

SalesMaxx: Step by Step Proven Techniques to Boost Your Sales

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Forward.

Have you ever met a salesman who is so confident and has excellent sales performance with apparent ease?

This type of salesmen belongs to ‘natural born salespeople’ [1], those who rely more on their intuition, gift, unconscious competent, or whatever you may call it. They have something hidden that makes him/her an excellent salesman. But as study shows this type is only approximately 20% percent of the sales talent pool, which can be called “*Eagles.*” The remaining 80% are ready, willing, and capable in their sales duties, but they need training, methods, tools, and also proven techniques. These are majority of salespeople who will get benefits from sales training, pitch letter, etc.

This paper is written for those 80% salesmen out there who needs step-by-step proven and consistent methods to get their jobs done, and makes increasing sales performance. We will discuss how a step-by-step proven method –called ‘*sales process*’- will ensure your team’s sales performance.

But this paper is also written for the marketing and sales manager level people, those who have to coordinate and supervise the others. As experience will show [1], an effective management is critical to sales process and sales performance. An effective sales manager will monitor, coach, manage, and supervise their sales force using a *consistent* sales process. Otherwise the sales force will find the guidelines inconsistent and this fact alone will reduce the morale of his/her sales team.

The basic idea of this paper is based on “*The New Solution Selling: The Revolutionary Sales Process that is Changing the Way People Sell*” book, by Keith M. Eades [1]. His concepts have been successfully implemented by computer industries giants like IBM, Microsoft etc. In this paper, we will adapt these concepts into different industries other than software / hi-tech markets. The principles are more or less the same, but the sales process and steps may be different here and there. We also include short discussion on new marketing techniques using internet. There are plethoras of those methods, so we will limit our discussion on the most common methods such as blogging etc. [2]

Moreover, this paper is written based on more than 14 years experience in corporate marketing, which is often called (in technology jargon) as 'B2B' market.

We've tried our best to write this article in as simple and accessible as possible, and removing the plethora of marketing jargons which can make you confusing. We also include some funny stories here and there as refreshment to readers who are new to marketing world [3]. For those experienced salespeople and marketing specialists, please skip the jokes and just cling with the ideas.

At the end of this paper we also include a review of sales process software which may be found useful as illustration on how the concepts described herein can be implemented consistently. We call this software 'SalesMaxx' and can be accessible for test purpose at www.salesmaxxonline.com.

We hope you to let the ideas in this paper to help you to build solid sales team based on solid sales process to reach solid sales performance.

Wishing you plenty of happy sales moments!

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1. Introduction

When you hear the word '*sales*', what is your first reaction in your mind? Some of you will recall happy moments when you got the first clients, and some of you recall worst moments where your clients moved to another product. If you are in management level, most likely the same word will remind you to the nights that you have to go home late because you should attend sales meeting.

As in other specialized fields, the sales and marketing world have their own meaning for words, especially for hi-tech sales people. See for instance Table 1, just for hint.

Table 1. The Dictionary: what hi-tech salespeople say and what they mean

Word spoken by sales people	It's real meaning
New	Different color from previous design
All new	Parts not interchangeable with previous design
Unmatched	Almost as good as the competition
Designed simplicity	Manufacturer's cost cut to the bone
Foolproof operation	No provision for adjustments
Advanced design	The advertising agency doesn't understand it
Field-tested	Manufacturer lacks test equipment
High accuracy	Unit on which all parts fit
Direct sales only	Factory had big argument with distributor
Years of development	We finally got one that works
Breakthrough	We finally figured out a way to sell it
Futuristic	No other reason why it looks the way it does
Distinctive	A different shape and color than the others
Hand-crafted	Assembly machines operated without gloves on
Performance proven	Will operate through the warranty period
Meets all standards	Ours, not yours
Broadcast quality	Gives a picture and produces noise
High reliability	We made it work long enough to ship it.
Microprocessor controlled	Does things we can't explain

Source: http://jokes.maxabout.com/jid0017483/the_dictionary_what_hitech_sa.aspx.

Oh, yes, it aim's that bad at all. After all as salespeople you can boast yourself as the real people who do real jobs to get things done by meeting real customers who actually buy your products. In other words, you are the 'user-interface' -- in computer parlance -- that customers will touch, and speak to, and for sure --uh- express their feelings too, be it good or bad mood.

Therefore in this article we focus on real, daily sales issues, not the high-level strategic marketing issues, which belong to those in executive management level.

To simplify the present paper, we will begin with a summary of ideas to be discussed in the remaining sections of this paper.

1.1. Summary of ideas

To simplify our ideas, we introduce a new word VEST, which is abbreviated of a quite simple formula:

$$V = E \times S \times T$$

Where the meaning shall be clearer if we use words instead of letters:

$$\text{Volume(new sales)} = \text{Exposure} \times \text{SuccessRate} \times \text{TransactionRate}$$

The word 'VEST' itself has its own meaning, which is a bulletproof suite:

1. *vest n.* A sleeveless garment, often having buttons down the front, worn usually over a shirt or blouse and sometimes as part of a three-piece suit. (cf. www.answers.com/topic/vest)
2. a waist-length garment worn for protective purposes: a bulletproof vest. (cf. dictionary.infoplease.com/vest)
3. *bulletproof vest.* Body Armor Protective covering and other equipment designed to guard individuals in combat. (cf. www.answers.com/topic/bulletproof-vest-2)

In other words, the word VEST would mean that using the step-by-step proven methods described in this article would enable you and your sales team to secure sales performance when the marketing competition seem increasingly difficult to get in. And more over, how to keep your customers despite fierce competition).

This is simply a set of proven methods to keep your business 'bulletproof'.

1.2. Volume (New Sales)

New sales are the key driver to get the sales growth. Without the strong success of this activity the sales growth is going no where. In my perspective New Sales is a success from 3 group of activities (variable), i.e. Exposure, SuccessRate, and TransactionVolume.

And the New Sales is related to the total Sales Volume by the virtue of this relation:

$$\text{Sales Volume} = \text{New Sales} + \text{Present Sales Volume}$$

In other words, without introducing New Sales, your Sales Volume is stagnant. And worse than that, it is likely that your Present Sales Volume is not a static number, because your products also have their own life-time expectation. In other words, what customers like ten years ago may be different with what they like today. In hi-tech industries this lifetime could be less than 3 years. Therefore you can also introduce 'depreciation rate' into your Present Sales Volume, if you wish to emphasize that what you got now is not for eternal.

1.3. Exposure (E)

This variable is expressed in number (or times of exposure).

This is the effort you shall make in order to expose the products and services to the marketplace. It requires quality and quantity marketing activities approach. Quality mean talking about the right market segmentation and targeting that fit with your product or vice versa.

For example, if you hit wrong target segment than your effort is useless and you are just burning the sales and marketing expenses with low ROI. If you hit the right target segment with the right product than the chance of success is huge now it is depend on the other variables.

1.4. **SuccessRate (S)**

This variable is expressed in percentage (%).

This is about sales process. Like any other processes, sales also have a set of steps from identifying the right prospect, approaching, showing the value of the product and service, negotiating the deal and closing the sales. In short it takes 4 steps but depending on the nature of the business it could takes 4, 5, 6 and more steps to close the sales. We will also discuss the **Salesm@xx** solution will explain in depth about this process.

The success of each step in the sales process requires a selling skill and experience to be more effective and efficient on moving from one step to another. There is no born sales person. I believe everyone born with a sales talent. The different is a successful sales person practicing and sharpening their talent. They are reading selling books, going into sales training and having the right attitude and passion on doing their job. Using Stephen Covey's words of Habit, Sales is a Habit. The successful sales person having 3 elements of habit: Knowledge, Skill and Attitude. They know what to do (knowledge) , how to do it (skill) and want to do it (Attitude).

1.5. **TransactionRate (T)**

This variable is also expressed in percentage (%).

The last variable on getting high new sales depends on the average transaction value you gain. If you are highly successful on the other variables but gets very low TransactionRate (%) than your sales volume is also low.

High and low TV also depends on the nature of the business. For example, if you are selling a natural drinking water in small packaging than it's so obvious that you need very high transaction rate in order to get a high sales volume, while if you are selling a premium property such as house or apartment than you may just need to get one closing per month to have a big new sales volume (in terms of currency).

The difference between TransactionRate and SuccessRate is between the industry-wide or nature of your business (be it helicopter, property, or toy), and the inside-nature of your company, i.e. how you follow methodically a step-by-step bulletproof methods which ensure that each prospect can be handled properly until the sales is achieved.

1.6. Present Sales Volume (P)

Present sales volume (P), is also called 'Current Sales Base'.

Depending on the nature of the business, Present sales volume (P) plays very important role when you are in the portfolio business. If your business not a portfolio than you can put zero result on the formula or just simply pass this section.

Portfolio business is the accumulation of a routine transaction volume. It is like a consumable product such as: Food & Beverage product, cleaning chemical, banking, executive club, etc. You expect your loyal customer to keep buying your product or services in timely basis (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.). It is retained sales or maintenance sales or a sales foundation to gain more new sales.

The question is how to keep them loyal while your competitor is like a hungry cheetah want to grab your customer every time everyday. They are proposing better offers, better products with cheaper price or better benefit. Failing to do these activities will result low to zero growth of your sales volume regardless how success your new sales activities.

But if you are highly successful on these activities than every new sales will just get topping up the base and your sales volume growth just go higher and higher. So yes, in portfolio business the CSB play a great vital to grow your sales portfolio.

1.7. What is Salesm@xx

Salesm@xx is a new cutting edge concept of managing your sales activities using the above VEST formula, proven methods of sales process, along with Sales Management Solution technology.

Acquiring the **Salesm@xx** selling knowledge will simplify your learning process to be more effective on doing your sales activities while the Sales Management Solution will enable you leveraging your skills to maximize the sales outcome.

In short **Salesm@xx** is a new mind set, a new skill set and a new tool set to have better sales management and grow your sales volume. It is just a one shot comprehensive solution to be more effective on maximizing your sales outcome. **Salesm@xx** solution is especially suitable for a B2B type of business which requires one-on-one sales approach. If you are a salesman or managing B2B sales organization than you definitely need to consider using **Salesm@xx** approach to maximizing your sales result.

Of course, if you are managing a B2C-type of business, you can also reap the benefits from **Salesm@xx** selling knowledge too, because it is very easy to adapt the concepts described herein.

The last section will discuss **Salesm@xx** solution will explain in depth about this process.

2. Exposure

The exposure concept is not so difficult to grasp, in particular if you already had your feet wet in sales and marketing world. How to get things done right, and in effective way, that is the real question.

The principle is also very simple, i.e. as an old saying: *“you will reap what you sow.”* Of course before we sow, first of all we shall find out what kind of seed to sow, and whether it is appropriate to the fields. Furthermore, you shall count the quantity of seeds needed, and also the quality, otherwise they may be damaged during the season and therefore useless.

Now we turn our discussion to real marketing world.

2.1. Segmentation

Let's begin with a story, probably a real one (thought not exactly sure who did what when).

A door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman manages to bull his way into a woman's home in a rural area.

“This machine is the best ever” he exclaims, whilst pouring a bag of dirt over the lounge floor.

The woman says she's really worried it may not all come off, so the salesman says, "If this machine doesn't remove all the dust completely, I'll lick it off myself."

"Do you want ketchup on it?" she says, "we're not connected for electricity yet!"[1]

So perhaps you know what is the message here, i.e. there is no point to sell vacuum cleaner if the house has no electricity in the first place.

Not only that, customers is becoming more diverse, according to studies by geodemographers, people who study the population characteristics. For instance, Clarita determined in the 1970s that 40 lifestyle segments were sufficient to define US populace. Today, the number has grown to 66, a 65% increase. [2]

Moreover, researchers begin to talk about the significance of ethnographic marketing, in particular if your region is ethnically diverse. In principle ethnographic marketing discuss how to use anthropologists' findings to understand how people use and relate to products and services.

To summary, goals of ethnographic marketing include:

- In-depth understanding of consumer;
- Seeing things from customer's viewpoint;
- Being open to different points of view;
- Exploring contexts and conditions;
- Emotions behind consumer behavior;
- Multi-vocal methodology.

As R.V. Kozinets (Kellog School of Mgmt) puts it:

“Anthropology offers marketing ways to understand a variety of concerns important to marketers and marketing researchers, including language, taste consumption linkages, desires, motivations, and the decision making influences of particular consumers and consumer groups.”

2.2. Getting Prospects, the Offline Way

2.2.a. Advertising

To boost exposure, of course the simplest way is to put some ads at places that your potential prospects will find them. These places could be newspapers, radios, television, movies, apartment walls, booklets, magazines, etc. One can also think of numerous unique ways to put these ads, for instance by installing a large balloon at the top of high-rise office building will increase chance of people to see, if nothing else but attractive color and fancy design.

2.2.b. Events

Events can be music performance, art performance, sport events, but they can also special gatherings like thanksgiving parties, high-school parents' meeting etc. The point here is not only the quantity of people who gather, but also how they could possibly relate to your products / services. It is not advisable to dumb all your expenses on a few great

performances only to get your banner displayed but no follow-up calls to potential customers.

If none of these events meet your requirement, you can invite local artist to do special dances or music performance but at unusual place near market or other public place.

2.2.c. Publications

Publications here don't only mean your CEO meets someone from outer space then your products get attention by media. You can get publication almost freely by doing something uniquely. Or at least ask a special team doing that for you, for instance roller-skating at the roads, wearing red-sunglasses etc.

Body Shop has its own unique way to get publication, i.e. by developing solid reputation for green products. That way people know where the products came from and they buy not only with their pocket, but also with their hearts.

In marketing parlance, this method is called doing marketing the spiritual level. It is called the best method a marketer can do.

2.2.d. Telemarketing

Telemarketing is also an effective method, in particular to get initial on your customer needs, We will learn on the next sections, that various methods depend on at what step is your sales process. Telemarketing is probably most suitable to get access and collect information from your customer (what they do, what they want, what are their problems, what are their pains).

In order to be more effective, it is also advisable to collect database first of your potential prospects, and select them to find out whether their business are suitable to your products and services.

2.2.e. Other nonconventional methods: guerilla methods

Some of those techniques described above may require large expenses, therefore may be suitable if you work with large budget or large companies (unless perhaps telemarketing).

As most companies are only followers, not leaders, then the methods of the leaders may not be suitable for them. Therefore in recent years, there is more attention on highly-efficient method called guerrilla marketing.

But beware, as telemarketing and other cost-efficient online marketing methods grow nowadays, some people say that guerilla marketing is dead. [5][6][7]

2.3 Getting Prospects, the Online Way

A tagline of Yahoo's search marketing says 'Customers don't go on tree, they grow online.'[4] This is exactly the message of this section, in the high-paced business nowadays, you need to reach your prospects not only at work hours, or at workplace, or at their houses. You need to be able to reach them not only at any time, any place, 24x7 hours a week, but also at the time that they want to, and at the place they wish to hear your message. Too much often we hear the story of dropped-off salespeople who try to reach the wrong person, at the wrong time, and at the wrong mood!

Online presence is one possible way to resolve this issue, i.e. by leveraging your exposures effectively while keeping your marketing expenses effective. Here we discuss a number of possible ways you can do. Of course we discuss here a few simpler ways that you can do quickly; for more advanced discussion on this subject you can find good books on internet marketing, etc.

2.3.a. Homepage

Homepage doesn't mean only static text like boring books that you dumb quickly under your desk. It should also not be so flash-heavy animated contents that took weeks to prepare and some minutes to open.

But at least your homepage should be informative, and functionally effective. If you want to trigger sales from your homepage, then at least it should display your products/services in attractive way, and enable visitors to ask for more information if they need to. It shall also enable receiving-payment, either the simple way (direct postal), or using advance method such as paypal or clickbank.

2.3.b. Newsletter, etc.

Apart of coverage/publication, exposures also require reputation. And reputation is built based on relationship and trust. This alone cannot be achieved via massive advertising; one shall instead build trust via online methods, such as email-based newsletter. If you keep on your prospects and customers with newsletter, they will know that you care about them. And from this trust is built, at the end you will achieve customer loyalty.

Of course, there is trade-off between customer loyalty and marketing expenses, so that CEO in last years think at Customer Relationship Management as an expensive methods to keep customer loyal, when in fact customer loyalty is next to illusion, The key here is perhaps to use effective Customer Relationship methods which offer highest leverage while keeping costs at minimum. Newsletter is one of this method.

2.3.c. **Blog marketing**

Blog is like diary you write at the end of the day. But the difference is it's online and plenty of folks can read your diary. You can use free blogging method, and then post your content using RSS feeder directories or using digg.com.

The most important things to remember when you develop specific blog for your company's products/services are [3]:

- Offer your visitors advice, tips and other opportunities, like free reports or something else related to your business.
- Encourage your visitors to post comments and/or suggestions.
- Post as often as you can. It is recommended that you post daily.
- You can allow other people to repost your material on their websites as long as you let them know that the resource box must remain the same, this means that they cannot change your links in any way.
- Always keep good content on your site. Make sure you stay up-to-date with your information.
- Make sure you link to other sites from within your site. Add affiliate links through banners etc.

2.4. **The Role of Database.**

There are already some books written on the subject of *database marketing*. The idea is that you instruct your database to do more work using advanced techniques to detect patterns or habits of your customers.

For example, SuperStuff [2], a US retailer uses such an advanced technique called CHAID with their database to find out that 310 out of 508 of their department stores have EBIT (earnings before interest and taxes) less than 2.8%, while the remaining 198 outlets have EBIT more than 6.4%. But then they find out that those stores which have averagely less EBIT at 2.8% have their competitor's outlets nearby. Not only that, they can also find out that stores located in neighborhoods with higher-income household get larger EBIT rate.

And based on these data, they can remodel ideas, to find out that of 188 stores which are located in neighborhoods with high-income household and have the competitor's outlets nearby, those who have allocated more than 50% of their square footage to apparel have larger EBIT margins of 5.3%.

This information can be used by management to remodel or reallocate their stores and increase their EBIT margins significantly for other stores.

The crux of the idea is using advanced statistical methods (e.g. CHAID [2]) to identify which numbers are statistically meaningful. That is between two or more groups which have different EBIT we can find out whether the difference is more-or-less in the same pattern, or they indicate some reasons behind these differences.

And so on, you can find more ideas by digging on advanced machine learning or database marketing subject. We limit our discussion here because it will be more tedious.

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