

Ten Lessons

Increase sales success.



by Mary Anne Davis

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR WAYS to improve the sales cycle and turn the sales pipeline into more orders? To do so, you need to act like a sports professional, someone who practices and keeps learning to stay on top of your game—the sales process—moving from first contact to signed contract.

You need a development plan that is more than a *daily to-do list* or *monthly sales goal*. It must be a *continuous effort to grow and learn*, resulting in more sales, and in getting the right sales while developing a winning attitude. To move from simply *making quota* to *becoming a successful professional*, consider these 10 lessons:

1. Plan work and work the sales plan. Balance time and schedule so that the most time is spent in key sales result areas such as calling clients, generating referrals, prospecting and customer meetings. By using the *CID formula* (Call-Interview-Deliver) each day; dynamic sales results will happen.

2. Know the sales process and the steps of the sale. Move gracefully from one step to the next using selling and closing skills to manage objections and close doors. You might start with a conversation, obtain information while being interesting, present the value, create desire, and let the customer buy.

3. Try to be interesting and engaging. Make all written/spoken sales messages clear, concise and compelling. Ensure the 30-second commercial prompts people to say, *Tell me more*.

4. Use relationship selling to build long-term, mutually profitable relationships. Open with a story, good questions, relevant gift, a mutual friend, client or referral. *Speak the customer's language*. Be mindful of time and have a purpose. Cold calling is for amateurs. *Relationship selling means generating referrals*.

5. Use consultative selling to investigate, not interrogate. Get permission to ask questions. *Ask the right questions for the right purpose at the right time*. Ask for the customer's opinion and experience on the subject, throw some thought provokers. This is *the art of selling*.

6. Sell value and sizzle: go beyond selling features and benefits. The customer must know the value for them.

How does the idea, product or service solve their problem and pain? A professional sales person matches the presentation to the client needs. Value selling is truly *the science of selling*.

7. Manage customer expectations by checking-in before moving to the close of sale. Find out the customer's opinion about ideas, products, or service before asking them to decide. Ask if it meets their expectations.

8. Manage objections by welcoming them as questions in disguise. Do not use fighting words like *but* or *however*. Bring in the *value statement* that is best suited to objection. *Questions enable you to negotiate and sell value over price*.

9. Let the customer buy using a summary of the sales pitch that includes a 30-second commercial that will state what happens when they own the idea, product or service. This will gen-

erate questions like "When can I get it?" or "What's the next step?" Help the customer buy by knowing which of the eight ways to ask for the sale.

10. Become a life-long learner: know the latest in company products, industry, winning sales techniques, and even motivational gurus. Use drive time or take 15 minutes a day to listen to books on selling, training, professional development, target marketing and referrals.

By practicing these 10 lessons, your *selling processes will improve* and *contracts will get signed*. The *positive behaviors* will produce *better results*. Make a personal plan for each lesson, and share the plan with others. **SSE**

Mary Anne Davis is president of Peak Performance Solutions, consultant and trainer, and author of *The Sales Messenger*. www.PeakPerformanceSolutions.com, call 214-613-1767; email maryanne@ppstrainer.com.

ACTION: Create your own development plan.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/IMAGE

Polish Your Image

It will lead to more business.



by Sandy Dumont

IN-DEPTH, LOST-LASTING IMPRESSIONS are formed in just two seconds! That's not much time to project to your prospects that you are a *dynamic, extraordinary expert*. That first impression will either open the door or slam it shut.

The way you look and dress announces the outcome other people can expect from you. To win more business, work on the image you project in these six ways:

1. Dress to impress. Others notice when you dress up for them. It makes *them* feel special—and they'll treat *you* as special and remember you. When everyone is wearing khakis and polos, wear dark slacks and a French blue shirt—a tie for men and power earrings and comfortable heels for women. Suits convey the most power and credibility.

2. Discover the colors that make you look better. Most people look good in pure (*primary*) colors like navy blue, black, true red, royal blue, and emerald green. *Grunge colors* rarely make people look their best; avoid moss green, brown and most *earthy* colors.

3. Discover the styles that flatter your body type. If you're fairly short, dress in one solid color from head to toe so you are visually elongated. If you are heavier, dressing in one unbro-

ken color will also make you look slimmer. For men, this means wearing a suit instead of wearing khakis with a navy blazer, for instance. For women, pantsuits make you look taller and thinner than a skirted suit. However, skirted suits convey more authority. Solids slim and elongate, look more professional, and have great versatility.

4. Good grooming makes you look polished and professional. Keep your shoes polished and your nails clean and well trimmed. Have clean, well-styled hair; dated hair suggests dated credentials or products. Scruffy shoes, dirty nails and *disheveled hair* shout that you are sloppy.

5. Develop good posture. It makes you look proud and confident. Stand up straight; breathe in from the lower abdomen until you fill your lungs. Your chest will be high and shoulders squared. Let your shoulders drop gently and *unhunch* them. You'll get an *attitude change* with a *posture change*!

6. Get used to wearing a suit or dressing in a professional manner. Putting on a suit *when the need arises* makes you feel as if you're an *imposter*; that it's not *the real you*. Others will notice that you don't feel good in your skin, and they may attribute it to a lack of confidence or experience. An ill-fitting suit lowers your credibility.

Image doesn't cost, it pays. If you dress to impress, you'll increase your *credibility, confidence and bottom line*. **SSE**

Sandy Dumont, the Image Architect, is author of several books on image. Get her 7 Days Makeover eBook at www.theimagearchitect.com.

ACTION: Polish your professional image.

