

A Reason Many Salespeople Fail and How to Avoid It

By John Chapin

In a recent article by friend and colleague John Brubaker (CoachBru.com), he stated that, “According to a U.S. Department of Commerce research study, in the first five years of a business the survival rate for independent small businesses is less than 20% but the survival rate for franchises is 95%.”

He continues: “...it isn't so much the name recognition... it's the fact that with a franchise you get to utilize a turn-key set of business operations [a successful system that works] as opposed to having to invent the wheel in your own business.

...Starbucks [has] an excellent system which is why they have a thriving business. From the point of purchase displays, merchandising, upsells, menu options and language to the tiered pricing, customer service, and order production/fulfillment methods they have a calculated, streamlined process for every single touchpoint. (Note: The system does NOT vary from store to store within the franchise. The system IS the system.)”

During a discussion with me, he iterated that his own research found that salespeople and entrepreneurs that follow a sales system are 10 times as likely to be successful as those that don't. The reason why this is true may not be what you expect. It's also not the same exact reason for franchise success, though it's similar. The primary reason why salespeople following a system are 10 times as successful as those that don't, is that they care enough to have a system to begin with. Let me explain. The first step to success in sales is an iron-clad commitment that you're going to be successful. Anyone committed to a goal lays out a plan and follows a system to achieve that end. Whether it's weight loss, learning how to play the harmonica... or sales goals. The person who just “kind of” wants to lose weight, thinks it “might be nice” to play the harmonica, or are in sales because it “pays the bills and gets them to the weekend”, aren't putting in extra time to plan out how they're going to actually make it happen. Similar to the person who spends more time planning a vacation than their retirement. They simply aren't serious about the latter.

The good news is: a sales system doesn't have to be a painstakingly detailed, step-by-step system that's required to run a franchise such as Subway or Starbucks. All that's required is that it leads to enough of the right activities resulting in enough contacts with enough qualified prospects, to make enough sales to hit weekly, monthly, and annual sales goals.

The Necessary Ingredients for a Successful Sales System

Ingredient #1: A Plan

Your plan is the easy part of this process. It simply consists of your goals, your activity, and your plan to get the activity done.

The first thing you need to determine is your annual sales goal. Once you have your annual goal, break that down to monthly and weekly goals. Next, calculate your daily activity. In order to do that, begin by dividing your annual goal by the size of your average sale. That will give you the number of sales you have to make for the year. Now, based upon your closing ratio, figure out how many proposals you need to present. Calculate the number of prospects you need to get that number of proposals. And finally how many calls does it take to get that number of prospects? Once you have the total number of sales, proposals, prospects, and calls, break those down to monthly, weekly, and daily numbers for each.

Your last step is to plan your days and weeks based upon the number of calls you need to make while getting your other activities done. Whatever your numbers are, with 168 hours in a week, you should have more than enough time. An example of the business portion of a day in your week might look like the following: 7 – 8 a.m.: paperwork and prep for the day, 8 – 10 a.m.: prospecting phone calls, 10 to noon: in-person prospecting, noon to 1: lunch, 1 to 3: appointments, 3 to 5 prospecting phone calls, 5 o'clock: paperwork.

Ingredient #2: The Tools

Your tools will consist of: a playbook, a binder with all scripts, a Concept Book, and a way to track and follow up with clients and prospects. Your playbook will include everything, but not limited to: company policies and procedures, how you start your day, how you find, contact, and follow-up with prospects, how to build long-term relationships, and how you end your day. It's basically something that you can hand to a brand new person and they can be up and running once they have a general understanding of it. A binder with all scripts contains: all prospecting calls, presentations, answers to objections, and all other items you need to convey to prospects and clients. Your Concept Book will contain all your "evidence": testimonials, user lists, reference letters, endorsements, articles, guarantees, examples of where your product or service was applied with successful results, and all documentation that supports any claims you make during your calls. Finally you need CRM (client relationship management) and PRM (prospect relationship management) systems in place. These don't have to be super-complicated or even computerized, they just have to be effective. I have one sales rep who uses a Yearly Planner, 3x5 index cards, and an excel spreadsheet. Again, the keys here are that you have a system and that it's effective.

Ingredient #3: Follow the Plan and Make Adjustments

Once you have your plan, get into action as soon as possible. Notice what is and isn't working and make adjustments. Remember, imperfect action is better than no action. The biggest problem I see with putting a system together is that some people become perfectionists and as a result, are

never ready to take action. Take action every day, even while you are putting your system together. Do not stop everything you're doing and decide you're going to wait until you have the perfect plan in place. *Do sales activities every day whether a plan is in place or not.*

If you're looking for an additional resource to help you put together a system, one of John's tools is: [Business Growth Vault](#) at CoachBru.com.