

Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2003 5:23 PM

Subject: BIZ BANK: SALES CALL RELUCTANCE....#1 KILLING PSYCHOSIS

Dear Aquathin Dealer OnLine;

OK, you have everything in your favour....hitting on all cylinders...great presentation, super products, Customers with needs. But sales are not occurring at the pace we've projected. It is possible, even probable, that a part of your Sales Team is not cognoscente of a reluctance to make or complete the sales calls.

This quick read article by John Carroll, from Sam Parker's Newsletter, is immediately personal to me, because a long time ago, I was one of the people described below. See if you can guess which one !!

My points are (A) this is easily corrected resulting in greater productivity, larger pay checks, happier Team Members, increased Customer base and Customer satisfaction....and (B) God gives us just so many seconds in a day to use...why let them pass by. Both are taught on Day Three at Aquathin U. !!

Warmest regards to all...as well, your comments are always welcome and very much appreciated.

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"John, Sam & Alfie"

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How to overcome sales call reluctance

by John Carroll

What's the number one killer of sales years and sales careers? Hint: it's not price or the economy. It's not even competition or unwilling customers and prospects. It is, believe it or not, simply the unwillingness of the sales professional to go and sell.

Sales call reluctance researchers George Dudley and Shannon Goodson report that "as many as 80% of all salespeople who fail within their first year do so because of insufficient **prospecting** activity."

Oversimplified? Consider these:

1. **Sales is a numbers game** -- If you contact enough prospects or suspects, you're bound to get results and **learn** from your mistakes. Of course, the more you can pre-qualify your target list of potential contacts, the greater your chances of success.
2. **A better mousetrap, by itself, doesn't win sales** -- The activities of contacting prospects, asking good questions, presenting solutions and asking for the decision **do** win sales. Success is often based on how frequently you reach out to people who are willing and able to buy from you.
3. **Referrals have to start somewhere** -- The top sales professionals, those who seem to live almost exclusively from current customers and referrals, had to **initiate** those contacts to start the process. They paid their dues along the way.

The hidden enemy

The fear of self-promotion is a condition in which even highly competent people receive far less in position, compensation and recognition than they feel they deserve. Doing the best job doesn't always get the best rewards. Those rewards tend to go to people who **promote** themselves, what they've done and what they can do.

Who are some of the top self-promoters of our day? When you look across all professions, those most famous in the public eye aren't necessarily the best at what they do. There are, arguably, those who are more skilled and earn far less in both notoriety and compensation for their efforts. This fear of self-promotion manifests itself in professional selling as sales call reluctance. It appears in several types and works in varying degrees of damage to the sales professional's results.

The symptoms

Sally is a steady, but never stellar, sales performer. She has a proposal she'll be presenting in two days to a new prospect. She has worked over the proposal a dozen times and is checking it again for any typographical errors. Next she'll review her presentation of the proposal and write her key points on note cards for further practice and rehearsal. All of this is done during the **sales day**, the only time of day when she can contact new prospects. This tendency of always getting **ready** and rarely getting it **done** is a symptom of the form of call reluctance known as over-preparation.

Ryan works hard to project the right image to his customers and prospects. He always looks good and professional, as do his materials and his vehicle. Today, as he goes out to prospect for the afternoon, he'll stop and have his car washed inside and out to maintain that image. This is done at the expense of his prospecting activity, a tendency of sale call reluctance known as hyper-pro.

The nature and pricing of Judy's product requires that she make her first contact with the CEO of her target prospects. She's uneasy with the idea, so she creatively works her way through organizations by starting with purchasing agents, human resource managers and anyone else who will speak with her. She builds rapport with these people easily, yet somehow she fails to get in front of the owner or boss. Unfortunately, except in rare instances, only that person at the top can decide to buy what she sells. Judy has a tendency toward social self-consciousness,

another form of sales call reluctance, marked by an unwillingness to contact people in higher socioeconomic levels and positions of authority.

Jack knows that his financial products sell best by educating his prospective buyers through free seminars. He watches the sales numbers of his peers climb as they present seminar after seminar. Despite the evidence, he continues to contact one prospect at a time to present his products one-on-one. His tendency to shy away from group presentations is the form of call reluctance known as stage fright.

How to identify sales call reluctance

Fortunately, there are several specific steps you can take to address sales call reluctance in yourself and/or your sales team. Use these tips first to find where call reluctance may be hurting you most:

1. **Look closely at activities for trends and tendencies** -- It's fairly simple to see an overall lack of activity. That could indicate any of several forms of call reluctance. Check for specifics such as follow up on referrals. Lack in this area may reveal referral aversion, the avoidance of asking for and following through on referral opportunities. Some will often try to mask this condition by vigorously defending the position with statements such as, "Referrals don't work in my business/ with my customers/ in this industry."
2. **Observe during the sales call** -- What happened when it was time to ask for the business? Did you or your team member shy away? Did you as sales manager have to close the sale? Avoidance of asking for the order is common, known in sales call reluctance as the yielder tendency.
3. **Check telephone prospecting activity** -- If "dialing for dollars" is important to you or your sales representatives, check on the frequency and quantity of calling. When you find low levels here, the telephobia tendency of sales call reluctance is likely at work and will sabotage even the top professional with the most proven approach.
4. **Use a sales preference assessment** -- A validated instrument can quantify specific challenges and suggest appropriate steps to address sales call reluctance issues. It also provides a proof source to show members of your sales team, in an objective way, a comprehensive picture of those areas of improvement.

Overcoming the enemy

Once you've identified and assessed the problem, you're ready to take the appropriate steps to reduce and eliminate some of the sales call reluctance present in yourself or your sales team. The steps you take depend on the specific areas requiring the most attention. Here are a few examples:

1. **Over-preparation** -- One client using this instrument had a simple method to address this. He simply chased the sales representative in question out of the office after a certain hour of the morning. That prevented the seemingly endless preparation, which was taking the place of prospecting and selling activities.

2. **Stage fright** -- Another client has made participation in Toastmasters International a requirement for members of his sales force. Practice in speaking to a group whose purpose is to help the speaker improve has helped even the most fearful become competent enough to look forward to group presentation opportunities. Overcoming this fear has, in many cases, led to breakthroughs in other areas of sales call reluctance.
3. **Yielder** -- Role playing, albeit one of the sales professional's least favorite activities, is often indicated as practice in asking the prospect or customer to buy. This practice can make it easier to repeat the behaviors when the real-world **opportunities** come.
4. **Hyper-pro** -- Often the simple knowledge that this tendency hurts one's chances to increase sales results is enough in and of itself. In many cases, this is a good example where the **understanding** of the problem comprises more than half of the solution. The sales professional can take simple and immediate steps to minimize or eliminate the activities which take away from **solid** prospecting and selling opportunities.

You should also be aware that sales managers can and do suffer from sales call reluctance, which can do additional harm to the sales team. Look for these and other areas of sales call reluctance **constantly** to address and eliminate these obstacles to your sales success.

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