



The Top 10 Challenges Sales People and Entrepreneurs Face in Business

By Indeara Eastman

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1. **They Do Not Have Enough Time in the Day to Get Organized**

Face-to-face interaction can be a great way to build relationships and engage with clients on a personal level, however, the fast-paced nature of the business requires salespeople to constantly shuffle from one meeting to another. Relying on many face-to-face interactions leaves very little time in the day to spend at the desk to get organized and to reflect on their strategies. Using methods that we teach in Business Mastery for Success, salespeople can consolidate all of their important documents and presentations in one easily-accessible place, allowing them to stay prepared – even on the go. Email support@billionairemommy.com for more information.

2. **Lack of Clear Internal Communication**

The sales landscape is constantly shifting and what this means is that salespeople need to stay fully informed on all updated information. Missing out on timely information can be the difference between closing the important deal and painfully falling short. Fortunately, there are content management systems available that allow salespeople to subscribe to specific “tags” that will immediately notify them when managers upload new content, keeping them up-to-date on topics that are relevant to them and their clients. Stay tuned for upcoming video series' on how to keep strong internal communication.

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3. **Getting Constructive Feedback for Performance**

Feedback is one of the most efficient ways to improve results. It's important for managers to empower their salesforce and give them every opportunity to continue to increase productivity. Oftentimes, that means going beyond team meetings and other traditional tactics and, instead, turning to tangible performance metrics that can be digested more easily. The Usage Analytics feature in IBM Expert Seller with Box Platform allows for just that, providing weekly analytics-driven reports that highlight the most useful content based on seller activity, allowing managers to increase their team's efficiency.

4. **Making Genuine Connections with Clients**

To make a lasting impact, it's important for salespeople to develop personal relationships with clients and make them feel comfortable. Instead of reverting to simply describing the products and services they offer, sellers should first try to be relatable and understand clients on a personal level, which can eventually lead to a strong business connection. Just as importantly, salespeople need to be able to stand out from their peers. There are mobile apps available that allow users to put all of their client sales material in virtual briefcases that can be accessed offline, which decreases the overall amount of time a salesperson needs to learn vital info preparing for client meetings.

5. **Managing Client Expectations After Getting the Business**

Keeping client expectations in check boils down to eliminating any potential confusion and keeping an open line of communication. Sellers need to communicate consistently with clients and address any issues that arise immediately. They should work collectively with clients to set measurable goals and timelines, and actively listen to what clients are trying to articulate. The general rule of thumb is to set realistic expectations while still leaving room to go above and beyond to leave a lasting impression on a client.

The Top 10 Challenges Sales People and Entrepreneurs Face in Business

6. **Adjusting to the Role after Being Promoted etc.**

The road to becoming a sales manager sometimes involves being a salesperson for some time and then receiving a promotion to a higher position. If this has happened to you, chances are, you quickly realized that the skill set required for effective sales management is quite a bit different than the skill set required for being a salesperson.

For example, you have to learn how to manage a team and juggle all of their different personalities, skill sets and learning styles. It is no longer enough for you to only understand your own way of selling – as a manager, you have to be open to methods other than yours. Be accepting of the way your salespeople approach selling. There is more than one way to succeed; so if their way works well, let them do it and praise them for their achievements.

Being a manager also means that your relationship with the sales team changes. You are no longer their equal in the company's hierarchy, so you may be faced with awkward situations if your co-workers still view you as more of a peer than a boss.

Being a manager does not mean you need to give your team the cold shoulder. However, you may need to create a bit of distance when it comes to socializing with them after work. Be caring and open, but focus on leading your team to success rather than socializing and being their friend.

7. **Stress On the Job**

There is no question that being a sales manager can be stressful.

After all, you work long hours, have many responsibilities and rely on the performance of your sales team to meet quotas.

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Plus, salespeople can be difficult to lead, so managing a whole team of them can be overwhelming, especially when you have to learn how to motivate, inspire and lead them while making sure they get results.

Take some simple actions to reduce stress throughout the day and improve your quality of life at work.

Here are a few ideas to help you when you are feeling a bit frazzled:

- **Review Your Successes** – Dealing with failure can be tough, but looking back on your past successes in difficult moments will allow you to think positively and remember your worth as a sales manager.
- **Deep Breathing** – Deep, deliberate breaths can work wonders when it comes to stress management. Take some time out of your day to do this, and your tension will be reduced.
- **Recharge as Needed** – Take breaks when you can, even if you are busy. While it seems counterintuitive, giving yourself a few moments to recover can actually be a great way to improve sales productivity, both as a manager and as a salesperson.

Remember, stress can ruin your health and your attitude about work if you let it, so it is important for you to keep it to an absolute minimum for high performance and better results.

The Top 10 Challenges Sales People and Entrepreneurs Face in Business

8. **They Have Lack of Confidence, or Knowledge of What a Qualified Lead Is, Many Times They Will Work with Unqualified Leads and Prospects Who Will Never Buy**

A sales manager recently evaluated two of his team members: Gary spends too much time with non-buyers, and gets too involved in nonproductive activities. One root cause of this behavior is that he doesn't ask the tough questions and get to the real pain point of the customer, which starts with establishing strong rapport. Amy is strong with users, but both she and Gary have lost deals because our competition has contacts and influence at the CEO and Executive Director level, and they do not. Why is this?

1. Sales reps won't ask the hard questions up-front for fear of making their prospects angry.
2. Prospects don't want to say no. Most sales people think their job is to close everybody, and over the years sales training has taught, "Don't take NO for an answer."

Sales reps are taught to be persistent, handle stalls and objections, trial close, and always be closing. No wonder buyers need a system to protect themselves. Buyers realize sales reps don't want to hear NO. Buyers fear that when a salesperson hears a NO they'll keep going and try to turn NO into YES. When the poor buyer really means NO, they have found the easiest way to get rid of a sales person. One of the easiest ways to get rid of a sales person is for them to say, "I'll think about it; I'll get back to you." How many that request to think it over really turn into business? In most cases a very low percentage who go off to think about the offer come back to buy.

1. Salespeople don't get to decision-makers. Instead, most salespeople spend time with comfort people who are easier to get in front of and with whom the salesperson is more comfortable talking.

The Top 10 Challenges Sales People and Entrepreneurs Face in Business

FAST FACT: 60% of a salesperson's time is spent in front of people who will not, or cannot buy their product or service.

What is the solution? The sales rep needs the tools to separate tire-kickers from buyers and an approach to obtain executive approval early in the sales cycle. Learn to qualify your prospects out, not qualify them in. The top rep learns to ask the hard questions up-front, to save resources for real opportunities. NO is an acceptable response from a buyer. Going for the NO requires a tremendous paradigm shift for most sales people, but it can take all the pressure off the rep and increase her/his productivity. The prospect is also a beneficiary because it makes the process feel more like buying than being sold.

9. A Lot of Times Sales People Talk Too Much

A sales VP recently told us, "My sales reps listening skills aren't where they need to be – someone says something and they don't find out the real reason or intent behind the question, which leaves the prospect feeling like my salespeople don't understand them or their issues. Of course, when we sent them to the College of Product Knowledge, filling them with features and benefits and then sent them out to make their quotas, we should have expected this result." The marketing department has given the sales team the company's product line which "extensive, scalable, user-friendly all from an industry leader." So what's the problem telling our story?

First, people buy for their reasons, not the sales rep's reasons. Second, most high-tech companies feature and benefit presentations sound the same to the buyer, and when the presentations sound the same, the lower price becomes the determining factor in getting the business.

The Top 10 Challenges Sales People and Entrepreneurs Face in Business

What is the solution? Asking questions is the answer. Learn to ask questions and stop pitching. Teach your sales people the 70/30 rule; your prospective customer should be talking 70% of the time and the sales rep should be talking 30% OR LESS. With high ticket sales over the phone, the goal is to get the prospect talking about 95% percent of the time, whenever possible.

10. **They Do Not Get Familiar with Their Industry to Master your Craft**

Professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and CPAs all have one thing in common – they attend continuing education to maintain and increase their proficiency. Yet how many salespeople are continually seeking new ways to increase their skills? Many have the attitude “I’ve been selling for years, what more can I learn?”

The solution? Like many top performers, the top 20% of salespeople look for ways to sharpen their skills to gain the fine edge that leads to consistent success.

What to do to change it:

To find success with implementation of any common sales process requires the following steps:

Step #1: 100% Management buy-in. No selling system will succeed unless your front-line managers are 100% committed to and able to support and reinforce its implementation. A key to successful Sales Force Transformation is a conceptual shift on the part of first level managers from reactive (“what are you going to close this quarter?”) to proactive coaching in all phases of the process (debriefing sales calls, strategizing deals, making good bid/no bid decisions.)

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Step #2: Sales buy-in. Most sales training fails because it's the corporate flavor of the month and because there is not buy-in at all levels.

Step #3: Ownership. Even the best-selling system delivered by the most entertaining and persuasive trainer will be a distant memory within a few weeks if the effort is not ongoing. It's fine that your sales people know what to do – but to do it under pressure, in buyer/seller situations requires that reps graduate from knowledge to mastery. Experiential learning is what works for sales people. Your team needs hands-on learning and reinforcement experience in an environment where it's safe to get out of their comfort zone and try new and more effective behaviors.



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