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Art of Selling...

By **Art Waskey**

7 KEYS TO SALES DISCIPLINE

Recently, the decision-maker of a prospective customer stated that if our company could save his organization time and money through our productive enhancement program, he would switch their gas business to us. The rep spent several months understanding the customer's production issues, getting to know the prospective customer's organization and the related problems in their plant. Our rep documented his solutions in a comprehensive proposal; he was disciplined and prepared.

In his book, *The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player*, John Maxwell defines **Sales Discipline** as "doing what you really don't want to do, so that you can do what you really want to do. It's paying the price in the little things so that you can buy the bigger thing. Disciplined [sales professionals] must possess disciplined thinking, disciplined emotions, [and] disciplined actions. Sharpening your mind and controlling your emotions are important, but they can take you only so far. Action is what separates the winners from the losers. Your actions always reflect your degree of discipline."

What are the critical measures that describe a disciplined sales professional?

- **Develop a monthly planner:** Take time to plan. Exceptional sales people focus on their future activities, allowing adequate time for details.
- **Forecast Monthly Sales:** Review last month's results, noting all significant changes; forecast for next month, including business you plan to close.
- **Log 10 things you know about the Decision-Maker** in your top accounts and prospects. People buy from people they know and like. Are you investing the appropriate time to develop relationships?
- **Measure your Daily Call Frequency:** Effective sales professionals know how many calls provide optimum sales efficiency. Calculate your call frequency to determine your "sweet spot" for a home run.
- **Measure your Prospecting time:** include face-to-face contacts with decision and non-decision-makers, leads, follow-ups, account analysis, and appointments.
- **Institute a Self Study Sales Program:** Professionals invest time in learning the latest trends and techniques; read or listen to a minimum of a book per quarter; keep a written diary of your takeaways.
- **Track the Results:** Set goals [based on your history] for total and new business sales & margins, key unit sales, contracts, and significant customer decisions [prospective, penetration, and change].

The disciplined sales rep in our opening paragraph was rewarded with the targeted account. His persistence has consistently paid off; he is always a top performer. He is **NEVER** satisfied with yesterday's achievements. John Maxwell also advises, "People who are constantly improving themselves are intentional about learning something every day." Are YOU?

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