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## **Selling More Without Pressure**

By Beth Sayers

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## About the Author

Beth Sayers has wide experience in selling products and services to different markets and helping to promote them through direct sales, seminars, trade shows and advertising.

Beth noticed that many of the people around her were having trouble coping with the effects of the higher pressure on them. This started to affect their sales and many other important parts of their lives.

Over the next few months, Beth looked for the reasons why some people were doing as well or even better than they had before while others were not.

"The more successful people were not usually much different from their colleagues but they adapted better to the changing circumstances."

Beth wrote her ebook to try to help people cope with the negative effects of greater competition, demands for higher productivity and cost-cutting at all levels which have developed in recent years.

"I didn't find any "magic bullet" and no technique will be equally good for everyone. But, these ideas have worked for many different people, so I believe you will get great value from those which you use."

"I believe these ideas and techniques will be of great value to my readers. Of course, people will find some ideas more useful to them in their particular situation than others. Just keep the ones that work best for you."

"Most don't require a lot of effort or time to test in your own situation. Some will need a little time before you see significant results but those are likely to be the ones which also give you the greatest benefits. It just takes a little persistence."

She believes that the simple tips which she explains in her ebook will help almost anyone be much more successful in any sort of sales position, whether they sell face-to-face, by phone or over the Internet.

## Introduction

"Selling More without Pressure" is designed to help every reader improve the results they get and ensure that everyone involved; their customer, the company they work for and the sales person all get the best possible value from everything in their sales process.

I based most of this ebook on my own experience and have also included many tips and supporting information which other successful sales people have shared with me.

My main focus has been how we can adapt to the increasing pressure which is demanding better results and more effort while we are also required to cut costs to the bone.

I have years of experience selling in a number of areas. I have also prepared some advertising which has been successful.

I have also been very lucky in being able to watch and learn from some very successful marketers and copywriters.

I believe that you will find many of the suggestions will be worth adapting to your sales routine, whatever type of product or service you are offering.

The introduction of ever more powerful technology will mean that sales people will continue to face greater competition into the future. We all need to re-assess the methods we use and our interaction with colleagues, customers and suppliers so that we can all get the best results from our work.

I can't guarantee that anything in this book will solve all the problems you encounter in your work but they are helping many people in a variety of areas make more money and improve their business and personal lives, despite the added pressures which we all have to deal with.

## Everybody Sells!

If someone tells you that they hate sales and being sold to, don't bother to try to change their opinion. Those people have a view based on emotion and probably have had one or two encounters with aggressive sales people.



They aren't likely to give you a fair hearing about the value of the sales process or your product unless you give them time to move from that emotional state to a more reasonable one.

If you encounter someone with that negative view of our work or you are feeling down (and even the most successful people have those moments), it helps to remember that you have the most important job in the world.

As Arthur (Red) Motley, a very successful publisher who was also the President of the U.S.A. Chamber of Commerce for six years from 1960, said, "Nothing happens until someone sells something!"

This applies in our personal lives as well as our business activities.

We are all constantly involved in transactions of one kind or another. We have to negotiate to survive and the best sales people are likely to thrive most too!

The important thing is that you use your skills to provide quality services or products which help to improve the lives of your customers.

We all know there are people that sell anything for profit with no regard for the value to their customer. They give selling a bad name and make it harder for us to do our jobs. But, when you do your job well, you help to improve the impression that your customers have of sales people in general.

I have always been a booster for the type of business I was in and the people involved in it, not just myself and the people I worked with.

If anyone says anything negative about anyone else that works in the same

field, especially if it is just opinion and not based on documented fact, they are reducing the good standing of everyone in their type of business.



## **We all Love "Free", but .....!**

When I started in sales, I was told by my boss that, "The most powerful magic word is not "Abracadabra". "Free" is the greatest of them all!"

That sounds good, and may have been true at that time. But, I always have preferred Dale Carnegie's view that, "The most powerful word for any person is their own name".

Of course, I wasn't silly enough to argue with my boss about which was right!

Anyway, "Free" still catches a prospect's eye pretty well but you may have noticed that it doesn't seem to have the same pulling power as it used to?

I think that it may have been over-used and people aren't hooked by it as strongly as they used to be. After all, your potential customers are smart enough to realize that the "free" gift will only come to them if there is at least a strong chance they buy something from you or provide you with information about themselves which will help you sell them something later on.

They can see the bait but are wary of the hook.

I suggest that the main problem with many advertisements which we see is that the advertiser doesn't give their free offer the support it needs.

If you don't show your prospect the value of your gift to them, they will tend to think it's free, but probably worth nothing anyway.

You must always get the prospect to realize that you are giving them something which they really need.

The best way to do this is to show them how they will get some exceptional benefit by accepting your offer which they would otherwise have to pay for.

Then, you have to call for them to take action by setting a deadline for them to be able to get your offer. That's a form of pressure but you need to do it or they are likely to delay their decision about your offer.

Then, you could lose the possible sale because they are lured away by a better or more carefully targeted offer from some other company. Remember

that we all probably see more than a hundred advertisements each day!

So, you show the potential customer that they need to act now because (for instance) you set a limit on the number of items which you can give away or the offer is likely to finish soon. This also re-enforces the point that what you offer has real value.

The conditions which you put on the offer should seem reasonable to your reader. If you have done a good job of persuading them that the gift has a high value and it is relevant to the product they are thinking about buying, you have a better than average chance of making more sales.

The fact is that, if you don't set a limit, many of the people who read your advertisement will tend to delay taking action. They put it aside to deal with when they have more time. You probably do that yourself too.

That will probably result in them forgetting about your offer when they are distracted by something in the next email which they see. So, make your call to action as powerful as you can.

And, back up your call to action by giving the customer a firm but reasonable time frame in which they can get your valuable offer.

## Develop a Personal Mission Statement



Putting together a plan for your life and including a realistic set of goals and possible future milestones for your career is worthwhile, whatever your stage in life.

The people that achieve great success are not necessarily any smarter or stronger than you or I.

They are probably more focused.

One way to help you become more successful is to write down the goals you are striving for, defining them clearly in the form of measurable outcomes.

You also need to set a time limit by which you will achieve each of the goals which you are focused on.

Don't set any goals without writing out your plan for achieving each one.

Putting a time frame on them changes dreams to goals.

When you are writing your mission statement, avoid using the word, "try".

I have found that this word is often used like an escape clause in the contract. If the person who said, "I'll try ...." finds that they cannot meet their self-imposed deadline, they console themselves with the thought that, "at least I tried".

Preparing your own mission statement will probably take you no more than about thirty minutes.

But, if you ensure that it is simple with clear goals and deadlines, you will continue to reap benefits from that exercise for years to come.

## Get More Sales with Good Questions

There are two kinds of questions and you need to know when each type is the most appropriate.

**Closed questions** are often conversation stoppers while **Open questions** encourage the other person to give more than a routine "Yes" or "No" answer.

If someone asks you, "Are you happy?" you will probably just say "Yes" or "No" and leave it at that unless they ask another question.

If they ask, "Are you unhappy about anything?" you could still answer "Yes" or "No" and leave it at that, but you might also give an explanation that included more detail about your satisfaction or unhappiness.

When you are the person asking the questions, always use open questions to get as much relevant information from your customers or prospects.

If you watch some interviewers on television, you will often see instances of manipulation where the more skilled interviewer controls the responses of many people they interview through open and closed questions.



### *Handling Questions*

You should also give some thought to how you will handle questions from your customers and other interested people.

Be careful that you follow company policy about what questions you may answer and what, if any, should perhaps be referred to more senior staff, specialist areas within the company or the company's media consultant.

Some people will spoil their chances when they are preparing for an interview for a job or facing questioning by the media because they know that they don't have good answers to some questions which they might be asked, but they don't do anything to prepare beyond a vague hope that they will be able

to avoid the questions.

It is a much better approach to spend some time working out your best possible response to those questions!

If you don't prepare for the hard questions in advance, you will probably sabotage all of your efforts because your self-confidence will be affected by fear of those questions being asked and you will make a bad impression because of your inability to answer them.

You don't beat a big opponent by only focusing on smaller ones.

## Quick Tips for More Sales

**Listening:** The success of any sales person will usually be reflected in the ratio between the amount of talking they do compared to the amount of listening.

You also need to practise listening well, Most of us prefer the sound of our own voice to that of anyone else and, unfortunately, it is often very obvious.

**Use your customers' names whenever you can.** It is actually quite easy to learn how to remember people's names and other important details about them.

The basic reason that many of us find it hard to do is because we do not pay sufficient attention when we are introduced to them for the first time.



You have probably met some people that appear to listen to you but don't remember your name or much else when they meet you again even just a few minutes later.

I can recommend any of the books by Harry Lorayne about how to train your memory and improve your recall because I have used them and given many as presents to other salespeople on various occasions. Mr. Lorayne's first book

was, "How to Develop a Super Power Memory". I believe that it is probably still in print more than 40 years after its original publication.

Remember and use the names of the people you meet. One of my managers recommended that we used the other person's name at least twice in the first ten minutes after being introduced to them. She said that had two advantages; they liked to hear their name (just as any of us would) and it helped us to remember them.

I mentioned in another section the late Dale Carnegie's observation that the most important word to any person is their own name.

**A good sales person is a problem solver**, not just a product pusher. The

prospect knows what they need better than you do. Until you let them share that information, you cannot decide how to show that your product or service is the right solution for their problem.

**Tell them only what they need to know.** Wasting your time and, even more significant, wasting their time by pushing everything you know about the product at them will reduce any enthusiasm they might have for buying your product now and also for listening to anything you want to tell them in the future.

## Every Sale is a Team Effort

One of the most important lessons that I ever learned was that all sales depend on teamwork.



When you start making a few sales and your income and reputation grow within the company or among your colleagues in the industry, it is very easy to forget that your sales and your continued prosperity are, in a large part, dependent on the efforts of other people apart from yourself.

Just think how many products you could sell if your company's receptionist, accounting department, stores and service personnel did not provide an adequate level of support to your efforts?

Every one of these people is at least partly responsible for the success of the company and your own sales efforts.

I suggest that you make time to introduce yourself to the people that perform these vital functions in the background. I've made a practice to meet with them and ask them about their experience with the orders I've placed and the customers I deal with.

They have provided to me valuable information about the companies and individuals which I sold our products to. Many times, this direct contact gave them an opportunity to make suggestions which helped me to provide better service to the customers.

Sometimes, they have let me know about temporary problems with the supply of certain products which I would not have found out about through normal channels.

This has also been helpful when a customer has had a problem with an order or an account. I could follow up more easily on their behalf because I had made contact with particular people in the relevant areas – I was not just another voice on the phone to them.



Please understand that I always go through proper channels and am not suggesting that you do anything that's not in line with your company's policies.

But, personal connections with other sections of the company have enabled me to establish a level of trust and cooperation which is not always easy to do where there is no personal direct contact.

## Connecting with the Prospect



Your initial contact with somebody who is a potential customer may come through the standard channels such as advertising, walking into your store or show room, by phone or e-mail.

In some cases, you may connect with them when you are not working.

It's important to remember that your behavior, appearance and attitude at all times can reflect well or badly on your own professional reputation and that of the business which you represent.

I have had my first meeting with many people that have become customers, suppliers or even, in one case, my new boss at non-business occasions.

### *Your Introduction.*

Think carefully about how you will answer the inevitable question, "What do you do?"

Your carefully prepared answer should seem casual, relevant and interesting. Make it accurate and keep it low-key.

Try to give the other person an opening to follow up if they have a need or an interest which relates to your type of business.

This can be hard work and you probably won't get it right first time.

Make sure that you return the courtesy and ask the other person the same sort of question so that they have a chance to introduce themselves.

But, don't turn the conversation into a business discussion unless it is appropriate and they have expressed something more than just polite interest.

## **Business Card Tips**

I carry a couple of business cards with me at all times, but I am very careful that I don't push them on anyone, especially when I am not working.

Instead of paying for colored printing, check the cost of having your cards printed just with black ink, but on colored stock. It can give you greater impact because of the extra color at a lower cost.

Don't waste the back of your business card. Add some information which is of use to your client which they might refer to at some time every business day. That might be dates of important conferences or other events.

You save them the time it would take to look up the information and ensure that they see your contact information a few times each day!

Make sure that everything you put on your card is easy for your customers to read. Avoid decorative fonts (unless that is appropriate for your business) and very small print.

A good designer is worth much more than whatever they charge you. Many people are tempted to use their desktop publishing program to design and, sometimes, even produce their business cards.

The impression which these cards create on their customers and prospects is likely to be poor.

Look at the cards of your competitors and clients. You want your card to be at least as good as the best among those. That does not mean the thickest, most ornate or most unusual – just the one that makes the right professional impression.

Put your website address and email on your business cards. If you have a V.O.I.P. (Voice Over Internet Protocol) phone account, put your contact details on your card.

This may mean that you get some calls at awkward times. But, most people that call at odd times probably have a serious need for your product or service.

Even when they don't order at that time, the good impression they get from your extra accessibility and willingness to help can make the possibility of future business much more likely.

I had one customer ring my regular phone to find out what V.O.I.P. was about. Her daughter was going overseas for the first time and I gave her the information about how they could keep in touch at low cost, increasing the mother's peace of mind. She has since become a very good customer!

## **A Sympathy Sale can kill a Career!**

When some sales people are put under pressure from other sellers with better offers or more advanced products, a few try to get some sales by asking for special treatment from some of their customers.

They talk about their personal problems in the hope of getting some sales.

These people are not real competition for you or any sales person that maintain a professional attitude. Even if some of your customers give them an order, it is not likely to become a trend.

The only harm that these sales people do is to their own future prospects. No-one really likes to be burdened with these sorts of demands. After all, each of those customers have their own problems.

One of them is to get the best products for their businesses at the best price. They might give some preference to someone that makes an emotional rather than a rational appeal but their own success demands that it is a one-off occurrence at best.

The sales person that uses this sort of tactic will have greater difficulty than ever in maintaining a good relationship with their customers.

If you find yourself having personal problems which are affecting your work performance and the results which you get, you should seek help where appropriate from among your family and friends. Of course, you may have to say something about it to your supervisor if the problem is likely to continue to affect your work. That's the only person outside of your family and doctor or other advisor who needs to know about your personal problems (and you may find that they will help you more than you expect).

if those matters intrude on your business, it may not only affect the smooth running of your workplace, but i cause other problems in the future.



## Dealing with Pressure and Stress

The effects of the pressure and the stress which we encounter every day have a profound and lasting effect on our health, our performance and our personal and business relationships.



I will tell you what has been helpful to me and people that I know or have been told about. Each of us has our own store of experience and unique personal characteristics.

I must emphasize that I am only giving you my personal opinions about this area. I am not offering advice to anyone about this subject. You must make your own enquiries and consult with your doctor or other health professional that is qualified to advise you and can match his or her advice to your particular situation and requirements.

I looked into various stress relieving courses and theories but, the more I looked, the more confused I became about how I should proceed.

I wanted to avoid pills and potions if possible, although I realized they are a great help to some people.

Eventually, I asked a friend who I knew had been having problems because of a high pressure job and the resultant stress. I had noticed that he had seemed much better and more in control on the last couple of times that I had met him.

He was happy to tell me about his experiences in broad terms. As I said before, he emphasized that everybody's circumstances are different and there is no one-size-fits-all remedy which he could tell me or anyone could sell me.

Jack said, "A major part of the solution to me was to start to change the way that I was thinking about the pressures I was under and the stress which they caused."

"I didn't start to do that until I began to notice that these problems were having a serious effect on my self-image, general health and my relationships."

"That was the motivation I needed to take stock and make it a priority to fix the problems which were why I was becoming stressed."

Jack said that he had always considered pressure and stress as interchangeable terms. But, they actually refer to two very different things. He found that it was much easier for him to start dealing with the problems when he understood that difference better.

The **pressures** come from outside of us. They can be financial, emotional or physical.

The **stress** on our emotions and our physical system comes from the way we deal with those pressures.

The important part of the process and the one which few of us give sufficient attention is how we handle the pressures that are applied to us.

When anyone thinks that the pressure they are under is a problem and perhaps beyond their control, they become less able to deal with that pressure. This, according to Jack, also reduces the possibility that the stressed person might be able to handle that sort of pressure any better in the future.

Jack said that he thinks that this shows that our thoughts are more powerful than most of us realize.

It does not matter whether our thoughts are an accurate representation of the level of difficulty we could have when we tried to deal with this form of pressure. If we believe that it is too difficult for us to handle, it is unlikely that we will be able to win over it.

Jack said that he had to start changing his viewpoint about some of the major pressures which were affecting him. He pointed out that this was not an easy thing to do because he had previously accepted that they were too strong for him.

Different types of pressure will probably need to be handled differently.

You might start by reviewing whether or not there are, in reality, some tactics which you can use to reduce or remove the problem.

When you closely examined some of the pressures on you, you may find that they are not only bearable but they have little if any negative effect on you. The negativity which you felt about them may have just been because you did not have enough information about them. That's just fear of the unknown which has been the downfall of many people through the years.



Sometimes, your best course maybe just to stand up and repel the pressure that someone else wants you to deal with. It may be a matter that could be better handled by somebody else, perhaps even the person that has been pushing it over to you.

Sometimes, of course, there are pressures which may well be beyond our individual ability to control or remove. Please be open-minded enough to consider whether or not a particular situation can be better handled by asking someone you know and trust or even a professional adviser for help.

The worst thing that you can do in these circumstances is to do nothing.

That will only ensure that your situation will become worse over time with little prospect of any change for the better until and unless you take stock and then take action.



## **Pattern of Agreement**

One of the simplest and most effective techniques which I learned from a sales manager was that I could get more sales if I controlled the discussion between myself and the potential customer.

Although it was important to let each person say whatever was on their mind, I could usually keep the conversation mostly focused on the product or service which I was offering without offending them.

With careful preparation and practise, I could cover all the important points which the customer needed to know and get a decision on whether they would buy in a shorter time than might have otherwise been required.

That meant there was a possibility that I could make more sales in a day and that the customer's time was also not wasted.

The manager had another tip which has also been very helpful to me.

He said that I should ask questions as our conversation progressed, but that I should ensure that the questions were likely to prompt a "yes" in response. His theory, which I have found to be a good one, was that people who had been saying yes a few times were more likely to say yes to the offer I made to them.

Although this seems very simplistic, I suggest that you try it if you think that it fits with your type of sales process.

## **What's Your "Emotional Appeal"?**

You have probably heard of the term, "unique selling proposition". This refers to a feature of your product or service which you promote as being unique and better than anything resembling it which your competitors may offer.

If you examine the unique selling propositions which are promoted by various companies, you will probably find that there is little difference or extra benefit between those features and the offerings of their competitors.

But, clever promotion of a particular feature can make people take notice of your product and increase the number of enquiries you get.

What do you do when the potential customer contacts you?

I don't just focus on the features.

I try to connect with those benefits which the customer wants to get from buying the product.

That means connecting with the customer's emotions!

The truth is your customers will buy what they want (what gives them an emotional high) and then justify their action to themselves, their partner and friends with the features which are promoted in your advertising.

But, concentrating on the features when you are trying to sell the item is a losing proposition.

## The Biggest Mistake

At a recent conference which I attended, one of the lighter sessions was about the biggest mistakes which the featured speakers and some of the attendees could recall making during their selling careers.



It was interesting to see that all of the speakers, who had been chosen because of their proven success in the field of selling, were comfortable enough about their reputations to admit to some of the same mistakes which many of us have made from time to time.

When the focus shifted to those watching the presentation and we were asked to say what we felt were some of the biggest mistakes we had made, very few people put their hands up.

I did and, when given the microphone, I stood up and said, "My biggest mistake was that I used to try to do too much on my own and delay asking for help too often."

I could see from the reaction on the stage and in the audience that this mistake is a fairly common one.

There can be many reasons for people deciding to try to do everything themselves.

We may take on more than we can handle because we want to make a powerful impression on our colleagues and our manager.

If we get into trouble, we may try to fix the problem without asking anyone to help us because we don't want any damage to our reputation.

Or it could be for any number of other reasons.

The problems which can arise from this attitude are many. The delay may mean that the problems cost more in money and manpower to fix.

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness and it is never likely to be assumed that you are incompetent just because you need help with a particular issue.

I feel that somebody who asks for my help is actually paying me a compliment. They are demonstrating that they have confidence in my knowledge and character.

I have always found that the people I asked to help me have been willing and sometimes a little flattered that I asked them.

After all, the worst that can happen if you ask somebody for help is that they might say they are too busy or they are, for whatever reason, unable to help you with that particular problem.

So, at worst, you will have a delay of a few minutes. Then, all you have to do is ask someone else.

There were many other mistakes which were mentioned and discussed in that particular session at the conference.

**The point is that everybody makes mistakes.**

**The important thing is how you handle them.**

### **We all Make Mistakes**

This is probably a good point in the book to suggest a good way to deal with any mistakes which you make.

Don't worry about the consequences. You probably cannot change them.

Just contact anyone that is directly affected by your error and make arrangements to make good on any losses you have caused them.

When I did this, I got a very generous response from the people concerned.

In almost all cases, the impression created by accepting responsibility and making good on any losses they had, gave them a great impression of me and I have done further business with them over the years since my mistake.

I can't imagine that this would have happened if I had tried to avoid my responsibility for the problems I caused them.

## Impending Doom

With all the problems and opportunities that we have to deal with each day, it amazes me that so many people waste so much time and energy worrying about possible future problems.

Most of us will have feelings of uncertainty from time to time about what may happen in the future. This may be because we are having medical tests and have to wait for results or perhaps we have heard through the media, or our personal grapevine, about potential changes in the operations of the company that we work for.



It is perfectly natural that we will feel some concern when these events are looming.

You know that I am going to say worry is unproductive. But, I realize that it is very hard not to worry in those circumstances.

I want to suggest, however, some things which may help you as much they helped me in similar circumstances.

**Get the facts:** The first thing which I found a great help was to find out the most reliable information about the potential problem.

If you are concerned about your future employment, don't keep your worry bottled up inside you where it will only cause you to feel worse as the days go on.

Find out who can provide reliable information and contact them.

**Consider all the options:** The next thing I suggest you do is to discuss with those people the different outcomes which may occur. Then, you are in a better position to work out what might be your best options for each of those events.

Of course, this will not solve your problems, but it will mean that you are

better prepared for whatever the future holds and you will, to some extent, prevent worry and uncertainty from affecting your enjoyment of each day.

Taking action like I suggested here will help you handle whatever happens.

## Three Magic Words

Three words which have helped me improve almost every part of my working day and, at times, have also helped remove problems from my personal life as well are **adapt, improve** and **discard**.

### **Adapt**

You will often find that you can improve the way that you do something by adapting your present method instead of buying new equipment or making large changes to your regular procedures.

Although we are professional sales people and keen to refine our methods, we may tend to switch off our analytic abilities when we are on the other side of the transaction. We enjoy being treated as that special person, a potential customer. As we are sales people ourselves, it's very easy for us to recognize things that other good sales people do and it's usually very easy to add them to our own store of ideas.

A very good way to improve your current practices with minimal costs is to take note of marketing ideas which are being used in other types of business activity.

If you are intending to buy a new camera or a car or even a bicycle for your child, try to watch for any strategies the sales people use which you might be able to adapt to your type of sales.

### **Improve**

However successful our current methods are, we need to be trying to improve on them.

We cannot expect to even maintain our current level of success unless we do.

The stark truth is that some of our customers will stop buying from us, some other firm will bring out a more advanced product or system and competition will continue to increase.

The main point about improvement is that a small advance can have significant effect. I know people that are always looking for some super idea

or tactic which will make them unbeatable.

While they are searching desperately for it, they may be overtaken by you and I if we just keep improving a little whenever we can.

The tortoise in the fable had the right idea.

Simple ideas, like sending a clipping you saw which could help your customer improve their business, can pay dividends.

## **Discard**

**Stuff:** Many people routinely clip articles from magazines and save copies of interesting web pages or emails which are sent to them.

If you have been doing this, you might want to go through your cupboards and computer disks and discard the out-of-date, irrelevant and obsolete items.

I know that there is a cost we must pay for this habit.

The clips that came with items that were useful, such as productivity tips, are just dross after we have adapted or discarded the tips.

Because the individual file or clipping is small and most of us have plenty of storage space in cupboards or on disk drives, we may not realize how much rubbish we are expending energy and time to look after.

Some people I know have hundreds of disks but don't know what is on more than half of them.

If you want to improve your personal comfort, you could discard any books that you are probably never going to read again, stationery which you have had for a long time but never found a use for, and old electronic devices.

Some things may be useful to other people. But, everyone probably has more stuff which is just filling valuable space.

**Saving cents – losing dollars:** I know a salesperson that still has an old expired mobile phone number on his car. He doesn't get many people calling him but, if he got one new customer, it would be more than enough to pay for having his current mobile phone number and new signage put on his car.



We are all inclined to stick with our comfortable shoes and our television viewing habits. We need to be a bit more focused when we look at our business though.

**People:** We also need to realize that we have to think about the people we associate with. If we are mixing with people that are negative in their attitude and outlook, that will inevitably have a bad effect on our own attitude over time.

This will make it harder for us to deal with the effects of the disappointments which are an inevitable part of everyone's life.

If you want to keep moving forward, try to reduce the time which you spend with people that are stuck in self-imposed misery and doubt.

## **Managing Yourself**

One of the greatest causes of pressure on busy sales people is caused by their lack of proper management skills.

This can affect every part of our business and personal lives.

Just think what benefits you could get if you could arrange to have an extra thirty minutes, or even one hour, added to your day.

These tips have served me well and I believe that they will be just as valuable to you.

### ***Start Now***

You don't have to wait for the New Year or arrange for a block of a few hours to get started on your re-organization.

You just need to arrange some quiet time when you can plan your changes. Then, you should start with the minimum of delay. Putting off the reclaiming of your space, time and health could easily become a new habit which you will find hard to break!

### **Your Systems**

Organizing how you can do things better is the obvious place to start.

But, trying to change your systems and become more organized can be a stressful experience in itself.

That's usually because you try to do too much in too short a period and because your attempts to change things cause problems with meeting your current commitments.

You must keep in mind that:

- Changing the way that you do things will probably mean that some things take you longer to do while you are getting comfortable with your new system.
- Some changes may actually give you less improvement than you expected or needed. Then, you will probably need time to change

back where that is possible.

### **Do a Bit Every Day**

Most of us can probably find some small tasks which we can do without affecting our daily routine too much which can help us make small steps closer to our new organized state.

Instead of tacking an entire filing cabinet in one session, maybe you could take out a couple of folders and sort them out while you are having your lunch.

This can also help by reducing the worry which we might feel because of the size of a particular organizational task.

## **Reduce Your Breaks and Enjoy Them More**

When you prepare for a big task, decide before you start when you will take breaks, other than for any urgent matters, of course.

If you find yourself becoming stressed after you have been involved in some concentrated effort with your re-organization, it's tempting to take a break – maybe just a few minutes.

I suggest that you resist that urge until you have reached one of the significant points which you specified during your preparation. Then, give yourself that well-deserved break.

If you stop in the middle of a task without a specific reason, you will find that:

- You will start to make this a habitual response which will reduce your effectiveness on other tasks in the future.
- You will waste several minutes each time you take a break as your concentration and level of effort are reduced when you prepare for the break and again when you start to get back into the task.

## Manage Your Time

Almost everybody will acknowledge that time management is an essential skill for anyone that wants to succeed in any type of work.

But, many of us continue to suffer from problems in this area. Some people have even told me that they don't have time to learn to become better time managers!

That's really an example of a problem I mentioned in another section.

We recognize the potential benefits but feel that we are under too much pressure every day to start making improvements.



This task can be a lot easier than you may think.

We just have to remember the instructions for eating an elephant, "One bite at a time"!

The tips in the following sections can be used successfully by almost anyone and they should be easy to incorporate in your routine.

Just try one or two to begin with.

It is also very important to give those tips you do try at least a couple of weeks. Consistency is very important.

If you only take the medicine your doctor prescribed every second Wednesday, you probably won't see any benefits for a very long time.

## The Way We Do Things

Everybody develops routines which they do regularly. Most of us probably don't put much thought into how efficient those systems are – we just keep doing things the way we were shown when we started doing the job.

I have found that I can save time by investing a little time and effort in reviewing the routines which I have been using.

When I save time, I can either use that time for increasing my sales or by spending more time with my family and friends.

So, I regularly look at the tasks which I do with an aim to improving the results I get from them.

I have found it worthwhile to ask myself a few simple questions about each task which requires significant time and/or effort.

The same questions apply to the tasks you do in your personal activities and your working day.

My first question is, "Do I get enough benefit from this to continue doing it?"

Many people just keep doing something because they have been doing it for some time. But, they may be actually putting valuable time and effort into something which is actually not giving them enough value to make it worthwhile for them.

My next question is, "Should I be doing this myself?"

In your personal life, you may decide that another family member might take some routine task off your hands. Or, you may feel that it would be worthwhile for you to hire someone to come to your home and mow your grass or trim the hedge. That can be a win-win for both parties.

You just have to decide if the benefits for you are worth the usually low-cost of getting professional help.

In your working environment, you may not have the power to be able to decide whether you must do particular tasks.

When you get a task that has some negative aspects, just use the next

Chapter, Simple Systems, to work out the best way to do it and get it done. If you feel that there are benefits to the organization if someone else does a particular task rather than from you doing it, it's always worthwhile discussing it with them.

I think that every job probably has some aspects which are less pleasant. But, I also have found that excelling at a task which most of your colleagues do badly or avoid doing as often as possible can sometimes be a way to make a very positive impression which can count when you have your annual review.

## Simple Systems

Most well-organized people have simple routines which they have worked out for things which they need to do often.

Of course, you can get help from a professional organizer but the tips in this section should give you a good start while you are saving the money to get professional help.

Once you start to see the results, your motivation to improve the way you do various tasks will increase.

Please don't think that this is intended to make you a slave to the systems which you develop. I always keep my focus on the benefits for my business and personal activities which I get from the systems – they are the really important things in our lives.

It is definitely worth the time to develop your own systems.

Start by breaking a task in the smallest possible steps.

The easiest way to do this is to do the task and make notes of each action which you do.

You can try to make notes as you mentally go through the steps but this never worked very well for me because I always missed out something.

When you actually do the individual steps, you may find that something about the way you go through the procedure can be eliminated or improved. You may have been doing it that way for years and suddenly find how you can shave a few minutes off or even reduce the amount of effort you need to put into the task!

When you have written everything down, scan through all the steps which you listed and see if there are any parts which can be improved.

Again, you might see something which can be done in a different order or even eliminated altogether.

### Simple is Best

Some people are highly organized. They have Personal Information systems,



Smart phones, G.P.S. in their car, wireless or even Satellite Internet access and at least two diaries. If there's something newer released, they have it!

Whatever level of technology you use for organizing your business activities, make sure that you:

**Make back-ups and check them:** Disks, batteries and even whole machines do fail unexpectedly. If you don't have another copy of your information, your emails and whatever else was stored on the device, it could be a significant set-back.

Have copies of your most important information and documents safely stored in a different location. This is essential. Though it may be awkward and expensive to arrange and maintain, just think how awkward and expensive it would be for you if you lost your only copy of some vital files?

**Keep your information with you:** Make sure that you have your most important information with you.

**Co-ordinate your information:** If you have a desk diary and a portable device which you keep your appointments in, make sure that they each have all current information. I have heard about a number of people who had used more than one diary or other device to record their appointments and were seriously affected because they did not have details of something on whichever device they had with them one day.

You can store information on the Internet and access it from your various devices. This can be convenient but you need to be sure that your information is secure against theft while being readily available at all times to you.

## This Question Keeps Me Focused

One question which I ask myself is, "**Is this what I need to do now?**"

Just ask yourself this question and see the effect it has on your focus.

The important point is that you decide the answer and the action you will take each time.

The question is just a reminder for you.

I have found this so valuable that I printed a small card with this question in large print on it and I carry that card everywhere.

**Keep a Life/Work balance:** Please don't think that any of my suggestions are intended to keep you or anybody always focused on improving ourselves. It's important that we "work to live" rather than "live to work".

A balance between our personal and business activities is essential.

We re-organize our office and discard old files and other material which is getting in the way of getting maximum benefit from our work, but many of us resist making changes in the way we spend our time and who we associate with.



## Should You Upgrade Your Equipment?

Technology in various forms causes stress and frustration. You need to learn enough about the equipment you use to be confident that you will have no problems or cause any for your customers when you use it.

The rapid improvements in hardware mean that we have to review whether we should upgrade.

The following questions are useful when you are thinking of buying new equipment. They can save you money and help to prevent problems.

These questions may also be even more valuable to people that sell equipment of almost any kind, from office equipment to cars or almost anything else.

If you sell equipment of any kind, think about the questions in this section and prepare your best responses because they are likely to be questions your prospects will ask you at some time.

When you see the wonderful new technology advertised in the magazines or promoted by television programs or salespeople like ourselves, spending our hard-earned cash to get the new model and scrap the current system can seem like a quick fix – just swipe the plastic or draw down your cash reserves.

But, I try to remember to ask myself these questions which I hope will also be useful to you.

- 1]** Are there really any problems with the equipment which I already have that would make the cost and disruption from the upgrade worthwhile?
- 2]** Am I likely to lose business to competitors who actually are adapting the new equipment?
- 3]** If I stay with the present equipment, how long will it still be adequate for my needs? If the answer is "more than six months", you can probably wait because there is likely to be an even more advanced machine available by then. If that new model costs too much, you will probably be able to get the one you are considering now at a much better price after the release of the

next model.

**4]** If I buy the new equipment, how soon will it arrive?

**5]** Will there be a significant learning curve which could affect my ability to serve my customers during the change-over period?

If you are thinking about a major equipment purchase, I strongly suggest that you try not to be the first one with that model in your area.

That might be okay when you buy a stereo system or some household appliance, but any problems could be much more significant when you buy new office equipment.

If your equipment lets you down and your supplier cannot provide a quick solution, then you may risk letting down your customers.

Even if they are understanding (most of us have had problems with technology at some time), their first concern is for the smooth running of their business or the problems you cause them.

This is likely to cause some loss of reputation even if you don't actually lose customers.

It could leave some doubt in their minds which could reduce the likelihood of you getting their next order.

Try to compensate your customers in whatever way you can, even when the difficulties were actually beyond your control.

Your best efforts to avoid any inconvenience to them are the best first step, even before an apology.

If you're new equipment does bring problems, losses for you are inevitable.

Try to prepare a backup plan which will minimize the effects, especially the time you will not be able to give your customers the normal level of service.

Be sure to warn your customers, prospects and suppliers that may be affected if you will be unavailable for even a few hours.

## Cleaning Your Mental Attic

Most people have a lot of stuff cluttering their home. I've given you some suggestions about reclaiming the space earlier.

Another space which you should also de-clutter from time to time is your "mental attic", your subconscious.

I know very few people that don't carry around with them fears, dreams and regrets about things which they cannot have any positive effect on. That dross is likely to be preventing them from making and enjoying the level of business success and personal enjoyment which they are capable of.

It is very common for people to spend valuable time wallowing in regret about things they did or perhaps should have done years before. Once they start doing this, it can be very hard to refocus themselves, let go of the past disappointment and reclaim their life.

But, it is always worth the effort.

Many people carry anger about past slights they suffered. Unfortunately, there is probably no way to redress the situation. All that they are doing by carrying that repressed and useless anger is risking damage to their own health.

This was something that blighted my life for a while in past years. But I managed to deal with it after I read this quote and took it to heart:

**Holding onto anger is like grasping onto a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else. You are the one who gets burned.**

**-- Gautama Buddha**

I hope that it will help some of my readers.

## **Afterword**

I hope that the tips and strategies which I shared with you in my ebook will help you to reduce any stress which you currently have and also give you some ideas about how to better handle it in future.

I wish you all the success you strive for and all the happiness you deserve.

***Beth Sayers***

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