

Follow the tried-and-true path to sales success – Avoid Sales Gimmicks

Over the past week I've been inundated with e-mails for webinars, classes, and courses telling me that sales and business building is easy. They claim that you don't have to work hard, just listen to the webinar and you'll get the magic bullet to working a fraction of the hours you're currently working while closing 90% of the people you talk to. Oh, and don't worry about the fear and discomfort that usually stop you, with their secret formula those will magically disappear. It will be all sunshine and rainbows.

Unfortunately, people still fall for schemes like these. Why? In the sales world what stops people is the pain and discomfort associated with contacting strangers about your product or service. As a result, the creative brain latches on to anything that will help you avoid this pain. We also want what we want now, instant gratification, so if I can get there now, why put in the years of work necessary for true sales and business success?

There's one true path to success in sales and business, and pretty much anything else for that matter, and it starts with paying your dues. It's putting in the time, effort, and energy necessary to learn your trade, and then it's going out and getting beat up... a lot. As Malcolm Gladwell put it, "It takes 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to become world-class in any field." The reality is: if you don't have enough prospects in your pipeline, you're going to have to figure out how to get some there and the simplest way is going to be the hard work of either picking up the phone or knocking on doors and introducing yourself to strangers. Referrals are great, marketing is fantastic, centers of influence are awesome and yet, the reality is, very few salespeople or businesses, especially those just starting out, can rely on those sources to bring in the number of prospects necessary for sales and business success. That said, if you still think there's a way to cheat the system, here are some thoughts to consider...

Thought #1: Tom Brady still puts in about 84 hours a week, seven months of the year.

Yes, one of the oldest players in professional football, with five Super Bowl rings, still puts in 84 hours a week during the pre-season, regular season, and post season. LeBron James once said that if you show up *only* an hour early for practice, you simply aren't serious. Michael Phelps was doing two to three times the average swimmers workout putting in 8 hours a day in the pool.

"Rudy" Ruettiger said, "People aren't afraid of hard work, they're afraid of the hard work not paying off." You will be successful if you do the work on yourself and on your business. The hard work will pay off, but probably not tomorrow, next week, next month, maybe not even next year, or in five years, but if you hang in long enough, you'll win. The only way you fail is if you quit before you succeed.

Thought #2: The best take few days off.

I once heard Jack Nicklaus tell a story related to this. When he was 18 he was playing a round of golf in the pouring rain. He was the only one on the course. When he came off the eighteen green, he noticed someone hitting balls on the practice range. He walked into the clubhouse and asked the man behind the counter who the guy on the practice range was... Arnold Palmer. And the rest, as they say, is history.

While you need to rest and take breaks, the best of the best don't take a lot of time off. That's probably because they love what they do, or at least the results, so to them it isn't work. Think about something you absolutely love to do. A sport, a hobby, or watching the latest movies. Whatever it is, you probably put tons of time into it and time flies when you're doing it. It's not work, it's fun. And you'd probably do it every day if you could. If you don't love what you do, what can you fall in love with about it? The future it provides for you and your loved ones? The professional and personal development? Giving you the means to live up to your obligations?

Thought #3: The 10X Rule

In his best-selling book *The 10X Rule*, Grant Cardone says that most endeavors in life take about 10 times as much time, effort, and energy than you initially think they will take. If you think it will take 100 calls to achieve your goal, it will probably take more like 1000. With that in mind, if you think it will take 100, prepare to make 1000. If 1000, prepare for 10,000. If it ends up taking less than that, great, but either way, you want to go above and beyond and put in more effort, not just the minimum. The more you do, the more you *can* do. It's how the rich get richer and the best get better. You prepare to run a 26.2 mile marathon by running thousands of miles. If you expect to lift 50 pounds, prepare for 100, or 150, or more.

Thought #4: The way to Heaven is through hell.

While that may sound harsh on the surface, the hell you go through, the pain and discomfort of mental and physical transformation, and the person you ultimately become, will be well worth it. The person that survived the gauntlet of growth will carry you the rest of your life. That person will be able to handle any challenge, overcome any obstacle, and endure any hardship. It's not the goal, it's the person you must become to achieve it. It is true that what doesn't kill us makes us stronger, and it also makes you wiser, better, and more resilient and determined. Why are 80% of lottery winners financially worse off two years after they win the lottery? Because they got the prize without any work. They didn't become more of a person to get the money. They didn't change or grow.

As Les Brown said, "Once you begin to discover who you are then you really realize how you have been given authority over your life. But you can only do that through the struggle of life... Most people go through life avoiding pain. When you're working on a dream, at some point in time a transition takes place... you start challenging yourself to dig deeper. Something in you

that you never activated, is lying dormant in there. Don't try taking short cuts, do what you know is right."

If you want mediocre, you can skate by half-assing it and *you might* be "okay." On the other hand, if you want significance, and you want to make a contribution to the people in your life and the world, stop looking for the shortcut, the free lunch, and work for it. Take the proven path. Working smart is one thing, working to cheat the system, to avoid the hard work necessary for personal and business growth and success is quite another.

John Chapin