



How to Fail at Sales 10 Sure Ways to Go Hungry

Why do most sales people fail? Simple; they don't want to succeed. They don't want to win bad enough. They lack the desire or the initiative. They make excuses or do something else that takes them off their focus. They blame the government, the economy, the weather, their parents, the internet, their manager, the company, inflation, their family, or the dog ate it. They blame everyone but the one person responsible for their failure or success: themselves. The truth is that almost everyone is to blame for their own success or failure. The only thing management did wrong was to hire them too quickly in the first place. I've always said, "We hire too fast and fire too slow."

So what do you do if you want to fail miserably at your sales job and get fired quickly? What does it take to get set free to pursue other avenues that life has to offer? Here are ten sure ways to fail at sales and find yourself on the street looking for gainful employment. Caution, reading these can be infectious and beneficial to your career. Enter at your own risk.

1. Make just three contacts with every prospect.
I was hired by four clients in the last month who told me that I got their business because of my persistence. Yes, I kept contacting them over and over and over. This has become a funny part of my presentation when I ask the sales manager or host how many times I called before they hired me. The average sale takes 13 calls to close. Most sales people give up after three. They figure the prospect doesn't want to be bothered or that they are annoying them. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you believe in what you are doing or selling, then you must believe it fulfills a need that people have. You must believe that they can't live without it. You must believe you are helping them on a deep level with your product or service. They would be fools to turn you down. Get the idea. Unless you think like this, you are doomed to failure, because you believe that no one wants what you have anyway, anyhow. Oh, and by the way, return phone calls right away, unless you don't want to sell anything.

2. Love your system. I can't stand sales systems. They think everyone buys the same way and they train sales people to use the system over their own personal style. I was once a minister and had to go through witness training classes at several churches. Each training used a system. Most were a rip-off of the most popular one available. Each predicted what potential converts would say. "They say that, you say this..." I never was able to get anyone to convert to my faith by winning the argument. I have never closed a sale because I won the argument. Sales systems teach you how to out maneuver and out argue the prospect. They don't teach you how to sell based on your personality style and that of the prospect. They assume every prospect can be "had" if you wear them down with their script. People buy in their own personality style and comfort zone. They buy for their own reasons, not yours. Throw away that cheesy notebook and start selling based on principles and the customer's style.
3. Sell, sell, sell. Everyone loves to buy, but no one wants to be sold. If you want to drive away business, then get out and sell to people who aren't motivated to buy. Talk about your product endlessly. Don't take "get lost" for an answer. I took my car in for a routine oil change at one of those "routine oil change" places. The mechanic came out with his clipboard (this is never good news) and told me I needed a transmission service. "You have never had one according to our records and your transmission fluid looks awful. You don't want to take the risk of your tranny going bad on a long journey soon, do you?" "Really?" I said. I pulled out my service receipts and showed him this same service had been rendered just two months earlier at this location. About that time his manager wandered over smiling. I explained what had just happened. Sure enough it WAS in their records. The manager yelled at him, "Don't ever do this again!" I took it as, "Don't ever get caught doing this again." No one likes to be sold or hustled. I never went back again and told everyone I knew (including you) this story. You take a big chance when you hustle someone that they won't like it and will tell their friends. Like I said earlier, people buy for their own reasons, not yours.
4. Live for tomorrow. Have fun today and just say that you will do the real work tomorrow, or next month, or next year. A friend I was coaching once said in November that she was going to start marketing in January and that would be her "year of marketing." Too many sales people live for the "one day" when they will start their new marketing campaign, or a different target of prospects. But tomorrow is just an excuse for not doing it today. Every year is my year of marketing.

"I couldn't make many sales calls today, but tomorrow is going to be different." "Tomorrow I am going to set my goals high and make more contacts than I ever have." Sound familiar? Scarlett O'Hara was always putting off until tomorrow. "After all," she said, "tomorrow is another day."

That worked to keep Rhett Butler for a short while but even he walked out on in the end. When is your year of marketing? This year. When is the best time to start calling? Today. When should you get off your gluteous maximus and start selling? Today.

5. Give facts. “The key to successful sales is asking great questions.” I told this last month to a sales manager in the Midwest who was trying to sell her boss on hiring me to train their employees. She said, “Oh, yes. You reminded me of that.” Instead of asking questions, she had been bombarding him with the facts of what brining me in would entail and he wasn’t interested because it didn’t hit him on a personal level. Too many sales people come in with the “advantages” of their product, rather than hearing what the customer needs. Ask questions. Ask better questions. Ask great questions. Ask questions on top of your questions. Find out what the needs of the client are. Find out what their family is like. Find out why they are shopping and why they are looking at you and your company. Then shut up and listen. They will tell you what they want.
6. Major on features. Ford Saeks, internet marketing guru taught me to major on benefits and not features in may sales. It has made a world of difference in my marketing and sales. When your car breaks down, do you want to know every detail of how they are going to fix it? When you have a cyst or tumor do you care what the procedure entails? No. In every case you want to know the benefits of the service – not the features. Most people want to know what benefit they will receive from your good or service, but most sales people waste their time selling the features. I learned early as a speaker that most clients don’t care how I will solve their problem but what it will be like after I solve it. Find out what people want or need and provide it for them. Give them more and more of it and you will never fail.
7. Let the superstars do it. In every organization 20% of the workers do most of the work – about 80% of it according to statistics. These are the superstars of your organization. They sell without being told to. They make calls without being motivated by a contest. They don’t like to attend training because it is beneath their God-given talents that are already employing to keep your company afloat. You can’t train the superstars. They are born with the innate ability to succeed on a major scale. The rest of the staff needs to have a fire lit under them or be fired. Truthfully, most people on your sales staff could be let go due to poor results and it wouldn’t affect the sales bottom line. It would probably increase office space, budget formerly wasted on useless employees and initiative of those sitting on the fence waiting for management to do something bold (like firing the slackers). They need to be “set free” to find something they

can do or a place they like better. As Larry Winget says, "Firing isn't something you do to someone, it is something you do for someone." The bad news is, if you keep tolerating this, the superstars will leave and find a place to work where they are appreciated, challenged and paid more. So let the upper twenty percent do all the selling and you will be guaranteed failure.

8. Cut your price. When times are bad economically, why do sales managers think they should cut back on prices and training? What message does this send to your customers? "We never thought much of it anyway, so now we are charging less." I had a sales manager actually ask me to cut my price for him and he would "allow" me to come in and train his people in dynamic selling. Cut my price? My answer was, "Let me ask you a question, do you want me to teach your sales executives to cut the price of your service to your customers?" I went on, "If not, then why do you want me to practice something that I don't teach?" It amazes me how sales managers and HR directors want the best they can get for the least they can pay, BUT expect their sales people to practice just the opposite with their clients. What message is that sending to their staff? What type of pitiful sales training are they providing for them? Not mine, I will guarantee you.
9. Let your customer be the first to ask for the sale. Huh? Do you know how many sales are never made because the account executive NEVER asked for the sale? It seems unbelievable but sales people get timid at the point of decision and don't ask for the sale. I have literally called clients for speaking engagements and said, "I am calling because I want your business. Do we have a deal?" And they say, "Yes," more often than you think. The Bible says, 'You have not because you ask not.'

I was speaking for a group in the Dakotas last month and no one was stopping by my resources table to look at my books and CDs. Finally a woman stopped and looked at the materials. I figured I had nothing to lose, so I told her about the highest priced bundle I had available. She picked it up (Now understand she hadn't even noticed it). I told her what it contained and how it was a bargain as a bundle. She bought it. Had I just sat there allowing her to browse I know she wouldn't have purchased it, or anything else for that matter. Don't wait on the customer to beg you to sell something to them. Be brave; take a risk; ask for the sale.

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