



MOVE YOURSELF INTO THE TOP 4 PERCENT OF SALESPEOPLE by Leigh Wallinger

In business, and in sales especially, small differences in ability can lead to enormous differences in results. The difference between top performers and average performers is not that great, either in their respective skills, intelligence or ability. The person earning £1m per annum is not 10 times more skilful, more intelligent or more able than someone earning £100K per annum. The higher earner is slightly better in some key area(s).

Aim to be in the top 4%

A good analogy is with sport. A world record holder is only slightly faster than the other leading competitors. The person who wins the competition gets the recognition for being a winner. The demand for their time soars as they get involved with sponsors, advertising, television and the "celebrity circuit". This brings more recognition, wealth, opportunities and invitations. The winner gets 100% of the trappings of a winner. Second place is no good – in sport as well as in sales. Winner takes all - for being just a fraction better than everyone else.

In his book, 'The Psychology of Selling', Brian Tracy highlights how the Pareto Principle (or the 80/20 Principle) works in sales, just as it does in many other fields. This Principle, when applied to sales, states that 80% of total sales are made by 20% of the salespeople. Interestingly enough, the Pareto Principle also applies to the top 20% of salespeople. The top 20% of this group make 80% of the sales made by this group.

This means that the top 4% of salespeople (20% of 20%) will make a full 64% (80% of 80%) of all the sales made by all salespeople. The remaining 96% of salespeople are fighting over just 36% of total sales.

If you can get into the top 4%, you will never have job security or financial worries again.

In business terms, the top 20% of all businesses will win 80% of all orders. They do this by being just a little bit better in all the areas that count. In sales, and in business, it's winner takes all. There is no revenue (or profit) when you come second.

Looked at a different way, out of every 100 salespeople, 20 of them will secure 80% of all the orders and will earn 80% of the commission. Just 4 of them, 20% of the top 20%, will make 64% of the total sales. How do you get into this top 4%?

The SUCCESS Formula

To move yourself into the top 4% you need to know the formula for success:

SUCCESS = KNOWLEDGE x ATTITUDE x SKILL

There are only 3 components you need to work on to increase your level of success. A weakness in any one of them will leave you seriously disadvantaged in your attempts to reach the top 4%. As the factors are multipliers, a weakness in 2 areas probably means you have a major challenge, but if you address your weaknesses then success will inevitably follow.

Knowledge

What have you learnt about your industry?, How does it work?, What are the key pressure your prospective clients under?, What are your competition doing?, How well do you know your products / service? What are your points of difference?



Attitude

This largely comes from your mind and from the “voices” you hear in your mind. If you always hear negative voices in your head saying things like “I’m too old”; “I’m not good enough”; “I can’t succeed”; “It’s too difficult” then you will develop a negative and pessimistic outlook. This will be picked up by your subconscious mind which will then set about finding you situations in line with what you are thinking. If you are thinking about obstacles, reasons to fail, and negative outcomes then your subconscious mind will find you other negative circumstances. Having a positive attitude creates the opposite.

Skill

How good are you at your job? In sales, how good are you at all the key activities needed for success? Your skill factor will also cover non-sales abilities – building relationships, asking questions, listening, delegating, negotiating, planning, team working, time management, presentation skills.

To reach the top 4%, you need to continually increase your scores in each of these 3 areas. Start by giving yourself a score for each component. This is your baseline. Plan how you can improve your scores in each area over the next 3 – 6 months. Follow your plan and monitor your progress. Repeat every 3 – 6 months. Here are some suggestions:

10 ways to improve your knowledge

- 1 Read all you can about your industry, markets and key individuals
- 2 Collect brochures / annual reports for companies in your markets
- 3 Find out all you can about your competition
- 4 Get to know key players in your industry, learn what they do with their time
- 5 Join industry / professional bodies and invest time getting involved with committees
- 6 Ensure you know how businesses work – from Finance to HR
- 7 Network to grow your contacts and build new relationships
- 8 Take courses and attend conferences
- 9 Share knowledge with your network and people will reciprocate
- 10 Keep searching for new and better ways to do things, talk regularly to your contacts.

10 ways to improve your attitude

- 1 Think only about what you want
- 2 Write down what you want to achieve as goals every day
- 3 Build a close knit inner-network of people who will help and encourage you
- 4 Take full responsibility for what happens to you. The law of Cause & Effect applies
- 5 Be quick to listen and slow to talk. Learn to understand others
- 6 Accept things will go wrong and decide to learn from the experience
- 7 Mix with positive people
- 8 Network with a “give unconditionally” attitude, the Law of Sowing and Reaping applies
- 9 Avoid negative “self-talk”. Find something positive to think about
- 10 Reinforce your positive attitude by reading motivational books regularly.



10 ways to improve your skills

- 1 Read books, listen to CDs on sales related skills as you travel
- 2 Study successful people, find out how they spend their time. Copy them
- 3 Attend seminars and conferences
- 4 Book onto training courses
- 5 Find a good sales coach
- 6 Force yourself to go outside your comfort zone
- 7 Commit time in your personal schedule for learning new skills
- 8 Listen carefully to others and ask better questions to draw out more information
- 9 Identify your key success areas and get to work improving your skills in them
- 10 Keep networking and meeting new people.

Keep improving in these 3 areas and the multiplier effect of the success formula will lift you into the top 4% of salespeople.

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