

Have your Best Sales Year in 2019

By John Chapin

Warning: if you're looking for a short cut or easy way to your best year, you probably won't like this article. What I have to say is not what the majority of the population wants to hear. That said, it is what you *need* to hear if you want to have your best year in 2019.

Two tips for having your best year

Tip #1: Work Harder

This is the tip most people won't like. Here's the thing about hard work: the harder you work by making more sales calls, the more your sales will increase. Want to increase sales by 20%? Simple, increase your sales calls by 20%. If everything stays the same: your contact rate, your closing ratio, the quality of prospects you're calling on, your sales skills, etc., and you simply call on more people, you will automatically increase sales by the percentage of increase in the number of calls you make. So what that means is: whatever percentage increase it will take to have your best year, simply increase your calls by that number and you're guaranteed the result.

The most successful people on the planet, in any walk of life, are the hardest workers. No exceptions. The top athletes, the top musicians, top actors and actresses, and top ditch diggers, all work harder than everyone else. Are there exceptions to the rule? Yes, and they are just that: the exceptions. Follow the rule not the exception. The exception is the person who got rich winning the lottery. You don't want to rely on those odds. Stop looking for the short cut, the easy way, the care-free, painless way. In the long-term those are the longer ways. They are more expensive mentally, physically, and financially, and ultimately the short cuts are a waste of time. Follow the tried-and-true path and work hard.

The above said, it is also a good idea to increase the effectiveness of your sales calls. If you get better at all aspects of selling: getting to the decision maker, getting their attention, differentiating yourself, finding their pain, creating a solution, building rapport and long-term relationships, etc., now an increase in sales calls will grow sales exponentially. Even if you only get better in one or two areas, your sales will increase at a higher rate than if you simply increase the number of calls. In addition to getting better at selling, you should also follow Tip #2.

Tip #2: Be Disciplined

The most important activities of a salesperson are: prospecting, presenting and closing. The most important thing you do during the sales day is talk to people who can give you business. It takes lots of discipline to stick to these activities during prime calling hours. You've got to make hitting your numbers every day your number one priority. This means you've got to guard your time closely against your biggest enemy: distractions. Distractions come in *many* forms: phone

calls from friends and family, text messages, e-mail chimes, social media, chasing a fly around your office for five minutes, paperwork you should be doing off-hours, and other urgent/unimportant tasks that steal your attention during the day. While most of these distractions simply pop up, many of us are also be guilty of intentionally placing distractions smack in the middle of our day. Don't do that. Don't schedule doctor's appointments, dentist appointments, appointments with your financial planner, CPA, or anything else at these times. Obviously there are times when you can't avoid that, but you want to stick to this rule as much as possible. Also, again, don't do paperwork and other non-time sensitive activities during prime calling time.

You also want to look for other time wasters. I had one insurance agent who was going to every Chamber of Commerce, BNI, and networking event for years all while getting very little business. When we got her to go out and knock on 50 new prospect doors a week and follow up with phone calls, her efforts over the next 12 months produced more than 40 times the results she got from attending all those events. It's simple, she was no longer hoping the same people she saw every week for three years, who were at the networking events primarily to 'get' as opposed to 'give' business, would have a new lead for her. She was now proactive with in-person visits and phone calls to prospects. Was it harder to knock on the doors and ring the phones and face rejection from strangers? Yes. And as your parents told you growing up, the most difficult thing to do is usually the right thing to do. In-person visits and phone calls are also *still* the fastest ways I know to grow a business quickly. That said, if you still want to go to the networking events you can, but *only after* you've gotten all the prospects you need from phone calls and visits.

In addition to the above, put up two signs, one in your office and one in your car, that say, "Am I working on my most important sales activities right now?" If it's 5 a.m. and the answer is "no", that's fine. If it's 11 a.m. on a Wednesday, and most of your prospects are on a standard work schedule, and the answer is "no", that's an issue.

Finally on Tip #2, part of being more disciplined is also delegating activities and finding faster, better, more effective ways to do current tasks. This will free up more time for more sales activities.

Ultimately there is only one question you must answer to determine whether or not you'll have your best year in 2019: Are you willing to put in the time, effort, and energy, and endure the pain, to do the things that must be done, when they must be done, in order to make it happen? Yes? Great! Then get out of your own way and go make 2019 your best year ever!