



HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN SALES

by Leigh Wallinger

Success is predictable.

If you are working in sales or running a business, follow this 3 step process:

- Excel in your Critical Success Areas
- Differentiate & Be Memorable
- Make a Difference

In sales, there is only one winner – the sales person who wins the order. If you are not aware of the power of the Pareto Principle, take an action to learn about it quickly. It's an awesome principle that sales people need to understand.

The Pareto Principle, otherwise known as the 80:20 Principle, applies to sales as well as to all aspects of our lives.

20% of our clients account for 80% of our profits.

Where should sales people focus their efforts?

20% of our time accounts for 80% of our achievements.

Identify the 20% and do more of the same.

20% of our clients take 80% of the time (and cost) of our Service Department

How do we address this imbalance?

20% of all sales people account for 80% of all orders.

This means that each of the top 20% of salespeople are selling 16 times more than those in the 80%. Why is this?

The top salespeople are certainly not 16 times better than the rest of the field. The winners are only slightly better than the rest. The same is true in horse-racing. The winning horse is sometimes only a nose ahead of the second placed horse at the winning post, but always wins 100% of the 1st place prize money.

Critical Success Areas

The top sales people study what other successful sales people do. They identify the most important aspects of their job and set about becoming very competent and effective at these activities.

The most important aspects of a sales job, the critical success areas, are Prospecting, Building Relationships, Identifying Needs, Presenting Solutions and Closing. Now answer the following question.

What do I want to achieve in each of these areas?

Identify the most important goal for each critical success area. Write down each goal at the top of a separate sheet of paper (you will have a total of 5 sheets in this example) and underneath, list everything you can think of that you could do to achieve that goal. Try to list 20 different ways to achieve the goal. Some of the ideas will be more feasible and sensible than others. Find the one answer that you think is the "best" and develop a plan for its achievement. Finally, take action and implement the plan.

The most common quality of successful salespeople is that they are intensely action-oriented. They are proactive, not reactive. Success is best achieved when you are clear about the goal but flexible about the process of getting there.

The above process will, in time, improve the quality of your thinking. Goal setting and strategic thinking have an incredible power that helps people to achieve far more than they ever felt was possible.



Differentiate & Be Memorable

Life-long learning gives you more information and more experience. Knowledge of this nature is cumulative – once it is obtained then it is always available (not necessarily instantly remembered). Small improvements in your own skills and knowledge can lead to major differences to your life, achievements and wealth. The more you do; the more experience you gain. The more experience you gain; the better solutions you can devise. The better your solutions to problems; the faster you will deal with the challenge you are facing.

Develop total self-confidence in your ability to deal with the obstacles on your way to achieving success. By thinking positively, turning (negative) obstacles into (more positive) opportunities, you will draw in the support of your subconscious mind as you work towards meeting your goals. Begin to view problems as opportunities and learn to stay relaxed and friendly no matter what tension you are under.

Use your ever increasing knowledge as a way of differentiating yourself from other salespeople. By having a broad base of knowledge you will build stronger relationships with prospective clients. You will be in a position to help them solve their problems, even if that doesn't result in a sale directly for you. Allocate considerable time and effort in order to build up trusting relationships with your clients and prospective clients. Be seen as a business advisor (rather than yet another pushy salesperson who will never be seen again once an order is placed) and you will position yourself in the top 20%.

Another way to differentiate yourself and be memorable is to develop and maintain a personal brand. Great care needs to be taken in this area so that your brand complements the product/service you are offering. Small actions, like remembering a Secretary's birthday or sending "Thank You" notes will also help to differentiate you from the rest.

Make a Difference

Work hard to make a difference to the people you meet. If you look hard enough, you will find ways to help your clients or prospective clients. You might be able to introduce them to someone who can help them solve a thorny problem or give some advice or idea that will help them to achieve one of their goals.

The way you are viewed by your client or prospective client determines your success in sales. The top 20% of salespeople are viewed as consultants, helpers, counsellors and advisors to their clients. They are not viewed as salespeople. Remember, the top 20% get 80% of the orders, this is where you need to be.

Help others without any expectation of reward. Keep away from the mindset that says "If I help you then you will feel obligated to give me some business". Remember the phrase, "Sow and ye shall reap" and note the order of the actions. You have to take action first. The more favours you do for others, the more power and influence you will gain. Keep looking for ways to go the extra mile and do the things that other salespeople don't do.

Success in sales is predictable, but not easy. Adopting the 3-step process described above will put you on the right track. Look at what other successful sales people have done to be successful and do the same things.

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