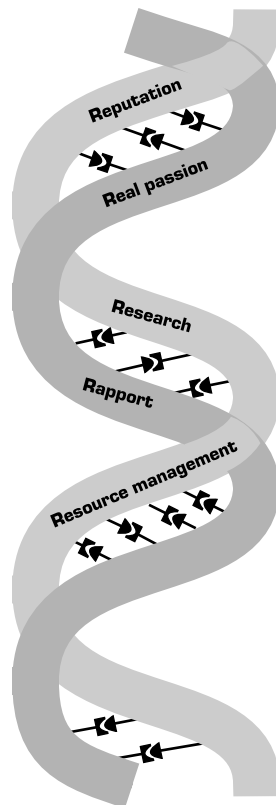


THE POWER OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

*Utilize Your Primary Tools to
Score More Sales*

You can want to be successful, and you can even want success for the right reasons. But if you don't apply the right resources, you still won't make it.

—GEORGE LUDWIG



Kyle W., who sold diagnostic imaging equipment in the hospital market, was frustrated in his attempts to meet a particular CEO at one of the nation's largest teaching hospitals. This guy had boxed him out of a large order and made himself completely unavailable to all salespeople. Instead of giving up, Kyle turned to his creativity and wit and developed a new approach. He dropped off a leading business book at the CEO's office in which he had highlighted passages that pertained to a particular leadership challenge the hospital was facing. In addition, he got three other area hospital leaders to write letters to this executive touting Kyle's reputation, character, and integrity.

Several days later, Kyle received a call from the CEO's assistant requesting a meeting to learn more about him, his company, and his products. Bingo! Kyle's creative ideas were so novel and compelling that they had gained him access to an intimidating, C-level executive. His application of the Power of Resource Management led to closing more than \$22 million in sales revenue from that account alone and helped him finish number one that year. Kyle W.'s creativity scored a sales touchdown.

Great football coaches achieve great success by managing their resources wisely. They often must take the team that's been given them and figure out how to develop it into a powerhouse. To accomplish this, they use four primary tools. First, they *develop a game plan* that strategically builds on their team's strengths and targets opponents' weaknesses. In addition, they must always *watch the clock* to be aware of how much time is left. Then, they must *be creative* with new offensive and defensive approaches, constantly adapting their lineup to changing situations. Finally, in front of the cameras at postgame press conferences and interviews, great coaches must know how to *present themselves as winners*. Outstanding coaches use these four resources to score one touchdown after another.

Sales superstars excel in their management of the same four resources. They know that a strategic game plan that covers every aspect of their business for the year, the quarter, the month, the week, and even the day is indispensable for achieving success. Top pros are creative in their approach to every facet of selling, from marketing themselves to securing referrals to presenting their products. They also know that the most precious resource they have to trade is their time and that how they present their solution to the buyer can make or break a sale.

These tools are overriding cardinal resources, because they contain the ability to ignite the other six *Power Selling* strategies. Your *game plan*, *watching the clock*, *creativity*, and *presenting to win* leverage all of your sales efforts to drive you into the end zone for a sales TD. There you'll experience the thrill of victory, not the agony of defeat.

YOUR GAME PLAN—THE KEY TO WINNING

Imagine an NFL coach gathering his team for a pregame meeting and giving instructions like, “Don’t forget to wear your helmet! Make sure to pass the ball only to the blue-and-orange jerseys. And remember, only 11 of you guys out there on the field at one time!” What would that team’s chances for success be with that kind of game plan? Zero!

NFL coaches and their staff develop a strategic game plan for every single game, whether it’s the preseason opener or the Super Bowl. They watch miles of game film of the opposing team, and they analyze their own players’ assets and liabilities. They pore over statistics and then pull all their analysis together into a strategic game plan. This plan includes player choices, play selections, offensive and defensive formations, and even contingency options if the original plan doesn’t pan out. The specific initiatives and tactical maneuvers spring from the strategic game plan.

Fortune 100 CEOs never run onto the business playing field without a thoroughly thought-out business plan, and neither do the selling elite. The concept of strategy (*strategos*) originated in ancient Greece and meant preparing and setting up forces *before the battle* commences; the tactics (*taktikos*) used *during the battle* came from this plan. Likewise, to be successful in sales, strategic planning must precede tactical maneuvering. Sales masters know that a great strategic business plan, which comes before the actual selling, will position them in front of the right buyers at the right time with the right business solution.

Research confirms that fewer than 10 percent of salespeople have a business plan to follow and an established sales process as their daily guide. What do you think happens when you have no business plan and no proven process to implement that plan? With no clear sense of direction, you may end up heading off in all directions at once, which will definitely *not* get you closer to success.

Life Plan

Just as specific tactics come from a strategic plan, a strong business plan flows from an overall life plan. Sales success happens when your life is consistently directed by your purpose and core values. The well-defined sense of purpose we discuss in Chapter 2 does more than build a strong psychological foundation; it also directs every business decision you make. To be productive in selling, you also need to be productive when you're *not* selling. Problems in your personal life will eventually sabotage your sales results, too. As Zig Ziglar always said, "If you're hurting anywhere, you're hurting everywhere!"

Entire books have been written about how to develop a life plan, and it's beyond the scope of this book to tackle the specifics. I do want to stress the importance, though, of having something written down that defines your purpose. (See my example in Appendix A.) Commit to following some kind of life-planning, time-management system, such as FranklinCovey, Microsoft Outlook, or Anthony Robbins's Rapid Planning Method. You can also study several systems and create your own customized program. This kind of life planning, as described by Covey, helps you focus more consistently on what's truly important, as opposed to just what's urgent. Life planning and life balance lead to long-term sales success and happiness.

Strategic Business Plan

Average salespeople don't plan to fail; they just fail to plan. An NFL coach's number-one goal for the season is to win the Super Bowl. From that visionary goal, they set a goal for each game, which is simply to win that game. From this goal springs a strategic plan for each game. The top selling pros develop strategic business plans by identifying where they want their business to be at the end of a specific time frame. They start with their visionary big goals, then plan their strategic initiatives. With those initiatives in place, they set their short-range and mid-range goals and then, most importantly, plan their time.

Big goals must be simple and prioritized. You can have many sales goals, but they all should fall under a couple of big goals. For the auto salesperson, it might simply be the number of units sold or gross dollar

volume. For the real estate salesperson, it might be the total dollar volume sold or total dollar volume listed, or both. For the corporate salesperson, it might be exceeding the company's quota or reaching a certain income level. No matter what the specific major business goals are, they must be clear and obvious.

Remember, a goal without a number is just a slogan.

—JACK CANFIELD

Your business plan should also be married to a specific time frame that's relevant for your business. A three-year window often is an ideal long-term time frame to consider for vision-planning purposes. Most salespeople never look beyond one year, but if you don't know where you want to be in three to five years, how will you get there? For specific initiatives, the one-year business plan is the primary blueprint. From a one-year plan, you can easily formulate your quarterly plans, monthly plans, and weekly scheduling.

Strategic business plans vary greatly, depending on the company you work for and the clientele you serve, but every plan must include a market position assessment, sales volume goals, filling the sales funnel, sales funnel management, client retention, and administrative duties.

Market position assessment. A sales-driven business plan must take into account the market position of any product or service. While the fundamentals of selling are the same across all industries, a product's position in terms of its life cycle, market superiority, and market momentum influences the premises upon which your business plan is founded.

When you have a clearly superior market position, your business plan should call for frontal tactics. Geoffrey Moore's book, *Inside the Tornado*, points out that in this situation, you must show the product as often and as early as possible to as many prospects as possible. Pfizer employed this strategy with phenomenal success in 1998 when they introduced Viagra® for erectile dysfunction. With no competition, they promoted their product relentlessly, until it became part of household daily language and sold millions of units.

Conversely, when your product or service doesn't enjoy such an advantage, you must formulate a different business plan. Maybe your plan

can focus on selling your product to a small, specific niche, to gain a foothold where your competitors are absent. One of Betco's (Jan-San supplies) sales reps focused primarily on selling to school systems, because in his territory, the competitor dominated all other arenas. By zeroing in on school systems first, he was able to penetrate his territory successfully, gain a foothold of satisfied references, and then have enough presence to take on the more established competitor head-to-head in other arenas. In either case, a realistic market position assessment drives the plan.

Sales volume goals. Remember from Chapter 2 that focusing on your goals activates the RAS of the brain and helps create the conviction to reach the goals. Your sales volume goals direct your mental focus and form the core of your business plan.

Several elements make up your sales volume goals, the first of which is identifying your company's sales quota for you. Is it realistic, or is it too high or too low? It's better to change that number at the beginning of the fiscal year than one month before year's end. If your current market position assessment suggests that your quota is unrealistic, document your opinion objectively—don't emotionally cry that your number is just too high.

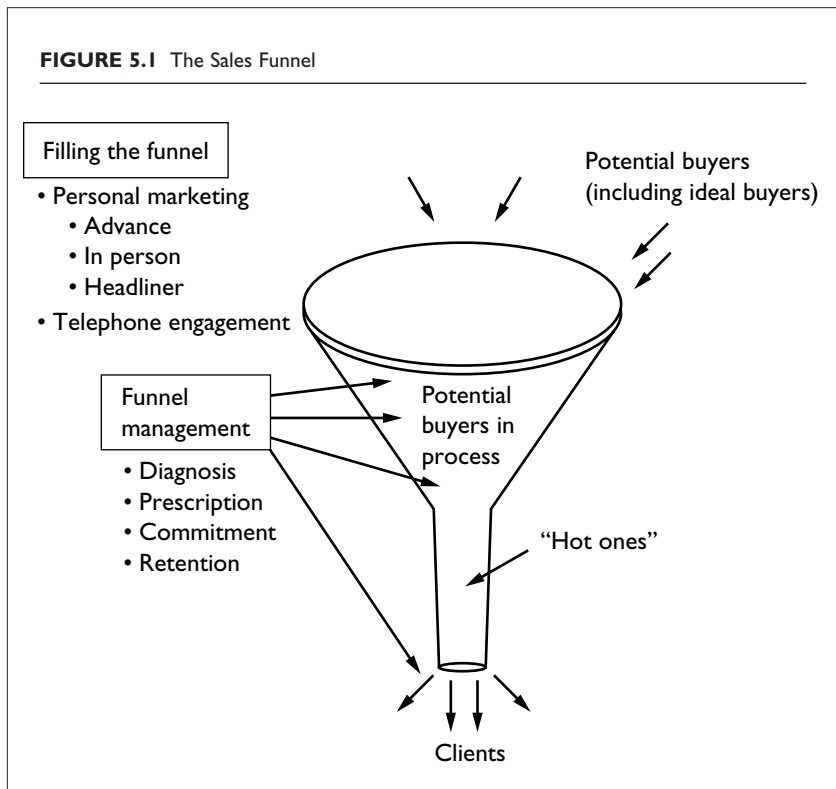
The second element is identifying your income goal. How much money do you want to make?

The third element is identifying the sales volume necessary to exceed your company's sales quota and/or your income goal. These sales volume goals should be established for the year, quarter, month, and even week, if appropriate. Sales volume goals can also be broken down by product, market, or other meaningful segment.

Filling the sales funnel. The pipeline that contains all of the prospects and buyers you currently pursue can be conceptualized best as a giant funnel. Floating above the funnel are all those prospects with whom you've never made contact. The potential buyers you've had direct contact with are just inside the big, wide top of the funnel. As the funnel narrows, the family history you've collected reduces the number of prospects. These leads are further reduced when you diagnose—you effectively *weed out* prospects to whom you're not likely to sell. Finally, down

at the narrow bottom of the funnel, you have just the *hot ones*, those best few buyers whose orders are imminent. The sales funnel will be examined closely in the next section as a primary tool for managing your time, but for now, simply recognize that your overall sales success depends on how many quality leads (ideal buyers) you drop into your funnel.

Your business plan must include a detailed strategy for generating enough leads to fill your funnel and reach your sales volume goals. You know from Chapter 3 that you must first identify your *ideal buyer*, develop a *target list* of ideal buyers, and determine the appropriate *strategy* to reach them. For most industries, setting appointments by telephone, covered in Chapter 4, is the primary prospecting method and keeps the funnel full. Your personal marketing strategy (which may include advance marketing, in-person marketing, or Headliner marketing tactics) and



your referral, networking (using your advocate list), and cold-calling initiatives should also be included in your plan.

All your initiatives should be written down and tied to specific, measurable milestones. For example, you might track the number of telephone prospecting calls attempted, referrals secured, direct-mail pieces sent out, or networking functions attended. These specific milestones, when attained, provide a high level of confidence that your sales volume goals will be reached.

Sales funnel management. Your strategic business plan must also include specific guidelines to prioritize and handle each potential buyer at every level of your sales funnel. Determine who gets the highest priority and what steps are needed to progress to the next stage in the funnel.

Managing your sales funnel also helps you forecast—most companies are sticklers for forecasting—and successfully predict future business. When you establish key milestones at each level of the sales process, you can more easily balance short-term prospecting activity to fill the funnel with long-term management. This helps eliminate giving your sales manager “blue sky” forecasts at the end of each quarter or month.

Client retention. This part of your business plan addresses how you will retain your clients. How will you not only meet, but exceed, their expectations? Remember from Chapter 1 that focusing on serving builds a strong reputation and that selling to a new buyer is *seven* times more expensive than selling to an existing one. Part of your business plan must include the strategies for turning clients into long-term collaborative partners. Because this is absolutely mandatory for joining the ranks of the selling elite, we have devoted Chapter 7, “The Power of Relationships,” to addressing it.

Administrative duties. This is a small but important part of any effective business plan. You must include your expense budget, paperwork requirements, forecasting reports, and any other helpful tactics that your company requires or you believe are necessary.

Great NFL coaches and sales superstars alike know that winning requires developing and following a strategic game plan. Here are a couple of Power Boosters to help you develop your business plan.

POWER BOOSTERS

- Go back to Chapter 1 and complete the Power Booster for discovering your purpose and write it down, if you haven't done so yet.
- Investigate various life-planning systems with the intent of adopting one or improving yours if you already have one.
- Develop a strategic business plan that incorporates all six components listed in this section.
- Go score some serious sales touchdowns with your new or improved plan!

WATCH THE CLOCK— DON'T LET TIME RUN OUT

In 1965, the Chicago Bears trailed the Minnesota Vikings by six points with less than two minutes to go. A running back by the name of Gale Sayers took the kickoff on the Bears's four-yard line, headed up the middle, cut to the left, ducked back to the right and scampered for the sideline. Once he reached the sideline, it was clear sailing all the way into the end zone. Nobody touched him. He scored a touchdown. A few plays later, a middle linebacker by the name of Dick Butkus grabbed an interception. On the Bears's very first play after Dick's interception, Gale Sayers scored his fourth touchdown of the day. The Bears won 45 to 37. Gale Sayers and the Bears knew that time was their scarcest resource and that they had to make every second count to win the game.

Sales superstars also know that if you don't manage time as your most precious resource, you'll remain on the bench. Starters know exactly how much time is left on the clock and use their seconds accordingly.

If you don't implement some kind of plan for effective time management, both in life and in sales, you will not become a sales superstar, and you'll probably end up unhappy and unfulfilled. You must learn to leverage the time you've devoted to selling to score more sales touchdowns.

Old time-management theory had salespeople believe it was somehow wrong not to call on every single buyer in their territory. This practice sends too many salespeople calling on too many accounts, which results in too few accounts being diagnosed properly, which results in too few orders. Remember from Chapter 2 that salespeople typically have only around 200 days per year to generate results. You *have* to make those days count if you want to become a sales superstar. A major key to sales success is spending your limited time with the best potential buyers in your universe, and three major steps help achieve this. You must *identify your ideal sales day*, *concentrate on your critical few*, and *work the sales funnel* for sales success.

The Ideal Sales Day

When our company is hired to develop a customized sales process and training program for a particular organization, one of the first things we try to identify is what their ideal sales day looks like. This isn't a description of the day when a salesperson brings home big orders—that's the "perfect sales day." Cha-ching! We want to identify the type of day in which you spend your time with ideal buyers, and increase the likelihood that the perfect sales day will more likely occur. Detailing this day sets a benchmark towards which you can work as you conduct your weekly planning and execute your daily tasks.

We create a descriptive template, based upon the company's sales team's input, that identifies what activities—if performed every day—would result in moving the sales efforts of the territory forward in the fastest manner.

The best way to show how the ideal sales day is formulated is to give examples. For Betco, we identified the ideal sales day as a day in which the salesperson visited two or more ideal buyers from their target account list, completed the precall identification research (i.e., the family history), and wrote up an account strategy for each call. When Betco sales personnel planned their days to line up closely with this ideal sales day, they increased their sales results, and the company's management team had greater confidence about hitting their year-end quota.

For Johnson & Johnson's Advance Sterilization Products (ASP) division, an ideal sales day occurred when a sales specialist called on three

or more ideal buyers (hospitals) from their target account list. An ideal buyer for ASP included (but was not limited to) hospitals that have good financial health, expanding surgical procedures, archaic sterilization equipment, and easy access to all buying influences. The ideal sales day also included engaging four or more contacts at each hospital and gathering all the buying influences together for a single meeting. Each meeting would be conducted from precall research, which was included in a written account call strategy.

Every sales master, and every world-class selling organization, must identify their ideal sales day so they can benchmark their time management. This ensures that they spend their most precious resource—their time—with the prospects who are most likely to make them the happiest—the ones who purchase their products.

Concentrate on Your Critical Few

Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian economist, observed in the early 1900s that 20 percent of the Italian people owned 80 percent of their country's wealth. Over time and through rigorous application to many fields of study and business, his principle has become accepted as a valid premise regarding the relationship between input and output. His theory, called Pareto's Principle or the 80/20 Rule, states that 20 percent of all possible inputs for any given task will create 80 percent of the outputs, or results.

How does this rule apply to selling? Twenty percent of the total activities you engage in will result in 80 percent of your sales results. That 20 percent of activities (which vary by industry, product, marketplace, time of year, your current situation, and even the competition) are your best practices, your *critical few*. Identifying and concentrating on the critical few every single day help you manage your limited time and lead to sales success.

Never begin the day until it is finished on paper.

—JIM ROHN

Jim Meisenheimer, a sales strategist from Lakewood Ranch, Florida, starts every day with a six-pack. Not beer—he recommends starting every

selling day by listing the six most important things to be completed that day and then working from the list.

You must also analyze and identify which of your current activities are total time wasters. Get rid of them, or clump them together in your schedule—or, better yet, delegate them. Make a serious attempt to minimize administrative paperwork and then complete it during the hours you're normally least productive. Schedule your face-to-face and telephone engagement during the time you're likely to be in your peak state. Use your drive time for continuing education by listening to audio programs. Learn to say "no" more often by not dropping everything and running after buyers who definitely do not fit your ideal buyer profile. Acquire any productivity boosters like contact-management software, a cell phone, pager, PDA, or other tool that minimizes your time away from the critical few activities that produce your best results.

Work the Sales Funnel

In 1967, I rode my first big roller coaster. I screamed with joy and hung on for dear life as we plunged several hundred feet toward the finish of the Blue Streak at Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio. I fell in love with the rush of speed and adrenaline from roller coasters and still think they're awesome fun for young and old alike.

In 1985, I rode a different kind of roller coaster. I sold defibrillators for a division of Eli Lilly and enjoyed a huge first quarter, followed by a second quarter dump, followed by a modest climb in the third quarter, followed by another plunge. This roller-coaster ride was no fun at all. I had big commissions one quarter but had to eat at fast food joints and deal with an angry sales manager the next.

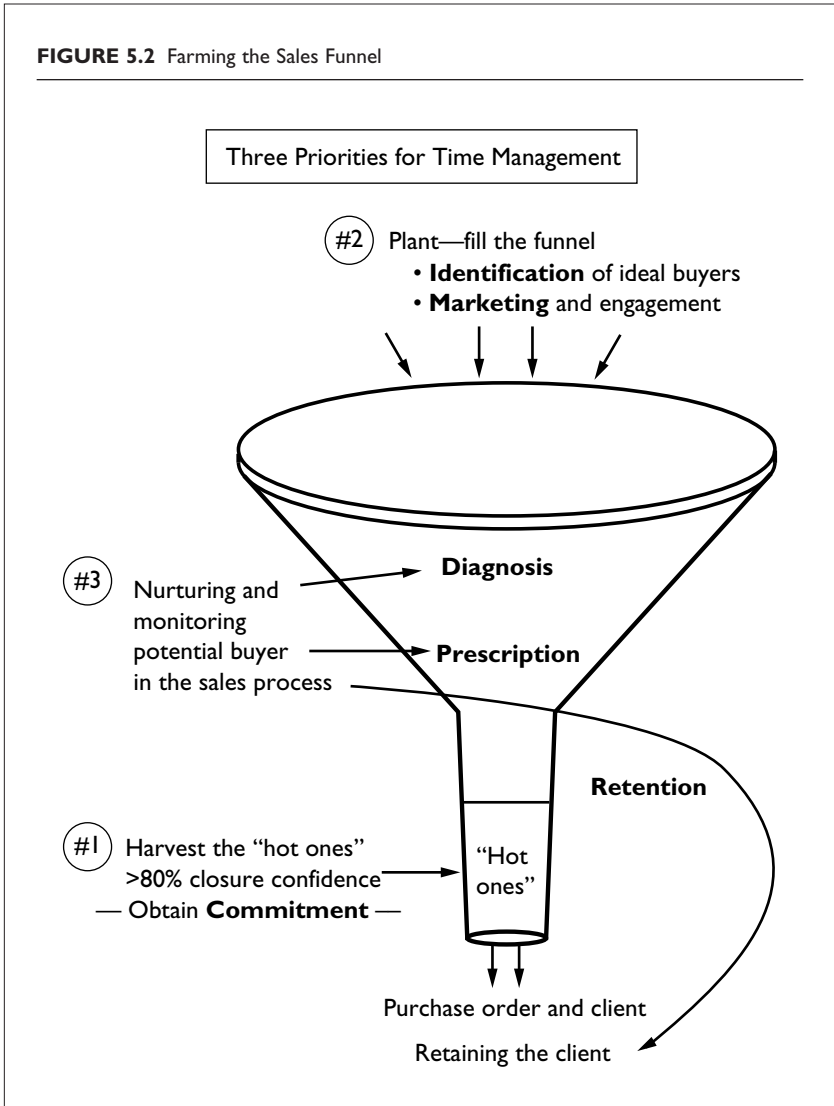
I've since learned that the roller-coaster effect in sales comes from letting your sales funnel run dry, which means that sooner or later, you'll have a dry wallet, too. Ouch! Most salespeople (including me in 1985) prospect like crazy when they discover that their funnels are empty. But the time lag between prospecting and actual sales creates a roller-coaster sales effect.

Sales superstars, on the other hand, prioritize their selling time differently so that their funnel stays full, their wallet stays full, and their

ride is smooth. Top selling professionals know how to work the sales funnel to manage their time and prioritize their selling tasks.

Growing up in Indiana gave me the opportunity to learn a few lessons about life and managing a sales funnel by studying the neighboring farmers.

FIGURE 5.2 Farming the Sales Funnel



The first law of the farm states that when your crop is ready, you must harvest it. Farmers often run their combines long after sundown, using headlights to help them see in the dark. They put in the long hours because crops left in the field will spoil. Top salespeople prioritize their time so that the *number-one priority* item on their *critical few* list is devoted to *obtaining commitment* from potential buyers who are ready to “harvest”—the *hot ones* in the sales funnel. These potential buyers have at least an 80 percent confidence level for purchasing. They have agreed with your diagnosis and they see *your* solution. You have confirmed that your prescription is the right one. These opportunities should always be your number-one time priority because they guarantee a steady sales and income stream. If they’re left alone, they too will spoil or, worse, be harvested by your competitor. Most salespeople—from rookie to pro—do in fact make this their highest priority.

The second law of the farm states that if you don’t plant seed, you’re not going to get a crop. Your *number-two priority* for time management, for most industries and sales positions, is to “plant” your buyers. Rookies don’t plant, and that’s why they get a sparse harvest.

If you don’t put viable prospects into your sales funnel, you won’t get any sales flowing out the bottom. The number of leads you put into your funnel at any given time directly relates to the number of sales you’ll enjoy later. Farming is also long term. You can’t plant in September and get a crop in October; you must plant in April to get a crop in October. Same thing is true in sales. You must put viable leads into your funnel long before you expect sales results to avoid the dreaded roller-coaster effect. Always plant—always fill your funnel with *ideal buyers*—as your second priority.

The third law of the farm requires that the farmer continually monitor the seedlings and nurture them toward maturity for harvest. The farmer regularly fertilizes, uses insecticide, removes weeds, and waters the crop all summer long. Sales masters monitor and nurture every potential buyer in their funnels as their *number-three time management priority*. This means finishing the family history (identification), performing the thorough assessment (diagnosis), presenting the solution (prescription), and building a repeat client relationship (retention).

The key is to identify which critical few activities (best practices), based on your business, move the buyer forward through the funnel toward commitment.

Working your sales funnel effectively requires following the three laws of the farm to prioritize how you spend your time. First spend time with the hot prospects that are ready to commit to purchase, next fill your funnel, and finally nurture the potential buyers in your funnel.

NFL coaches, players, and all sales pros watch the clock so time doesn't get away from them. Knowing what your ideal sales day looks like, concentrating on your *critical few* activities, and working the sales funnel will have you scoring touchdown after touchdown long before the two-minute warning sounds. Here are several Power Boosters to maximize your most precious resource—time.

POWER BOOSTERS

- Determine your ideal sales day and try to plan next week (and the weeks to come) around that model.
- Determine the critical few activities for every level in your sales funnel.
- Commit to being not just a Doctor of Selling but a farmer, too—always be planting and filling your sales funnel.
- Remember the three laws of the farm. Close the hot ones first. Fill your funnel second. Nurture the rest third.

CREATIVITY—THINK OUTSIDE THE PLAYBOOK

Bill Parcells has coached four different NFL football teams, including the championship New York Giants. Bill is famous for always having a trick play or unorthodox spread up his sleeve to get his team into the end zone fast. These ideas were not in the playbook. Coach Parcells knew

that thinking outside the box—thinking outside the playbook—was a valuable resource for winning football games.

Kyle W. surprised both his superiors and his peers when he dreamed up the idea to combine his common knowledge about a hospital's challenges with a relevant business book and a few reference letters. His creative tactics secured him an entree with a high-level buyer. Competition in sales is so fierce that salespeople must be creative or risk losing the sale to someone who is.

Sales superstars from every industry develop new approaches that pay off in all facets of selling. Their creativity overcomes obstacles, presents different solutions to a problem, or develops an innovative way to generate more sales and serve buyers. Top producers work their game plan, but they know that on occasion, they must think outside the playbook and trust their gut to move a potential buyer forward creatively. Their keys to creativity are *trying new approaches* and *picking up ideas from their peers*.

Try a New Approach

In sales, the need for new ideas is always great, because the selling environment changes rapidly due to many different buyer personalities, economic conditions, complex buyer politics, emerging products, competitive activity, and a slew of other factors. Sales masters know that your past experiences, especially successful ones, can actually be a handicap if you only look to reuse these strategies. The pros know that you must constantly adapt and think *outside* the playbook, while still working *from* the playbook. Don't abandon all the smart, tried-and-true sales steps that have made you successful, but also look for innovative ideas, tactics, and plans. In short, always be willing to try something different, like Kyle did when he needed to reach that unreachable CEO.

Another example of creative selling comes from Jim P., a real estate salesperson who pioneered an innovative way to reach potential real estate buyers. He invented a novel approach for selling new condominiums that overlooked a golf course. Jim advertised a series of free golf clinics that showcased a local teaching pro and featured a prize raffle. After three clinics, Jim had accumulated a database of more than 200 local golfers. Jim then prospected those golfers by direct mail first and

then by telephone follow-up (with a script). He was able to schedule 26 showings, which eventually led to 8 sales. Jim snagged close to \$80,000 in sales commissions from a small investment, a little elbow grease, and a creative approach.

There are infinite new tactics that are both creative and resourceful. Remember from Chapter 1 how important it is to stand out and to focus on serving? Sending unusual sales letters, birthday cards, or thank-you notes accomplishes both. Anies H. was ingenious when he drove that Porsche over 250 miles to show it to me. That's way out of a typical auto salesperson's playbook, but it paid off—I couldn't help but buy. You can also be creative in your manner of dress, innovative with your business card design, or unique with your personal marketing brochures.

Nothing is so useless as general maxim.

—LORD THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

You can find original ways to follow up with buyers, too. Remembering buyers' triumphs and tragedies, their children's names, and favorites sports or cultural interests can all be accomplished creatively. One Johnson & Johnson salesperson always e-mailed his top clients who followed a particular sports team a little quip from the newspaper about their team (even if it was the Chicago Cubs). His clients loved it. One real estate salesperson made it a habit to always remember her clients' pets' names. Now that's creative and resourceful!

How you present your product or service is another avenue that lends itself to creative flair, especially in positioning a product so its drawbacks are minimized. When plasma sterilization was first introduced by Johnson & Johnson, many potential buyers perceived that its small chamber was a drawback when compared to the traditional sterilizers. Even when they were told that the plasma sterilizer could process a much larger quantity of instrumentation in the same time frame, because it was faster, they still couldn't grasp the advantage. These buyers were used to evaluating sterilizers based on what they could see—the size of the chamber.

Finally, one rep developed a persuasive handout that included visual comparisons of the two systems' total output in any given day. When he showed the drawing to potential buyers, they could see that the chamber size didn't control the sterilizer's effectiveness. This new approach overcame that particular obstacle and opened up a lot of sales opportu-

nities, despite the fact that it wasn't revolutionary—it just tweaked the existing presentation method.

These examples show the benefits of trying new strategies. I offer them not for you to copy them but to encourage you to keep trying new approaches until you unlock a sales windfall. If you want to become a sales superstar, you must think outside your playbook.

Tap Your Peers

Professional football players often pick up new strategies by poring over game tapes and observing how other players have successfully outmaneuvered an opponent. Wide receivers routinely query each other about which pass pattern route to run or which particular move—shoulders, head, hips, legs, or eye fake—will work best to blast past a particular cornerback or safety.

Sales pros also know that tapping their teammates can help develop creative new strategies. Sometimes a fellow salesperson already uses a successful approach that's new to your selling repertoire. By implementing how your colleague generated sales success, you also can become more successful.

When I first learned to sell defibrillators to the hospital market, I picked up a creative approach from a fellow salesperson named Carlos Q. Before I worked with Carlos, I generally asked the nurse buyer a few questions and then took them through a standard demonstration of the equipment. Working with Carlos opened my eyes to how a fully engaged equipment demonstration should be conducted.

After Carlos carefully asked Sally, an ICU nurse, a series of diagnostic questions (and confirmed his diagnosis), he began to reenact a “code blue” scenario, complete with all the intensity and adrenaline of a real-life cardiac arrest event. He used his simulator to re-create the V-fib heart rhythm. Then he aggressively pulled out the paddles and began responding just like a nurse or doctor would react in a life-threatening situation. Carlos set the dials, charged up the de-fib, barked the commands, and pretended to de-fib an imaginary patient. Carlos made the TV show *ER* seem almost flat-line.

Carlos went through the entire sequence a second time, but this time he insisted that Sally do all the work with the defibrillator. Carlos

got her physically involved in every aspect of the demonstration, while he addressed every point she had mentioned in the diagnosis that was important to her.

Carlos's creative theatrics and method of involving Sally in the demonstration taught me that physical involvement by the prospect leads to a feeling of ownership, before they've bought anything. His innovative style, passionate state, and ability to get Sally tactilely involved with the defibrillator created greater emotional involvement by her. My observation of Carlos's unique presentation style helped me develop my own effective equipment demonstration. Thank you, Carlos Q.!

Tapping into your peers also includes synergizing with them to invent completely new methods. In every industry, regularly scheduled meetings have great value for sharing ideas, strategies, and resourceful approaches that are outside the playbook. Sales managers take heed: schedule those meetings even when you hate to take your people out of the field. Doing what's important must take precedence over doing what's urgent, if you want to enjoy sales stardom for the long haul.

Creativity can drive you into the end zone of sales results. Here are a few Power Boosters that will help you get creativity and resourcefulness back in your sales game.

POWER BOOSTERS

- List the top ten problems you face selling your product or service and set aside two hours to creatively brainstorm new approaches.
- Come up with at least one new way to market or prospect for new ideal buyers.
- Come up with at least one new way you can creatively stand out.
- Come up with at least one new way you can follow up with your best clients.

(continued)

- Identify one drawback of or objection to your product or service that has cost you sales and commit to finding a better way to present or minimize the shortcoming.
- Identify two or three sales pros whom you will call regularly and soak up every success strategy they have.
- Pressure your sales manager to schedule meetings regularly for sharing ideas and brainstorming new approaches.

PRESENT TO WIN— PRESCRIBE THE SOLUTION

During NFL postgame press conferences, coaches and players alike have learned that how they present themselves and discuss their game can dramatically affect both public opinion of their team and ticket sales.

Sales superstars also have learned that how they present the solution that their product provides is one of their primary resources for getting a sale—and a commission. The selling elite prescribe their solutions far more effectively than the rookies. They present in such a way that the potential buyer sees their solution and agrees with it.

Many sales books stress how to present your solution persuasively to the buyer, and most salespeople do so fairly well, because they're excited about their product and how it will help the buyer. The top pros, however, distinguish themselves from the rookies by the work they've done *before* presentation time—in their comprehensive identification of the problem (the family history) and clear diagnosis (the thorough assessment). They always remember not to prescribe their solution without first confirming their diagnosis—in other words, they *never present without consent*. But, even with thorough research, if the manner in which you prescribe your solution is unprofessional, or lacking, you can still blow the sale. Sales superstars *prescribe with buyer agreement* and *follow basic presentation guidelines* when it's time to talk about their product or service.

Prescribe with Buyer Agreement

Top selling professionals create a vision of *their* solution in the mind of the buyer. When buyers see and agree with this prescription, they'll usually push to close. To understand how sales superstars create this buyer agreement, it's important to distinguish among some sales definitions. Old sales training books talked about a product's *features* and *benefits*, but it's more helpful to distinguish a product's *features*, *advantages*, and *benefits*. These distinctions were first made popular by Neil Rackham, author of *SPIN Selling*, and Mike Bosworth, author of *Solution Selling*.

Describe your product in terms of what it does, not in terms of what it is.

—BRIAN TRACY

Imagine a beautiful sports car with a CD player. The *feature statement* is, "This car has a CD player." The CD player is one of the car's features. Average salespeople love to sell features. You've probably been to a car dealership where the salesperson excitedly showed you every bell and whistle (feature) on the car, most of which you could care less about. This is prescribing without tying the prescription to the needs of the buyer, which should have been determined in the diagnosis.

The *advantage statement* is, "The CD player enables you to play all kinds of great music whenever you want to." These are the statements where a salesperson describes how the buyer will either gain or eliminate pain by using the feature. Because the car has a CD player, you can enjoy great music anytime.

Most salespeople think that advantages are benefits, because they assume the advantage is a benefit for every buyer. That's where the problems arise prescribing the solution. In reality, an advantage is a benefit only if the buyer says it's important. Solutions are the accumulation of a product's *specific* benefits that are in the mind of the *buyer*, not the salesperson. If salespeople diagnose properly, they know which advantages are actually benefits for that buyer. While it's always better to share advantages than features, if the advantages don't matter to the buyer, you're just wasting air, because they're not benefits. The sports car may have a great CD player, but if the potential buyer hates music or only listens to talk radio, then it's not a benefit. Buyers listen to only one radio

station when it comes to benefits and solutions—WII-FM (What’s In It For Me)!

A good *benefit statement* is, “The CD player enables you to play all kinds of great music whenever you choose, which *you said* was something you wanted to be able to do.” This type of statement is tying the feature to a specific benefit that the buyer has admitted wanting. If you uncover during the diagnosis that the potential buyer loves music, then that benefit should be part of the buying solution.

By doing a thorough diagnosis, you’re able to *present only those benefits* that will meet the buyer’s needs. When buyers agree with you about their needs and desired benefits, they’ll be far more likely to agree with you about the solution. Remember that buyers don’t buy products or services; they buy the *states* that they imagine they will experience after purchase. You communicate the state that they’ll experience via the benefits that matter to them, and these combined benefits *form their solution*.

Research has documented that the most effective sales presentations prescribe benefits and spend very little time talking about product features. Instead of talking about the graphic equalizer in the CD player, the sales pro paints the picture of you driving down the road enjoying your favorite music. Better yet, the pro takes you for a ride and, with you driving, puts in one of your favorite CDs that you grabbed from your old car.

Magnification questions (from RPM questioning in Chapter 3) can help transport potential buyers into the future state, where they get to experience your solution’s benefits. “What music do you like to listen to?” and, “What would it feel like to be cruising south on Lake Shore Drive listening to some Simon and Garfunkel?” are examples of questions for a buyer who likes Paul Simon tunes (obviously an older buyer like me). Questions can also magnify the pain of not having your solution as well. “Have you noticed how bad the music on the radio has gotten lately?” Prescribing your solution comes down to a mixture of making *benefit statements*, sharing other buyers’ success stories, and leading the potential buyer with questions.

Great salespeople, when they’re presenting their solution and seeking buyer agreement in competitive situations, also *differentiate*. Differentiating your product or service comes down to zeroing in on the *benefits* (advantages the buyer said were important) of your solution that offer a unique advantage. They prescribe all the benefits that the buyer said were important, but they give special attention to emphasizing those

that enjoy a *differentiated superiority* over the competition. Sales superstars list all their benefits on paper, for their own reference, and make a special annotation of the differentiated ones.

A final way to increase buyer agreement is to *offer proof*. Remember that buyer suspicion is always high. After diagnosing properly, confirming that diagnosis, and prescribing the solution based on benefits the buyer acknowledged, your buyer may still feel some anxiety. Sales masters pick up on this emotion both verbally and nonverbally, and they immediately offer proof to help the buyer over the hump to committing to their solution. Product demonstrations, product trials, site visits, reference success letters or calls, the client list, a test ride, and sample pharmaceuticals are a few of the ways you can offer proof that *your solution is their best solution*.

Basic Presentation Guidelines

Effective presentations require you to draw simultaneously on many of the strategies discussed in *Power Selling*. You need *real passion* to be in your supercharged selling state and communicate your solution enthusiastically and confidently. The Power of Research, used during your identification and diagnosis, determines which benefits you stress during your presentation. The Power of Rapport is needed to connect with buyers when you prescribe your solution, so that their confidence in your prescription remains high. Strong rapport also allows you to be a *state prompter* and more easily move the buyer toward your solution.

In addition to those broad strategies, sales masters also use several specific presentation tools to win buyer commitment. They always remain professional, organized, and articulate to inspire buyer confidence. When buyers admit that they have a need during diagnosis, they often feel vulnerable and wonder if you'll try to take advantage of them. Avoid negative words or phrases that sound insincere, such as *honestly*, *frankly*, *quite frankly*, and *trust me on this one*. Your professional, expert presentation will inspire their confidence so they can comfortably move forward in the buying process.

Top sales pros share *reference success stories* during presentations so that buyers can *see* how other buyers with similar problems were helped by their solution. These stories also help buyers overcome any remain-

ing suspicion. They are similar to the reference stories used in telephone engagement, except that now you must tell the whole story, including how the solution worked.

Salespeople need many reference success stories, categorized by product and market segment, which they can share effectively and concisely. These stories, if told expertly, should *prompt the state* of the potential buyer by tapping into the emotional need to move away from pain and toward gain. Average salespeople usually have only one or two stories, and they often can't tell them in a way that evokes emotion. These stories can also be used to *provide proof* about a benefit.

Your *client list* of satisfied clients should be made available to potential buyers. This serves as a big reputation-builder and also provides Social Proof, if the names are significant to the buyer. This list should include clients whom the buyer can call, and you should provide letters extolling your product's solutions that the buyer can review. The best option is for clients who were in the reference success stories you just shared to be available to take calls or be visited by the potential buyer. One of the most successful techniques at Johnson & Johnson's ASP division was to have potential buyers visit a reference success story account and see the solution for themselves. That's powerful presenting!

First-class presentations always involve as many of the potential buyers' senses as you can. Have things for them to look at and handle while they're listening to you. Involve their visual, auditory, or kinesthetic senses as much as possible by getting the potential buyer as physically involved in the presentation as possible. Remember how Carlos Q. got Sally to run the defibrillator, which created a feeling of ownership and emotional involvement? Physical involvement will definitely generate more sales because, as Chapter 4 demonstrated, buyer motion leads to buyer emotion and vice versa. Physical involvement also helps you discover how receptive buyers are to seeing your solution. By keenly observing their nonverbal actions during physical involvement, you can gauge their level of acceptance or resistance.

Get buyers to push the buttons, ride the floor scrubber, turn on the equipment, drive the car, walk every room of the house, handle the client list, hold the sample, leaf through the binder, assemble the part, or put the trays into the sterilizer. It's easier to get a potential buyer involved in a product purchase than a service purchase, but with a little *creativity*, you can usually find a way. You can even get buyers involved in a group

presentation. Have them help with the easel, projector, or video machine. Rookie salespeople often want to show off with a whiz-bang demonstration, but this usually bores buyers because they're not involved. Physical involvement leads to emotional involvement, which leads toward purchase.

A final presentation guideline is for presenting to a group of potential buyers and influencers at one time. If possible, meet with every attendee prior to your presentation and conduct a thorough assessment. This gives you the advantage both of establishing rapport and of being able to zero in on the key points that address their true needs. Prepare written objectives for your presentation. What do you hope to accomplish?

To begin the presentation, have someone else introduce you, if possible. Try to leverage the first three minutes for building rapport and credibility. Use your reference success stories as much as possible and get the audience involved. Remember not to take yourself too seriously. Close the presentation with a summary of the benefits they agreed to and enthusiastically call them to action.

NFL coaches and sales superstars all recognize that how they present themselves and their products greatly influences their reception. Sales pros prescribe their solution with buyer agreement and winning guidelines. Here are your Power Boosters for first-class presentations.

POWER BOOSTERS

- Understand and memorize the difference between features, advantages, and benefits.
- Develop a list of all your benefits (those features that your buyers have said are benefits) and a list of differentiated and unique benefits for your products.
- Develop a repertoire of handy proof sources to help buyers get over the anxiety hump.
- Utilize passion, research, and rapport to form the foundation for presenting your solution.

(continued)

- Develop at least one reference success story for every major product solution.
- Absolutely have a printed client list and several testimonial letters from satisfied clients.
- Present your product involving as many buyer senses (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) as you can, and get the buyer as physically involved in the demonstration as possible.

LET'S RECAP

All great football coaches and sales superstars use their resources wisely. Mike Ditka, Kyle W., and the selling elite utilize their primary tools—a strategic business plan, time management, creativity, and presentation skills—to score more sales.

Developing a strategic game plan for your business and managing your time are critical if you want to get into the end zone of sales success. Selling without a game plan and failing to watch the clock are like squaring off against former Bears defensive lineman Richard Dent without a helmet and pads. Ouch—that's going to hurt! Being willing to think outside the playbook by trying new approaches and tapping into your peer network will feed you those innovative, game-winning plays for which Bill Parcells is known. NFL coaches and top producers both use great presentations to win over fans and secure a sale.

Imagine being in the locker room at the halftime of your sales year when you're getting tromped. Your sales results stink, your spirit is broken, your funnel appears empty, and your future looks bleak. Beads of perspiration begin to trickle down your face. Your chest feels tight, and panic is beginning to set in. Your mission: to turn things around! You have no other sales players you can call in, no marketing budget, and no "give me" sales to turn around your sales game.

What do you do?

It's time to get inspired by the master of resource management—MacGyver! The lead character of the television series by the same name,

MacGyver was the miracle man of resource management. He reversed seemingly hopeless scenarios by creatively using whatever's available. He has been known to make a parabolic mirror from the remains of a blown-up jeep. He has found household items to build a simple radio that rescues him and saves the day. MacGyver always managed his resources to win the day. Ingenious, resourceful, always with a plan, cognizant of time constraints, and able to persuade others with his solutions—MacGyver is the man to clone. His DNA has the Power of Resource Management on its fifth strand, and it can win the day for you, too.

