you believe in the product or service you are selling. With integrity, your life is in total alignment with your values. You find that being in sales is natural and that you have inner motivation because your work is a reflection of the true “you.” You cannot “fake” integrity. Who you are as a person always speaks louder than anything you say.

3. Use Competitors to Reach Higher Levels of Success

Competition builds character. Until challenged, we often think we are doing our best. Our competitors' efforts give us the impetus to do better. Through competition we discover reserves we did not know we had. Even though we may finish a competition behind others, we may well find that we have produced results that are our personal best.

ATTITUDE

4. Be Proud of Your Profession

“Every calling is great when greatly pursued.”

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Being in sales is a career of service. Our whole society is built on the idea of service. The major religions of the world teach that we are here to serve others. We can and do make a difference in peoples’ lives.

5. Take Responsibility for Your Own Success

You will be as successful as you decide to be. Tempting as it is to talk about what others (your organization, your boss, your colleagues) should be doing or should have done, start viewing goals, problems, and obstacles from the inside out rather than from the outside in. If you do your best with honesty and integrity you are already successful. In the end, failure is self-inflicted and success is self-bestowed.

6. Dehypnotize Yourself

We’ve all witnessed or heard about stage hypnotist acts. Once hypnotized, the audience volunteer is able to perform remarkable feats such as lifting great weights or holding arms outstretched for long periods of time at the suggestion of the hypnotist. What we forget is that the person already had the capability to perform those feats. So, in a very real sense, a hypnotist really dehypnotizes us. He or she puts us back in touch with our true self. Our capabilities are masked by fears or restrictions we or others consciously or subconsciously place on us. Limitations are self-imposed. Do not accept them. Dehypnotize yourself through a program of positive affirmations: “I am successful!” “Today is a great day!” “I am confident, poised, and relaxed!” “I hold only good thoughts in my mind!”

7. Use Visualization

Visualization is a powerful success tool. Visualization goes beyond the affirmations of thinking and feeling you are successful to actually “seeing” yourself being successful. To be truly effective, visualization should en-

compass multiple senses—touch, feeling, taste, hearing, and sight. “Sensing” the result firmly anchors it in our minds. When the result is firmly anchored in our minds, we have literally created the future.

8. Stay Busy

Just staying productively busy provides a tremendous psychological edge. You feel better about yourself, your career, and your life.

9. Use Your Product or Service

When you use the product or service you are selling, you personalize its benefits and you re-ignite your own passion for your product or service. Moreover, you build customer credibility by being able to cite your own personal experiences with your product or service.

10. Keep Your Attitude Above Your Knowledge

As we start something new, our attitude is usually above our skill level. As we progress in the new skill, the natural tendency seems to be that our attitude starts to decline. We must work to maintain a consistently high attitude and we can begin by making a decision—a decision to always keep our attitude above our skill level.

11. Break-Out of Your Comfort Zone

We can only climb by grabbing the branches, not the flowers. You find out what you are capable of doing by pushing yourself beyond what you have done in the past. Train your mind to think, “Here’s how this can be done,” instead of, “Here’s why that won’t work.”

12. Don’t Take Rejection Personally

If you believe in yourself, your organization, and your product or service, then you’ll see a prospect’s, “No,” as a loss to the prospect rather than as a personal rejection. According to the law of averages, each, “No,” puts you one call closer to another, “Yes.”

13. Be Thankful for Difficult Times

Sales has ups and downs. Recognize that the downs provide opportunities for significant growth. Every sales call—regardless of outcome—is a source of feedback and greater self-knowledge. Accept the downs as a test of your inner strength and as a challenge to make a victory of your experience. You have a choice of action and you can make a decision not to be discouraged and not to quit when you face difficult times. Such a victory is the best kind of victory—a victory of perseverance and will.

14. Be Patient

“The greatest power is often simple patience.”

—E. Joseph Cossman

The sales process takes time. New sales reps many times push too hard to close sales now. This can—and usually does—backfire. Often we just need time in order for things to happen. Understanding that progress can be slow need not dampen our enthusiasm. Indeed, patience is a virtue. We must remember that we don't get the dividend before the investment, or the harvest before the seed is planted. Just as an investment of one thousand dollars per year compounded at eight percent interest will produce almost half a million dollars in forty years, an investment of time, money, and effort plus patience will enable us to be successful. Think of patience as an equal partner with your other resources. By applying the principle of compound interest to all of your efforts, you will reap huge dividends.

15. Do Your Best

Not everyone can be number one, but everyone can do his or her best. If you do your best, then at least one person will be happy!

SELF-DISCIPLINE

16. Build Self-Discipline

“The one quality which sets one apart from another—the key which lifts one to every aspiration while others are caught in the mire of mediocrity—

is not talent, formal education, nor intellectual brightness. It is self-discipline. With self-discipline, all things are possible. Without it, even the slightest goal can seem like an impossible dream.”

—Theodore Roosevelt

What is self-discipline? It is making yourself do what you know needs to be done when it should be done. Self-discipline strengthens your will, as exercise strengthens your body.

17. Be a Professional

Discipline yourself to set high standards and make all of your acts worthy of your high standards. Look to the Samurai as a role model of professionalism. The Samurai keeps his grooming, clothing, possessions, body and mind impeccable at all times. The Samurai’s intense physical and mental training and discipline give him the ability to accept life on a moment-by-moment basis. Act worthy of yourself!

18. Do What Unsuccessful People Will Not Do

In “The Common Denominator of Success,” the classic booklet written by Albert E.N. Gray and published over fifty years ago, the common denominator of success is the discipline to do what unsuccessful people will not do. Most successful organizations that have a sales training department will teach the methods the organization has found to work. Yet, sales representatives fail because they do not do what they have been instructed to do. Why? They will not do them because they are hard work or may lead to rejection, or both. Like cold calling, for example. If you really want to be successful, discipline yourself to “do what failures will not do.”

19. Work Hard

Sales is a highly paid profession because it does require hard work and effort. If it were easy, sales would not be so well paid. Recognize that if you want to be successful in sales or any other profession, you must offer something in return. In most cases, that something is hard work.

20. Make Hay While the Sun Shines

When you’re hot, you’re hot! On those days when everything just seems to

go well, don't stop when you reach your sales quota or your call quota. Keep going and take advantage of being "in the groove."

21. Stack the Odds in Your Favor

One of the cardinal rules of investing is "Time, not timing." Experience reveals that it is impossible to "time the market." Most of the annual gains in the stock market come in only three to five trading days a year and no one knows when those particular days will occur. Similarly, football, hockey, basketball, and baseball games are usually won in two or three plays. What does this say about the role of luck in sales? If you do all of the right things, you will be in the right place at the right time. When those two or three plays happen, you want to be there. To be there for those plays, you have to self-discipline yourself to work day in and day out. Make the calls, and the sales will take care of themselves.

22. Consider Yourself Lucky If You Have a Support Person

"Our chief want in life is someone who will make us do what we can do."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you are fortunate enough to have a spouse, family member, or friend who cares enough about you to make you live up to your potential, you are fortunate indeed. A sales trainer at a Fortune 500 company begins each training class with the observation, "having someone who will get you out of the bed in the morning and off to work is more important to your success than any sales technique you will learn."

Part Two: SELLING SKILLS

PLANNING AND FOCUS

23. Stay Focused

Set your objectives and stay focused. Concentrate on high-payoff activities. Do the things that directly contribute to sales. Companies fail for the same reasons sales representatives fail—lack of focus and clarity. Focus concentrates energy and magnifies its impact. Using the same energy required to light a light bulb, a laser beam can cut through solid steel. By focusing on high-payoff activities, you can achieve quantum leaps in performance!

24. Be Results-Driven

Plan for results, not events. The problem with many time management books is that they are “event-driven,” rather than being “results-driven.” The emphasis in these books is on “to do” lists and schedules. Make a point of asking this question to yourself several times a day: “Is what I am doing right now going to lead to more sales?” If the answer is “No,” then stop what you are doing and re-focus your efforts on tasks that will lead to more sales.

25. Keep Statistics

Develop a set of key statistics for your sales situation. Your key statistics will most likely include the following: number of telephone calls to reach a prospect, number of telephone calls to get an appointment, number of appointments to get an order, and dollar size of average order. From these numbers, you can then calculate commission per telephone call, commission per appointment, and commission per order. Use your statistics to monitor your results and to identify problem areas. For example, you find sales are down for the week. By examining your statistics, you can find out exactly why sales are down (average order size is down) and then work to correct the problem (concentrate on larger dollar volume orders.)

26. Understand the Law of Averages

Over time, in one-call closing situations, your closing rate may be 60%, or six sales made for every ten presentations. However, your closing rate in the short term may be one out of ten or nine out of ten. On the one hand, if your rate is one out of ten in a particular week, recognize that the law of averages is working and do not become discouraged. If, on the other hand, your closing rate is nine out of ten, also recognize that the law of averages is working and do not begin to think you are a sales closing wizard.

27. Repeat What Works

After you have a great day, examine what you did and repeat it! Follow the same procedure for a great week and a great year.

28. Prepare for the Unexpected

Rather than wondering, “What’s going to happen on this call if things don’t go as anticipated?” plan for the unexpected by asking yourself, “What are the worst things that can possibly happen if the call doesn’t go as anticipated?” If the prospect is a “no-show,” have a back-up plan such as cold-calling on other prospects in the building or neighborhood. If the prospect has an emergency and must prematurely end the call, rehearse how you are going to act. In spite of your best efforts, the unexpected will happen. But, if the “unexpected” happens, then it is not “unexpected.”

PROSPECTING

LEVERAGING YOUR REFERRALS

29. Multiply Your Contacts

Even if you move to a new town and meet only three people, and those three people know only three people each, you have nine contacts of contacts. These contacts of contacts lead to twenty-seven contacts of contacts of contacts, and these lead to eighty-one contacts of contacts of contacts of contacts. You have more contacts than you think!

30. Build a List of Core Referrals

Often, it's easy to think of referrals as a "one-shot" deal, that is, you get a list of referral names from a new prospect and then you go on to another prospect for more referral names. But your best source of referrals can be your "core referral list." Core referrals are customers you can return to time and time again for fresh referral names. Any of your customers who deal with many, new people on a regular basis are ideal for your core referral list. Doctors, lawyers, real estate agents, and beauticians are examples of the kinds of professionals that should be on your core referral list. The people on your core referral list already know you, your organization, and your product or service, so they are pleased to recommend you to others. Cultivate your core referral list and add value by becoming a core referral for them!

31. Upgrade Your Referral Base

Set a conscious goal to upgrade your referral base on each sales call. Better referrals almost certainly mean higher dollar average orders. It's not difficult to upgrade your referral base—you just have to let your prospects know the kind of referral you want. If you are engaged in business-to-business sales, ask your prospect who he or she knows in a larger organization in the same industry. Eventually—and sooner than you think—you'll work your way into the largest, most successful organization in your territory. If you are engaged in in-home, consumer sales, ask your prospect who he or she knows in more expensive subdivisions. For example, "Mrs. Jones, who do you know that lives on the Main Line in Philadelphia?"

32. Build Referrals by Thinking Long-Term

Build lasting relationships by thinking long-term. Deposit more into a relationship than you withdraw. Many people start a relationship by wanting to put in one dollar and take out ten dollars. You build lasting relationships by putting in ten dollars and taking out one dollar. Eventually, you will get back twenty dollars. Sometimes your product or service may not quite fit your prospect's needs and you know a competitor's product or service would exactly match the needs. In such an instance, think long term and recommend your competitor's product or service. The trust and credibility you establish with the prospect will pay huge dividends in the future from

that prospect and from friends of that prospect. For example, my neighbor was thinking of having cosmetic dentistry performed instead of traditional orthodontics because it was a quick fix for her misaligned teeth. She obtained several dental references and selected the dentist who was most qualified in terms of training and experience. After examining her mouth and dental molds, he explained that could do the procedure for \$5000. He went on to say, however, that if his wife had the same mouth, he would advise her to choose orthodontics over cosmetic dentistry. He then suggested that my friend see an orthodontist. After hearing the story, that dentist is now my dentist.

33. Welcome Complaints

Resolving a complaint for a customer is a wonderful way to get more business and referrals. Take the problem off of the customer's back and put it on your back. Instead of asking the customer to call your customer service department, offer to call the customer service department yourself. Offer to call UPS to track a shipment. Resolving complaints is really turning lemons into lemonade.

34. Use the Customer's Address Book to Get Referrals

Before you ask for referrals, ask customers to get their address book so they can write your name, address, and phone number in case they have questions about their order. It's easy to ask for referrals once they have their address book open. This also works for prospects that don't buy. Ask them to get out their address book in case they change their minds and want to call you.

35. Ask Prospects to Refer You

Even if a prospect does not buy, you can be successful in asking for referrals. Asking prospects to refer you puts the referral on a personal basis. The prospect has observed you at work and knows you are a caring, sensitive person. He or she has every reason to believe you will treat others the same way.

36. Enclose Extra Flyers and Order Forms in Your Mailings

Customers and prospects will pass along information to their colleagues if

you include extras. This one change to mailings I do has increased my response rate up to eightfold!

37. Always Carry Your Business Card

Prospects can turn up anywhere at any time. Think about all of the times you wish you had remembered to carry your business card.

COLD CALLING

38. Make Cold Calls

You can be very successful making cold calls simply because so few sales representatives use this strategy in today's marketplace. In the business-to-business arena, secretaries see so few representatives making cold calls that they don't know how handle them.

39. Don't Try to Outsmart Gatekeepers

Clever tricks to get around gatekeepers usually backfire. No one likes to be manipulated and a gatekeeper that you have manipulated can keep you from ever seeing or speaking with the prospect. Gatekeepers have tremendous power in that they have the power to say, "No," but they never have the power to say, "Yes" to a purchasing decision. Whenever possible, try to get gatekeepers on your side. They can be tremendous assets. To win the confidence and trust of a gatekeeper, acknowledge them as a person and treat them with respect.

40. Try, "Excuse me, can you help me out?"

When cold calling, this phrase opens many closed doors. Nearly everyone is willing to help someone who asks. The usual response is, "Sure, how can I help?"

41. Take Advantage of Captive Positions

When you're taking an airline trip, you can take advantage of the captive physical situation to make a sales presentation or to solicit leads. The situation is ideal because you know exactly how long you will be sitting next to your seatmate. Dual ski-lift chairs are another example of a captive

situation. In both cases, you'll have to develop your presentation so it can be done in a tactful way.

THE TELEPHONE

42. Attack Fear Head-On

Whatever your fears, acknowledge them to yourself and then attack them head-on. For many salesreps, calling to get appointments is fearful. Just get started. The act of picking up the phone releases a tremendous force. You realize you have taken charge of your own destiny. As you continue and you begin to get positive results, your confidence will grow. When you attack your fear, you don't simply feel better because of the positive results in getting appointments or making sales. You feel better about yourself!

43. Use Answering Machine Messages to "Read" Prospects

Instead of hanging up when a machine answers your call, listen carefully to the tone and words of the prospect. Does he or she speak quickly or slowly? Does he or she have a sense of humor? Use these clues when you call back to "mirror" the prospect.

44. Think of Your Telephone as an ATM Machine

Appointments you make by telephone may eventually lead to sales, and sales means money to you. You won't get an appointment with every call, and you won't get a sale with every appointment, but you can calculate the value of every call you make. For example, if over time you find it takes ten calls to get an appointment and three appointments to get a sale, then you know that it takes thirty calls to make a sale. If each sale is worth \$150 to you in commissions, then each telephone call is worth five dollars.

45. Call Decision-Makers, Professionals and Executives Before or After Business Hours or During Lunch

Decision Makers often start earlier and work later than other employees. The odds of reaching one of these people increases dramatically if you call them early in the morning, late in the day, or during lunch. Secretaries and assistants are not around to screen calls at these times of the day, so the

decision maker will answer his or her own phone. In addition, executives will often not have their voice mail system activated at these times.

46. Use the 73% Factor

Research has shown that in making decisions, 73% of all people hesitate. In other words, most people cannot make rapid decisions. Make the 73% factor work for you in a telephone approach by giving the prospect a choice of two times to see you. This relieves her or him of making the decision to see you because you are making the decision. It becomes simply a question of when to see you. Your whole approach must be 15 seconds or less for the 73% factor to work. In that time, you must answer the questions everyone who answers a phone is subconsciously asking: Who is calling? Why are they calling? And, What do they want? Here is an example of a 15 second telephone approach: "Hello, Mr. Smith. This is Joe Rep with Acme Enterprises. (Answers question 1.) I'm dropping off free chances to win a trip to Disney World to people who are nice enough to just take a look at how our product will help make their home a healthier place to live. (Answers question 2.) Would tomorrow evening at 7:05 be good, or would 7:25 be better? (Answers question 3.)

47. Use a Simple, Natural Phone Approach When Telephone Prospecting

If you've had difficulty reaching a business prospect because calls are screened, try calling in the same manner you would call a friend: "May I speak to Joe?" Chances are you will be put through.

THE INTERNET

48. Use E-Mail

Print your e-mail address on all of the documents you mail or give away. And, get e-mail addresses from your prospects and customers. E-mail is a quick and cost-effective way to stay in touch with your prospects and customers. My e-mail address is gvg@ccil.org.

49. Get a Free Web Page

You can get a free web page from a number of sites such as Netscape and

Excite. These sites make it easy to set up and maintain your own site. An easy way to develop and test your site before uploading it to the Internet is to develop your site using Microsoft Word and saving the file in HTML format. You can then open the file using an Internet browser to see how it looks. Once you have created your web site, update it regularly to keep the content fresh and current.

50. Keep Your Web Page Simple

If you look at the large, commercial, and successful web sites such as Yahoo and Amazon, you'll find that a common ingredient is a fast-loading page. Keep your page as simple as possible and use thumbnail graphics. Be sure your e-mail address is featured prominently.

BUILDING RAPPORT

51. Think of Things a Typical Salesman Does and Don't Do Them

A stereotypical salesman is "pushy." Do the opposite. Be a "pulley" and ask questions. A typical salesman likes to do most of the talking. Do the opposite. Listen. Also, when you listen, your prospects and customers will reveal to you characteristics of typical salesreps they find objectionable. Think about the kind of sales representative you would enjoy buying from, and then be that kind of person.

52. Be a Real Person

Be a real person with your customers and prospects by sharing your stories and your aspirations. Bring the quality of who you are to your customers and prospects. If you do that, you'll show that you are an interesting, fun, energetic person who is striving to succeed. Your customers and prospects will feel good about buying from you because they know that beyond getting a good product or service, they are helping a good person achieve his or her goals.

53. Smile

A smile is an instant way to build rapport. Smiling is natural and does not

take any training or require special skill. And, a smile always increases your face value.

54. Listen

Really listen. Listening is the number one sales skill. Really listening shows that you are a caring, sensitive person. Be more interested in what you're hearing than in what you're saying. What are the keys to being a good listener and to letting your prospect or customer know you are a good listener? Use summary statements to confirm what you heard, use questions to clarify, and use your body language to acknowledge that you're listening to what is said. On the one hand, if you listen, your customer will tell you what his or her needs are. On the other hand, the more time you spend talking, the more time your prospect has to think of ways to say, "No."

55. Be Vulnerable

Being vulnerable is one of the least discussed, yet most important, ingredients in sales success. Being vulnerable builds instant rapport. When we share our fears and disappointments with another person, we are opening ourselves to the possibility of additional hurt. That's why so few people do it. We are so concerned about how others see us that we constantly do everything we can to protect our self-image and avoid hurt. Yet, when we are vulnerable, we are sharing our humanness with another person. By being vulnerable, we create a bond with the other person. And, we find that when we share our vulnerabilities, the other person will open up. That's the beginning of a real relationship. Because being vulnerable is such a powerful tool, it must be used with integrity. If your personal goal is to get ahead in terms of money, power, and position by manipulating your customers, then you are headed for disaster if you use this tool. Prospects and customers will see right through you. The essence of successful salesmanship stems from your character, not from your script or the words you say. When we have character and integrity, and see our roles as being of service to our customers, then we lose nothing when we share our inner feelings. In fact, we gain everything.

56. Do Your Homework

Before you call on a prospect, learn as much as you can about your pros-

pect and the organization. Doing your homework also includes knowing your competition. Doing your homework demonstrates that you are a prepared professional.

57. Use the Customer's Name

Hearing our names is one of the most pleasant things we can hear. Practice your conversation skills by using names in the conversation. While using someone's name in a conversation is a very natural thing to do, for some reason, this does not seem to come naturally in a sales situation. Using the customer's name personalizes the presentation and says to the customer, "I see you as an individual."

58. Be On Time

Building rapport with prospects and customers begins with being on time for an appointment. Being on time shows that you are considerate of your customer or prospect and that you value their time as well as your own time.

59. Dress Professionally

First impressions are important. People want to deal with people who look successful. Contrary to what you may hear, business is never casual. Dress like a doctor or lawyer. Doctors and lawyers are successful professionals who are paid, like you, for advice and counsel. Your clothes should be as expensive as possible and they should be clean and well pressed. Go to a hair stylist and be sure your hands are clean and your fingernails are manicured. Your accessories (jewelry, watches, handbags, and briefcases) should also be as expensive as you can afford. In addition to making the right impression on your customers and prospects, you will make the right impression on yourself. If you look good on the outside, you'll feel even better on the inside.

60. Learn from "Confidence Men"

People will find a reason to buy from you if they like you and trust you. Television newsmagazines like *60 Minutes*, *Dateline*, and *20/20* frequently air stories of scams run on consumers. Some of the schemes seem outlandish and preposterous. The common thread that runs through all of victims'

stories is that they “liked and trusted” the scam artist. Like and trust are what building rapport is all about. Watch these shows to see con artists at work in the “hidden camera” segments. Learn from the con artists, consider how much more successful they could have been if they were selling legitimate products and services, and then apply some of their rapport-building techniques to your own selling situation.

61. Give Sincere and Specific Compliments

People love to be complimented, but any compliment must, first of all, be sincere. If you are not sincere, the recipient will easily see through your compliment and mentally dismiss it. Compliments should also be specific. Don’t just say you like someone’s office or house. Point out specifics—furnishings, view, artwork, and the like.

62. Never Knock the Competition

If a customer or prospect has bought from a competitor, he or she had a reason. If you knock the competition, you are essentially saying the customer is stupid or at least used poor judgment. Through questioning, find out what needs are not being met by the competitive product or service and then emphasize how your product or service will fit those needs without denigrating the competitor’s product or service.

PRESENTING

63. Always Ask—Never Assume

“It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.”
—James Thurber

Approach each sales opportunity as a new experience. Never assume that you know what the prospect’s needs are or that you know what the prospect is thinking. Each encounter is a unique experience. What has worked for one customer in a similar situation, may not work for this prospect. What you think you know causes more trouble than not knowing. Always ask questions to uncover needs, interests, likes, and dislikes.

64. Let the Prospect Help Make the Sale

Use a demonstration to let the prospect help make the sale. Car dealers and pet stores have been successfully using this technique for years. The more time a prospect spends handling and using the product, the greater the chances of a sale.

65. Paint a Word Picture

“Paint a picture” of your product or service for your prospect. A picture really is worth a thousand words. When you paint a vivid picture, your prospect will literally “see” himself or herself using your product or service. The mental picture will remain in the prospect’s mind long after your words are forgotten.

66. Use Logic and Emotion

Master salesman and motivation speaker Zig Ziglar advises the use of both logic and emotion in a presentation. Logic makes people think and emotion makes them act. When he sold pots and pans, Zig would use logic pointing out the fact that according to the USDA, the average shrinkage of a four-pound roast cooked in an ordinary pot was one pound, seven ounces. With Zig’s pot, the shrinkage was only five ounces, meaning the ordinary pot stole one pound of meat! Logically, cooking in Zig’s pot saved money. Next, he would use emotion by noting that his pots kept the nutrients sealed in the food so that the family would be healthier. You need to balance logic and emotion, says Zig, because with only logic you end up with an educated consumer and no sale and with only emotion you end up with buyer’s remorse and a canceled order.

67. Speak in Terms of “Investment” Rather than “Cost” or “Price”

Using “cost” or “price” focuses the prospect’s mind on what will be spent or given up to get your product or service. The word, “investment,” helps focus the prospect on what will be gained.

68. Think in Terms of the Prospect’s Needs

Prospects buy for their needs, not our needs. Fit your product or service to

the prospect's needs, rather than trying to fit the prospect to your product or service. How do you uncover the prospect's needs? By questioning and listening. Just as prescription before diagnosis is medical malpractice, presenting your product or service before you understand the needs of the prospect is sales malpractice. In *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie gave what is perhaps the best reminder of this principle: If you were going fishing, what would you use for bait, something you preferred (a candy bar) or something the fish preferred (a worm)?

69. Listen to the Music

Just as vocal music is a mixture of words and melody, people speak in words and melody. To understand customers and prospects, we must go beyond the words to get the true meaning of what is being said. Tone, inflection, and emphasis can often be as important—or more important—than the words themselves. Make a conscious effort to improve your skill in this area.

70. Use a Barometer During Your Sales Presentation

During your presentation, ask, "How am I doing so far, Mrs. Prospect?" This question softens the presentation, gets the prospect talking, and sets a positive tone because the typical response is, "You're doing fine!"

71. Ask the Question That Almost Certainly Will Produce a "YES" Response

When making a proposition to a customer or prospect, end with, "Is that fair enough?" Almost invariably a customer or prospect will answer, "Yes." The question is magical in its construction. For some unknown reason it's almost impossible to answer, "No, that's not fair enough." If you are skeptical, practice it with your friends and family before using it with one of your customers or prospects.

72. Ask Permission to Take Notes

Taking notes during a sales presentation shows the prospect that you are listening. Moreover, it lets the prospect know that you value what he or she is saying. Additionally, take your notes in the prospect's words. You can then refer back to the prospect's words when you match the prospect's

needs with your product or service. Your notes are also a record of any promises you made.

73. Use the Power of the Word, “Why?”

“May I ask why you feel that way?” gets customers and prospects talking. Prefacing “why” with “May I ask” softens the question to make it non-threatening to the customer or prospect. This question can be used anytime in the presentation. Another phrase you can use to get customers talking is, “That’s interesting, please tell me more.”

CLOSING AND HANDLING OBJECTIONS

74. Always Ask for the Order

Prospects expect to be asked for an order. Yet, countless studies have shown that many sales representatives fail to ask for the order because they fear rejection. If your presentation has been conducted properly, asking for the order is a natural conclusion. Simply asking for the order is the most effective close.

75. Use the Magic of Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful closing tool because it removes the prospect from the sense that he or she is in a sales situation. You can use a story in response to any objection, including the “big three” – no need, not now, and price. Say simply, “Mr. and Mrs. Prospect, can I tell you a story about (not needing the product or service, thinking it over, or price)?” The prospects will almost certainly answer, “Yes,” because we all want to hear a good story.

“My manager told me a story about a couple who didn’t purchase long-term care insurance because they (thought the price was too high, wanted to think it over, didn’t think either one of them would need it). Unfortunately, a short time later the man was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. His medical condition quickly worsened and his wife was no longer able to care for him at home. To pay for his long-term care in a facility, she had to go to work full-time and they had to sell most of their assets. On the major holidays, she made special arrangements to bring him home. She

marked those days with a red letter “H” on the small calendar he kept on his bedside table. The first Thanksgiving away from home, he returned for the holiday and said the family blessing at the Thanksgiving Day table. He closed the blessing with this addition, “My greatest prayer and wish is that every day could be a red-letter day!” So, if they hadn’t thought (they didn’t need the policy, they wanted to think it over, the price was too high) everyday could have been a red-letter day for them. Now, Mr. and Mrs. Prospect, do you think you would like to go ahead?

76. Consider the “Actor” Close

If your organization uses a planned presentation and you find the close is not working for you because it just does not fit “who you are” (your prospects recognize the close is not you), consider the “Actor” close. Using this close, you say the planned presentation word-for-word, but you do it in a way that it’s obvious to the prospect that you are acting. This approach breaks the tension, allows you to pause and make comments about the close in your own words, and helps build credibility. With the “Actor” close you are able to combine the power and careful planning that went into the planned presentation with your own credibility and insight.

77. Challenge Your Prospect

We all want to accept challenges because of our huge egos. Just after high school graduation, two good friends of mine were recruited into the Marine Corps by a recruiter who essentially used this approach: “I don’t think you guys are man enough to make it in this outfit.”

78. Use the “Therapy” Questioning Technique

The “Therapy” questioning technique is an easy, natural way to uncover real objections in the sales process. In addition, the technique often allows the prospect to find the solution and close the sale. Here’s how it works: Take the last word or last few words a prospect says and repeat them in the form of a question:

“I’m not sure this suit fits.”

“Fits?”

“Yes, it’s too tight at the waist?”

“At the waist?”

“Yes, if you can let it out a little, I’ll take it.”

The “Therapy” questioning technique is remarkable in its effectiveness and simplicity. Try it in a conversation with family and friends to become comfortable with it before you use it in a sales situation.

79. Handle the Price Objection with a Quotation

The price objection is one of the most common—and most difficult—objections to handle. Noted English writer and art critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) offered this commonsense advice on comparing prices:

“It’s unwise to pay too much, but it’s worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money—that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot—it can’t be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better.”

80. Answer Objections with New Information

Nothing irritates a prospect more than having a sales representative repeat information when answering an objection. Repeating the same information and asking for the order again usually destroys any chance of closing the sale. When answering an objection always provide new information, new facts, and new reasons for buying. Of course, the key to being able to provide new information is to find out what’s behind the objection. Keep information, facts, and reasons for buying in reserve until they are relevant to the prospect. Pleasant persistence with newness overcomes resistance.

81. Be Professionally Persistent

Studies have shown forty-four percent of sales representatives quit after one, “No;” another twenty-two percent give up after two, “No’s;” fourteen percent after three; and, twelve percent after four. However, sixty percent

of customers say, “No,” at least four times. These figures translate into just eight percent of sales representatives getting sixty percent of the business.

82. Ask the Prospect for an “OK” rather than a “Signature”

Asking the prospect to “OK” the order softens the sale, whereas asking for a “signature” calls for a formal decision on the part of the prospect. Asking the prospect to “sign” signals the prospect that he or she is being sold. Asking for an “OK” is an informal, non-threatening way of asking for an order and closing the sale.

83. Leave an Order Form When the Answer is “Not now,” “No,” or “I need higher approval”

When you can’t close a sale because you can’t overcome a stall or objection, leave a filled in order form and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I was skeptical when a seasoned sales pro suggested it, but I tried it and found it works.

84. Under-Promise and Over-Deliver

In attempting to close a sale, the natural tendency is to over-promise. We want the order so we promise a super-quick delivery time or other inducement to get the sale. Such a tactic is almost certain to backfire. When a customer receives more than he or she expected, the result is almost certainly repeat business and referrals.

85. Provide Extra Services

If you’re selling a consumer product, offer to gift-wrap the product and enclose a card. Offer to handle rush deliveries by arranging for UPS or FEDEX shipping. If you’re selling business-to-business products or services, you can also make special shipping arrangements for your customer or have the product or service handled in some other special way. Show the customer that you care enough to go beyond the basic requirement.

86. Reassure After Closing the Sale

Customers want reassurance that they made the right decision by going ahead with their purchase. Simply reassure them by saying, “You made a

good decision, Mr. Smith.” Your simple statement goes a long way to preventing “buyer’s remorse,” which is a natural tendency we all have after making a purchase decision.

AFTER THE SALE

87. Use a Testimonial Book to Resell Your Customers and Get More Referrals

Investing in a first-class, leather-bound, 3-ring testimonial book is a wise decision. After you close a sale, ask your customer to write a paragraph and sign your testimonial book. Your customer will probably look through the book to get ideas on what to write, and by seeing what others have written, he or she will be resold. At that point, asking for and receiving a list of referral names is easy.

88. Use Your Testimonial Book to Resell Yourself

Whenever you need to “jumpstart” yourself, simply open your testimonial book. Looking at the comments all of your customers have written will recharge your batteries.

89. Follow-up on Leads Quickly

Hot leads cool quickly. When a prospect requests information on your product or service, he or she most likely has an immediate need. Therefore, the best time to follow-up on a lead is when you get it. The same is true of referred leads. When a customer gives you a referral name, contact the referral as soon as possible. Human nature suggests that the longer “you sit on a lead,” the less likely you will be to follow-up on it. If you call and leave a message and the prospect does not call you back, call again.

90. Ask Permission to Follow-Up

The simple act of asking permission to follow-up sets the stage for a continuing relationship.

91. Recognize Your Customers and Prospects as Individuals

Personalize notes you write to your customers and prospects. Find out the interests and hobbies of your customers and prospects. Then, when you see a newspaper or magazine clipping that fits a hobby or interest of one of your customers or prospects, you can send it along with a personal note. Videos, audios, posters, and books are other items that will make a big impact for a small investment.

92. Follow-up with Your Customers on the Anniversary Date of the Sale

A note to your customers on the anniversary date of the sale is a wonderful way to stay in touch. Even if your product or service is a “one shot” deal, follow-ups can lead to additional business through referrals.

93. Send Thank You Notes

Immediately after a sales presentation, always send a handwritten, personalized thank you note. If you closed the sale, thank your customer for the business. If the sale is still pending, thank your prospect for his or her time and close the note by reconfirming the agreed upon follow-up plan. If the sale was not made, thank the prospect for considering your proposal and leave the door open for future business and referrals. When a sale goes to a competitor, phone again after the prospect has had time to use the competitor’s product or service and ask, “How is it going with XYZ?” If the response is not positive, you have an additional chance to make the sale.

Part Three: LIFE SKILLS

94. Maintain a Balance in Your Life

Successful and happy lives are a blend of work, financial, spiritual, family, and health values. Every life is an experiment of one and you must decide what is of greatest and lasting importance to you. One way to do this is to think of how you would like to be remembered. Then, carry those thoughts over into your everyday life.

95. Write Your Life Goals and Review Them Often

One of the characteristics of successful people is that they have written goals. Few people take this simple step. A famous study of the 1953 Yale graduating class revealed that only three percent of the class members had set goals, had written them down, and had a plan for accomplishing them. Twenty years later, in 1973, a follow-up study was made. The three percent who were goal setters were happier, more successful, and healthier than their classmates. The study also revealed that the three percent had ninety-seven percent of the net worth of the class.

96. Invest in Yourself

Your most valuable asset is your earning ability. Commit yourself to life-long learning. Attend sales seminars. Buy books and audio and videotapes. An investment in you is an investment in “the goose that lays the golden eggs.”

97. Stay Physically Fit

Sales is demanding work. Make time for a fitness program. The more physically fit you are, the more stamina and energy you will have. A regular exercise program is a wise time investment that will pay huge dividends. A fit body also keeps your mind sharp. After all, if your body goes, can your mind be far behind?

98. Know the Value of Today

What you do today is important because you are spending a day of your life for it. What you accomplish today must be worth it because the price is so high.

99. Keep a Sense of Humor

A keen sense of humor is the antidote for stress. Every situation has a funny side. Find it and laugh about it.

100. Engage in Community Activity

Giving back to the community is a chance to acknowledge that you are a responsible member of society. Moreover, actively giving of yourself through volunteer opportunities is much more fulfilling than merely giving money to charitable organizations. The wonderful thing about giving is that you will always receive more than you give.

EPILOGUE

101. Don't Forget to Be a Nice Person

Some people brighten rooms when they enter; others brighten rooms when they exit. Strive to be one of the former. Just encountering a really nice person can “make” anyone’s day. If you are a breath of fresh air, you will make a good impression and you will be remembered in your professional and personal life.

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