

PEAK

P E R S P E C T I V E S

The Monthly E-Newsletter of
Peak Pathways, LLC.

Appreciating or Depreciating

“They could be used again, we’ll find a use for them or at least somebody will want them sometime, put them in the storage yard.” The owner of the new bait shop and convenience store had a sizeable parcel of land with plenty of room to keep the solid oak doors that were removed from the building when walls were taken down to open up the space. That was probably a practical and conservative decision at the time but over the next several years and decades the open space also received used boats, lawn mowers, cars, trucks and various other pieces of equipment that never seemed to find a new home. Neglected and subjected to the elements the one time assets deteriorated and eventually became a liability that had to be removed at considerable expense when the owner died and heirs prepared to sell the real estate.

Most of us do not have a storage yard for accumulating old cars and mowers. However we may well have other assets, tangible and intangible, that are neglected and allowed to depreciate overtime. With use and care depreciation can be slowed and in some cases, particularly intangibles, they may appreciate in value.

While it is unfortunate to let solid oak antique doors or classic cars weather and rot, the bigger loss is when personal strengths and skills go unused and atrophy. Even more disconcerting is when personal dreams and visions for a better career or life are allowed to dissolve in the elements of daily responsibilities and contrary expectations of other people. A simple act of conscious gratitude for our skills, strengths, relationships, hopes, dreams, and visions will help them grow and develop. Appreciation helps them appreciate! We encourage everyone to take time to regularly and consistently identify and appreciate those intangible assets that are important, then

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About Peak Pathways

The focus of Peak Pathways is on the leader with services in five key areas:

Leadership/Executive Coaching helps leaders to personally grow in areas important to business.

Executive Career Transition Coaching starts with choosing the career, successfully searching for the right employer & emphasizes success transitioning into the new role & responsibilities.

Team Development is working with staff members at various levels to reach new heights of productivity & personal satisfaction.

Team Selection & Hiring Practices develops strategic plans & routines to create a top performing organization by having top performers in every job.

Stress Assessment and Control utilizing Emotional Intelligence & other assessment tools.

Key Professional Affiliations:

[Profiles International Inc.](#)

[The Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara](#)

[Korn/Ferry International](#)

watch them grow and thrive.

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9 Sales Practices You Should Always Follow

Landing a job in sales is one thing, but being successful in sales can prove to be a much more challenging and stressful task. There are a couple of reasons job boards are always flooded with open sales positions:

Working in sales isn't for everyone.

If the stress of quotas and performance-based job security is enough to keep you awake at night, and if you lack confidence, motivation, or social skills, then sales may not be the right career for you. To be successful in a sales position, it takes an individual with specific skills and characteristics, along with the right mindset and proper training.

Training and coaching is often subpar.

The sad truth is that many new hires in sales positions (who might otherwise be successful) fail because they are improperly trained, then thrown into a sea of prospects, and told to deliver results or get out. This situation is far too common and is a recipe for disaster from the start.

Regardless of your experience or circumstances, there are specific sales practices that should always be followed and will lead you to success. Here are nine sales practices you should always follow:

1. Be well prepared.

A potential client can usually tell if you're prepared or not. You should be well-informed about a prospect's industry and potential needs before making initial contact. In addition to research, you should also spend time preparing for any meetings or phone calls that follow. Recent survey results show that 44 percent of sales reps prepare for a prospect meeting the day before, just 12 percent prep a week in advance, and 2 percent "wing it," or don't prepare at all. Without proper preparation, prospects will perceive that you are just another telemarketer attempting to pull a fast one and take their money for something they don't need. Being prepared will directly affect prospects' perception of you and your product.

2. Ask strategic questions.

When meeting with your prospective client, don't just throw information at them and expect it to stick. Ask strategic questions that will reveal useful insight, and allow the prospect to come to conclusions on their own! For example, you might ask "What is your organization's toughest challenge? What

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will happen if you don't solve it?" Through proper planning, knowing your product and your client's needs, you'll be able to form rhetorical and open-ended questions that will favorably sculpt the prospect's view of your offerings.

3. Listen carefully.

Don't do all of the talking; always listen very closely when your prospect is speaking and maintain eye contact. The ability to be a great listener in sales is key, as doing this lets the client know that you are genuinely interested in them, their business, and how you can help with their challenges. Should the prospect communicate any concerns, effective listening can help you address them, learn what is most important to the client, and allow you to pick up on cues that can help you determine the best angle to take on your pitch. One of the easiest ways to sell your product or service is to identify how it solves your prospect's problem. Ask questions, find out what they need...perhaps, they may have no need for the flagship solution that you are pitching, but could utilize a different product.

4. Focus on prospects' needs.

Understanding your prospect and their needs is the most important step when determining what products to pitch, thereby gaining their business. If you were to offer someone a vacuum, but they just bought one last week, it's unlikely you'll be closing the sale. Now, let's say you ask strategic questions and discover they have a 30-year-old refrigerator that needs repair—you focus on their need for a new refrigerator, which you offer, and close the sale. Every potential client has a different set of needs, and identifying and catering to their needs through specific products or services is crucial to getting new business.

5. Build value.

If you can effectively build value in your offerings, they will essentially sell themselves. Give examples of situations where a past client had a challenge, how your services helped solve it, and the end result. This strategy is effective because it describes a real-world application of what you are offering, and doesn't seem like they're being sold to. Once you discover specific solutions the prospect is most interested in, keep building value around those points. Before closing, it's important to go back and summarize each point of value you discussed earlier.

6. Be honest!

Prospects may be apprehensive to fully trust you because you may be perceived to have self-serving motives as a salesperson—commissions and quotas. This is a hurdle that you will face in almost every sale, so learning how to defeat it quickly is vital to gaining business. People want to buy from others they can trust, so honesty and transparency at every point in the sale is an absolute must. Throw in some humor if you can, and be genuine in your conversation. Remember that the point of sale is only one part of the transaction, so don't think you can use dishonesty as a closing tool without it coming back to bite

you. A great overall buying experience—from interaction, to the product, to service after the sale—creates returning customers and increased sales through referrals.

7. Ask for the sale.

The moment of truth is at the point when you ask for the sale. When asking for the sale, never ask the prospect a question they can answer “no” to! For example, instead of asking “Would you like to buy this today,” you would ask, “Would Monday or Wednesday be better for you to come to the store?” This tactic assumes the sale and offers the client options, which gives them the feeling that they are in control. Should the client say “neither,” offer them more choices. If you have successfully built value and addressed the prospect’s needs and concerns, then asking for the sale and getting a “yes” should be a given.

8. Handle rejection professionally.

Sometimes things don’t go as planned, no matter how well the pitch goes. Maybe the prospect wants the product, but doesn’t have room for it in the budget. Other times, a prospect may be interested, but not convinced. Regardless of the reason, rejection always stings the same after a good effort. Handling rejection in a professional manner can be difficult, but it is always necessary. You never know when that client’s budget might increase, or whether they will become convinced after hearing how well it worked from a friend. Prospects sometimes come back after the initial “no,” so don’t burn bridges!

9. Keep trying!

It’s easy to get down when you’re on a losing streak with prospects, but remember that Rome was not built in a day, and even the most successful salespeople have their slumps. This step applies to both rising from sales slumps and persistence with the client that said “no” until you get a “yes.” If you have a client that remains unconvinced, don’t give up. Instead, figure out what their objection is, find a solution, and try again! If you’re in a sales slump, treat it as a learning experience, and make the most of it by finding and testing new, more effective sales strategies. Challenges are inevitable, so utilize them as an opportunity to develop your sales skills and you will be even more successful than you were before!

