



Is Your Boat Adrift?



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Art Waskey is a speaker who truly delivers. In addition to a 45 year career in sales and marketing, Art is the author of multiple books on selling and a monthly column The Art of Sales. He shares these insights as an in demand event and conference speaker as well as leadership coach.

A sales manager once shared with me his concern about feeling adrift despite his success. This gentleman had managed several territories and in each he bettered his results. He was promoted to sales manager and his results continued to be outstanding, but he found himself unsure of his next career step. On a deeper level, he wondered what his purpose was as a sales leader.

His dilemma took me back 30 years to a time when I too was at a very successful point in my career but unclear about my goals. Fortunately, I found wise counsel who helped me understand that when your life boat feels adrift you need a rudder! My mentor directed me to find the characteristics that gave me purpose and to examine what drove me to succeed. He got me to identify my motivators — my rudders — and I found that at each step of my career I

had a particular goal in life. I realized I needed a renewed set of goals to keep moving forward.

Motivation and goals

The assignment to identify motivators and set goals is not an easy one. For the sales professional I recommend the following path.

Determine your strengths – When I look back at my success, I see there were particular passions that gave me the strength to succeed. I also recognize that there were personal weaknesses that felt overwhelming at times. The key to success was focusing on my strengths while minimizing activities that involved my weaknesses. Upon examination it was clear that I liked to work with people, to lead, teach, speak, and write about the experience. To help identify your strengths, in addition to self-reflection, ask others for their opinions of you and



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use profile assessments to unveil talents that may be hidden.

Visualize your achievements – Consider what you want. Once you determine which passions drive your purpose, visualize your achievements. For example, if being a motivational speaker appeals to you, when you hear someone give a presentation, envision yourself in their position. Witnessing the achievements of those you admire — in a field in which you want to succeed — can be very motivating.

Specify your goals – Set goals to achieve your passion and make them SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). They become more tangible if you write them down. Goals need to be big, but achievable in order to create excitement and challenge. In addition to small goals, create an overall long-range (yearly) goal to avoid being overcome by daily frustrations.

Measure your results – Break down each goal into next steps and assign target dates so you have the ability to track and measure your progress. When I decided I wanted to teach sales, I read everything I could on the topic and wrote about sales extensively. This progressive action led to my building a program titled Selling for Success, a Sales Cycle (impactspeakingdynamics.com/selling-for-success). It describes how each step

in the sales cycle is attached to a specific goal and a date for accomplishment. Measurement motivates.

Continually review your goals – Review your goals before you plan each week and focus on only three or four at a time. Discipline yourself to take the necessary steps to reach each goal. Consider any obstacles between you and your goal and, if necessary, formulate a plan to overcome them.

Turning vision into reality – Be absolutely convinced you will reach your goals. Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of the future into reality.

The sales manager who was adrift in the opening story now owns one of the leading businesses in his marketplace. The process of setting goals was his rudder. It helped him to steer his boat. By knowing precisely what he wanted to achieve, he was able to identify the direction he needed to take and to concentrate his efforts on progressively bigger goals. Have you found your rudder?

5 KEY SALES TAKEAWAYS

1. When your boat feels adrift you need a rudder— you need goals
2. Find the characteristics that give you purpose
3. Focus on your strengths and minimize activities that involve your weaknesses
4. Specify, measure, and continually review your goals
5. Be disciplined and concentrate on progressively bigger goals