

I N T R O D U C T I O N

THE NEW REALITIES OF SELLING

*Your present circumstances don't determine where
you can go; they merely determine where you start.*

—Nido Qubein

WELCOME TO THE new world of selling! More people are going to make more money and enjoy greater financial success in the months and years ahead in the profession of selling than ever before. Fully 5 percent of self-made millionaires are salespeople who started at the bottom, became very good in their field, earned high incomes, and became wealthy. And what hundreds of thousands, even millions, of other people have done, you can do as well. You just need to learn how.

My son Michael and I have condensed into this book everything we have learned from our experience selling millions of dollars of products and services. Everything in these pages is time-tested,

proven, and practical, and designed to help you make faster and easier sales in any market.

When I began my sales career, I knew nothing of the skills and techniques you are about to learn. I did not graduate from high school. I worked at laboring jobs for several years. When I could no longer find a laboring job, in desperation, I got into straight commission sales, cold-calling one office after another in the day-time and houses and apartments in the evenings.

I got the three-part sales training program that is common worldwide: “Here are your cards, here are your brochures, there’s the door.”

If I didn’t sell, I didn’t eat. I got up every morning at six and was waiting in the parking lot when people came to work at eight o’clock. My sales results were terrible. I was making just enough sales to eat and to pay for a small room in a boardinghouse. I had holes in my shoes, empty pockets, and no future.

A Life-Changing Event

Then I did something that changed my life. I went to the top salesman in our office, a man a few years older than me who was selling ten times as much as anyone else. And he wasn’t even working very hard! He always had a pocketful of money. He went to nice restaurants and nightclubs. He drove a new car and lived in a beautiful apartment.

I took a deep breath and went up to him and asked him outright, “What are you doing differently? How is it that you are making so many more sales than me, or anyone else?”

He looked at me with surprise and then said, “Well, if you want some help, show me your sales presentation and I will critique it for you.”

Now, I admitted that I had heard there was such a thing as a “sales presentation.” But it was like the far side of the moon, something

I had never actually seen in reality. I told the top salesman that when I called on customers, I simply said whatever fell out of my mouth.

He said, “No. No. No. Selling is a profession. It is both a science and an art. It follows a logical, orderly process from the first step through to the closing of the sale and the satisfied customer. Let me give you an example of a sales presentation.”

He then sat me down and asked me questions, commenting as he went along, exactly as if I were a prospective customer for our product. Instead of talking continually, as I did when I got in front of a prospect, he asked questions in a logical sequence, leading from the general to the particular, from qualifying me as a prospect through to closing the sale. It was different from anything I had ever experienced.

From that day forward, instead of talking continually, I asked better questions of my potential customers and listened closely to their answers. And my customers reacted to me differently. And I started to make sales, and then more and more sales. I began reading books on selling and listening to audio programs. I began attending every sales seminar I could find. And each time I learned and applied something new, my sales went up, and up, and up. Within a year, I was earning ten times as much income. My whole life changed forever.

What I discovered was the oldest of laws: the Law of Cause and Effect. This law says that for every effect in your life, there is a cause, or a series of causes. If there is any effect that you would like to have in your life, find others who have already achieved that outcome and then do the same things that they did to get there.

In my sales seminars, I often start off by asking, “How many people here would like to double their income in the next year or so?”

Every hand in the room goes up. I then explain that if you want to double your income, it is not that difficult. You simply identify some people who are earning twice as much as you—and who, by definition, at one time were earning half as much as you are today—and then you find out what they did to get from where they were to where they are today. Then, if you do the same things that other successful people do, you soon get the same results. It is not a miracle. It is not a matter of luck. It is simply a matter of law—the Law of Cause and Effect.

Selling in the Markets of Today and Tomorrow

Since that day in my early twenties, when I first learned how to make more sales, I have started, built, managed, or turned around twenty-two companies. I have recruited, trained, managed, and personally motivated hundreds of salespeople in different sales organizations. I have personally trained more than 2 million salespeople in sixty-one countries around the world. Many thousands of my graduates have gone from rags to riches, from the bottom to the top. Many have become millionaires and multimillionaires, actually ending up owning the companies that they were working for when they started using the ideas that you will learn in this book.

The good news is that sales success is quite predictable. When you do what other successful people do, you will soon get the same results that they do.

The first step is to understand the most important factors that determine sales success or failure in today's market. It seems that in every market, selling every product and service, in every industry, there are salespeople who continue to grow and prosper in sales, earning a wonderful living for themselves and providing well for their families.

How do they do it? They know that change is taking place faster today in every industry than ever before. Because of ever-greater competition, the need to please ever-more-demanding customers, increasing price sensitivity to products and services, and incredible uncertainty in national and international markets, the companies and individuals who survive and thrive are those that are fast and flexible in rapidly changing conditions.

Charles Darwin wrote that “survival goes not to the strongest or most intelligent, but to the one who is most adaptable to change.” The marketplace has changed dramatically, and continues to change, and you must change with it.

The Seven New Realities

Specifically, there are seven new realities, or facts, that you must incorporate into your thinking and your actions to achieve the kind of sales results and income that are truly possible for you. Today, more than ever before:

1. There are more sellers than buyers in every field.
2. Selling is more complex.
3. Selling requires greater focus and clarity.
4. Selling requires greater preparation.
5. Customers are more demanding.
6. Sales success requires multiple calls.
7. Closing the sale is harder.

THERE ARE MORE SELLERS THAN BUYERS IN EVERY FIELD

The first new reality is that, in every field today, there are more sellers than buyers. The competition is more fierce and determined

than ever before. There are fewer customer dollars available for an ever-expanding and desirable assortment of products and services. And whatever got you to where you are today is not enough to keep you there—or to get you any farther.

SELLING IS MORE COMPLEX

Second, selling is more complex than it was in the past. Product and service offerings, prices, and company capabilities are more complex than ever. Customer needs, wants, desires, and problems are more complex. Multiple customer contacts and meetings are required to make a sale today. And if anything, selling is going to become even more complex and demanding in the future. You are going to have to run faster just to stay in the same place.

CLARITY IS ESSENTIAL

The third new reality is that selling requires greater focus and clarity than ever before. You must develop absolute clarity about your ideal customer—that is, the person who can and will buy your product or service in the shortest period of time. You cannot afford to spend time speaking to people who cannot or will not buy what you are selling.

Once you have thought through and identified your ideal customer, you must then ask, “Why would your ideal customer buy from you rather than from your competitors?” What is your competitive advantage?

In 2012 alone, large and small companies spent more than \$8 billion on market research in a variety of attempts to answer these questions. The greater clarity you have about the perfect customer for you and your product or service, the more of these perfect customers you will find, and the faster you will recognize them when you come across them. Focus and concentration on your very best

potential customer is the key to your getting into the top 20 percent of money earners and moving up from there.

CREDIBILITY MEANS BEING PREPARED

Fourth, it's a fact that selling today requires greater preparation. It is absolutely essential that you do your homework on customers before you call on them for the first time. Fortunately, with Google and other online search engines, you can do better and faster research on people and corporations than ever before in human history. With a few mouse clicks, you can have access to information that used to require hours of research at the local library to uncover.

Sometimes I ask my audiences, "What is the single most important factor in selling today? What is the one factor that determines how much you sell, how fast you sell it, how much you earn, the size of your bank account, the home you live in, the quality of your life, and everything that happens to you personally and financially? What is the one factor?"

And the answer is, "Credibility!" Your credibility with the customer is more important than any other factor. The more the customer trusts you and believes you, the lower the customer's fear of making a buying mistake. The more the customer trusts you, the easier it is for that customer to buy from you. In fact, when your credibility level is high enough, the customer will buy from you and not even ask the price.

And the better prepared you are, the greater is your credibility from the first meeting. Do some "pre-call preparation." Find out everything you possibly can about your customers before you meet with them for the first time. When you meet with prospects and you explain how impressed you are with their accomplishments, and you can mention some background detail on the individual and

the organization, your credibility will soar. The customer will be more open and interested in talking to you because you have obviously done your homework.

Also, before the call, think through and plan exactly what you are going to do and what you want to accomplish in the sales call. The better prepared you are in setting your pre-call objectives, the more focused and clear you will be when it comes to asking questions and having a conversation, and the more impressive you will look and sound to your prospective customer.

Finally, quickly write down everything that was discussed in the call immediately after you get out of the presence of the prospect. When you walk into a second or third meeting fully prepared because you have carefully reviewed your notes from the previous meetings, you look and sound like a professional. Your credibility goes straight up.

The final benefit to preparation, aside from building your credibility quickly from the first call, is that it gives you a tremendous sense of self-confidence. And self-confidence is a vital psychological ingredient in successful selling.

CUSTOMERS ARE MORE DEMANDING

A fifth reality is that customers are more demanding nowadays. Why? Because they can be! And if anything, they are going to be more demanding in the weeks and months ahead.

Customers today are more skeptical and suspicious because of their previous buying experiences. They are afraid of buying the wrong product, paying too much, receiving too little, and being left in the lurch after the sale, as has happened to them in the past.

Customers also receive multiple offers of products and services. Your competitors are calling on them continuously. In their spare moments, your customers can go onto the Internet and find every

variation of your product or service that is available in the world today, and at the lowest possible prices.

It used to be that the salesperson was the expert when he called on a prospect. He knew more about his product or service, and the competitors in the market, than the customer. Today, the roles are reversed. Customers know as much or more than the salesperson, and what they don't know, they can find out in a few seconds.

Finally, customers are more demanding because they have limited resources. They do not have the kind of money that makes it possible for them to make a buying mistake. As a result, they proceed more slowly. They question every claim you make. They compare your offer with those of your competitors. They procrastinate and delay making any buying decision.

MULTIPLE-CALL SELLING

The sixth new reality is that it takes multiple calls to make a sale. When I started off, calling from door to door, it was a single-call selling process. I would meet a prospect, ask qualifying questions, make my sales pitch, and ask for a buying decision. The size of my product was small and the risk of making a poor decision was low.

Today, however, because of the incredible complexity of the modern market and the level of competition in the marketplace, you have to make an average of four or five calls on a qualified prospect to actually make a sale, and at each one of these meetings, the sales process can stop because of a new piece of information.

Your first call may be just to start a relationship, and to discover if a need for your product or service actually exists. The purpose of the first call is to separate prospects from suspects. The second and third calls may be to get more information, to make a presentation, or to present a proposal. The fourth and fifth meetings with the prospect may be to negotiate, finalize the purchase agreement, and close the sale.

The best sales organizations and salespeople use what is called the “milestone method” of selling. They carefully note the stage to which the sale has developed, knowing that for a certain number of prospects who begin the process, a specific percentage will actually become customers at the end of the process.

The question is, Where are you in the sales process? Is this your first meeting? Is this your second or third meeting? How far along are you toward actually making the sale and collecting payment?

CLOSING THE SALE

Closing the sale is harder today than it used to be, which is the seventh new reality of sales. Customers have fewer resources and are reluctant to change or try something new. Even if your product or service is attractive, the customer has to move out of her comfort zone and “stretch” before she is willing to begin using something new or different. In addition, there are “switching costs,” which can be mental, physical, and financial. Sometimes, from the customer’s point of view, it is just too much trouble to purchase your product or service.

There are other reasons why closing the sale is more difficult than ever before. We call these the “rules.” The first rule is, “No authority? No sale!” What this means is that if the person you are talking to does not have the authority to make the buying decision, he has no choice but to put you off by saying, “Let me think it over.”

The second rule: “No money? No sale!” If their financial situation is such that your prospects simply cannot afford your product or service, then no matter how attractive it is, or how good it could be for the prospect, no sale can take place.

The third rule is, “No need? No sale!” A major reason qualified prospects do not buy a product is because they do not fully

understand or appreciate how much better off their life and work could be if they had your product. Either you have not increased the intensity of their buying desire and made the product or service compelling enough, or the customer feels that the increment in value is too small to justify the time and expense of buying what you are selling.

The final rule: “No urgency? No sale!” Because customers are fearful about making a wrong buying decision, if they can possibly delay the decision, they will. This is why you should always have an “extra reason” for the customer to buy today rather than putting off the purchase until a later time. Sometimes we call this a “kicker.” You can offer free delivery, extra services, special discounts or rebates, or greater speed of delivery. But you should always have something in your back pocket that you can pull out at the end of the sales conversation to encourage the customer to buy immediately.

These are some of the new realities of selling. They are not personal. Every salesperson selling virtually every product or service in the market today faces these same realities. They are facts of life. As the Marines say, “Adapt! Adjust! Respond!”

Learn What You Have to Learn

Your job is to learn what you have to learn, and do what you have to do, to become one of the most successful and highest-paid sales professionals in your field. Fortunately, the answers have all been found. There are no secrets. Your job is to do what other top-performing salespeople do, over and over again, until you master the same skills. The good news is that you’ll start getting improved sales results from the first day that you apply these practical, proven ideas.

ACTION EXERCISES

1. What are the major factors in our fast-paced world that are affecting your sales today?
2. What will you need to start doing, or do more of, to succeed in the markets of tomorrow?
3. What are some of the biggest changes in customers and product/service offerings affecting your sales?
4. What are three qualities or characteristics of the ideal customer for the product or service you sell?
5. What are the most important things you need to learn about your customers before you can call on them?
6. Why don't qualified customers buy from you? What holds them back?
7. What can you do to create a sense of urgency in your prospects to encourage them to make the buying decision immediately?

And finally, what one action are you going to take as a result of what you have learned in this book introduction?
