

Better Business Focus

Expert Inspiration for a Better Business

February 2011

Planning your growth

in 2011

By Philip Foster

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Better Business Focus is the essential key for business owners and managers. It achieves that by focusing on the way in which successful businesses compete and manage their organisations.

It focuses on how people are recruited, coached and developed; on how marketing and selling is undertaken in professional markets as well as in markets with intense competition; on how technology and the Internet is reshaping the face of domestic and home business; and on how people are being equipped with new skills and techniques. In short, it offers expert inspiration for a better business.



Planning your growth in 2011

By Philip Foster

After the victorious Battle of El Alamein, a turning point in World War 2, Winston Churchill proclaimed that "This is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end... perhaps the end of the beginning".

We have had 3 years of turbulence and economic decline when many politicians, business leaders and bankers performed poorly. Now the "The Economist" predicts 1.7% GDP growth for the UK in 2010 and 1.8% in 2011. This may be "the end of the beginning" of economic turbulence for us. However, I guess that neither you nor your company would be happy with growth rates of around 1.8%. So, now is the time to start to plan for ambitious growth in 2011 and 2012.

Knowledge is information acquired through experience and education. What ideas and issues have you learned more about, and what do you need to learn more about? From my experience, Account Managers feel the need to know more about their own products, services, and applications around the world. Why? Because in some industries, product and service development and application are happening so quickly that they feel that they will be caught out by a manager in their Account telling them that in Singapore, or Cape Town something new is happening. Thus their ignorance is exposed embarrassingly. They also feel the need to improve their knowledge of the business environment and how it affects the behaviour and strategy of their Account. The mindset of the managers in the Account may have altered to changes in the business world and the ideas of the Account

manager are redundant, again embarrassingly so.

Skills can be described as the ability to do something well, and how to apply the knowledge. What skills do you need to improve? Negotiation always tops the list for my clients, especially as professional purchasing people are skilled at it, a fairly obvious learning need. For example if an Account Manager drops the price by 1% from £100 to £99 and the profit per product is £5, then the profits are reduced by £1 out of £5, a fall of 20%.

The course needs to be chosen with care – a beginner's course, a refresher, advanced, inter-cultural etc, whatever matches your learning need. During that course you will have an opportunity to refresh interpersonal skills such as listening, and persuading.

Physical energy is an often overlooked item and rarely mentioned in appraisals. But if you are carrying an injury or strain or "man flu" then your primary source of energy is reduced. Temporarily you can live off short bursts of emotional energy, adrenalin and caffeine and then find yourself more tired at the weekend. Since 1940, in many instances military tanks were destroyed by their own crews, as they had no fuel and no prospect of being refuelled, thanks to aerial bombing of roads and railways. So all of that superb engineering and crew training wasted due to a lack of energy (petrol or diesel). So this is the time for a medical or fitness check up. Time to plan a change of diet, time to have more exercise, time to create more "me time", to enjoy a hobby or pastime or just relax. Extra physical energy will

fuel your drive to implement your ambitious growth.

Personal organisation, a lack of it creates clutter in your work area, on your laptop, and in your mind, which reduces your focus. So now is the time to de-clutter by clearing out the debris of 2010, old emails, rail tickets, expense receipts, sweet wrappers etc... One sales director told me that he would randomly dual call with an Account manager and travel in his or her car. He was amazed and disappointed at the untidiness he experienced and you have guessed it, some of the worst offenders were the under achievers. So time to have the suits cleaned, shoes repaired, (treat yourself to some new stuff), brief case emptied and wiped, and laptop reorganised.

At my school in the 1950's we each had our own desk. We had to bring a duster to school at the end of term, were given a dollop of wax and then expected to polish the desk inside and out. At the time it felt very uncool but looking back, we were being taught to value equipment and ensure that, physically and mentally, we would start afresh the next term.

Will to win is often described to me by Sales Directors as the most important personal quality that they are looking for in a candidate. Sports Coaches and Psychologists tell us that 70-80% is about attitude in terms of winning or losing."You cannot always choose or change your circumstances, but you can always change your attitude" according to a Sports Coach in "Mind Games" (Grout and Perrin ISBN 1-84112-613-8) and another is quoted as saying "9 times out of 10 people are blocking their own

performance”.

You can improve your will to win. It is about focussing on the task and processes. The desired outcome will follow. If you focus on the outcome, you can easily tense up, sleep less, chew indigestion tablets, and fail. So concentrate on planning, preparation, superb meetings, listening, creativity and all of those good things you have learned and orders will follow.

In summary, 2007 to 2009 was awful, so lets put it to the back of our mind. You and your company need to grow revenues well in excess of 2%.

- You are in control of your destiny, so make your own growth plan.
- Knowledge, learn more about products, services, and application, and the business environment.
- Skills, attend a negotiation course.
- Physical energy, exercise more, eat more healthily, relax more.
- Personal organisation, declutter your mind and work area.
- Will to win – concentrate on the tasks and processes you know will help you win and do them excellently.

Hopefully, for you, and your company there will be ambitious growth and success in 2011.

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About the author:

Philip Foster created Account Strategy in 1997 in order to help companies grow the share of wallet with their accounts and prospects in a winning, systematic and timely manner.

Learning processes include workshops, coaching and conference sessions. Over 3000 people have participated in the workshops.

Philip graduated with a BA (Econ) and took an MA specialising in Defence Strategy and later an MBA at Cranfield. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts; a Member of the Association for Coaching; a Member of the Strategic Account Management Association; and Associate of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply.

He is a registered user of M.B.T.ITM, LIFOTM and the PinPoint™ facilitation method.

Previously at PA Sundridge Park as Client Development Director and earlier worked in shipping and logistics in sales, marketing and strategic planning.

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Best Business Advice* What's in it for me?

Persuasion is one of the essential attributes needed to succeed in business, but it's still a tricky skill to master.

One of the best bits of advice I got in my first job at Procter & Gamble was to focus on understanding the other person's needs from that person's point of view.

Persuading the other party to agree to one's own proposition is made a lot easier if you can offer the other individual a meaningful benefit in return.

So just step into their shoes and ask the question: "What's in it for me?"

After reading Management Sciences at University, Nick Attenborough started his career in brand management, leading teams at Procter & Gamble and Quaker Oats. He switched to public relations in 1981 when he joined his mother and sister at Attenborough Associates, becoming managing director in 1989.

*Taken from Best Business Advice.

A book which includes 75 examples of memorable business advice recounted by leading practitioners in the UK public relations industry.

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How to double your sales in 90 days - Part 2

By Ian Segail

In part 1 (December 2010) of this article we said that if you are going to double your sales 90 days from the time of reading, then you would have needed to go to work on the following three pieces of the "Double Your Sales in 90 Days" formula. We suggested that each month, for three months, you tackle each one of three key areas:

1. Increase your team's sales productivity.
2. Maximise the impact that you as a sales leader have on your sales team.
3. Amplify the effectiveness of your salespeople and the value of their time spent with the customer/prospect.

In the previous "Increase your team's sales productivity" article, I unpacked the two key measures of sales productivity and the steps required to accelerate them. Now, the focus of this month's article is maximising your impact as a sales leader on your sales team.

In this article we will look at the two highest value activities you can employ to accelerate your sales teams selling efforts.

Your plate is full

You have a full plate, of that there is no question! Goal setting, planning, establishing metrics, evaluating performance, managing the pipeline, market planning, generating reports, reporting, meetings, more meetings, recruiting, keeping abreast with technology and market trends, key account management, putting out fires, promise fulfilment, internal roadblock removal and the list goes on...

With all you have on your plate the big question is...How truly productive are you?

One of my first business teachers and mentors, Tom Hopkins of 'How to Master the Art of Selling' fame, would often quote the affirmation; "I must do the most productive thing possible at every given moment". Meaning that if you want to start multiplying your business, you must always do the most productive thing possible at every given moment.

This truly is difference between being really successful and failure – it is as simple as that!

Unfortunately over the course of time, is our role as sales leader we have often drifted away from the most productive thing. We may think we are being productive because we're always so flat out busy, but the reality is we are often not very productive at all.

To begin with, as a sales leader you must clearly define what the most productive thing is for you in your business. Then as Dr Stephen R Covey would say "the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing!"

So, let's first determine what the main thing really is, for you in your role as sales leader, and then we will take a look and see how your own personal productivity stacks up against it.

What is: "Most productive time" for a sales leader?

It is fascinating to note that a in a recent study of Fortune 500 CEOs,

they estimated that they only had 28 and 38 productive minutes a day. In other word these very busy executives only invested around half an hour a day on profit building activity, pretty incredible isn't it? When you consider your role and what you are paid to do, how much productive time do you really invest in profit building activity?

Productive time doesn't simply magically happen; you have to be focused and disciplined and consciously create it! How much of your week last week was spent on maintenance and fire-fighting rather than on generating profitable income?

As the individual charged with the responsibility for generating sales revenue, the most productive thing that you can do at any one time is: **Increase the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team.**

So let's discuss you and the number of truly productive hours you put into a day. Do you invest an hour of productive time a day? Two hours? What's your most conservative estimate at this point? Unless you have really focused on maximising your productive time before, my best guess would be that you currently work no more than 2 hours of productive time a day (And that is probably conservative). Remember, we are talking about only time invested to **Increase the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team!**

We are not talking here about writing a report that your boss needs for his executive meeting,

nor are we talking about meeting with the logistics manager to discuss merchandise delivery issues, we are not discussing customer complaints and putting out fires, nor are we talking about fielding general rep queries from the field. We are talking only about activities that **Increase the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team**.

Right now, stop and review your to-do lists from the last 3 days. Looking at all the time you spent working, how much real time was invested in doing the most productive thing; **Increasing the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team**? I challenge you to be really self-critical in your estimate. Imagine that I was there with you questioning every little detail. How many truly productive hours have you worked in the last 3 days?

By the way the small number of productive hours that you have come up with is more than likely very indicative of the way you operate most of the time. So if you have been super critical about where you currently invest your time, you have more than likely concluded that your productive time score is far too low. So looking at that number is it any wonder that you are behind on your financial goals, when most of your time is spent working on things other than **Increasing the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team**?

So your first task this month is to take yourself to task and go to work on carving out three to four hours every day where you only work on **Increasing the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team**.

To do this follow this simple (but not easy) three step process.

Step 1 – Evaluate your current reality. Determine how many hours you currently invest on **Increasing the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team**. Be really tough on yourself. Now resolve to double the amount of “Truly Productive Time” you intend

to work each week.

Step 2 – Lock in “Truly Productive Time” activities into your diary.

These times are non-cancellable for any reason other than life or death! Hey, if you had a dentist appointment and your number one customer or your boss asked to see you at that time, you’d no doubt negotiate another time to catch up with them, right? Well your “Truly Productive Time” activities must be no different. They demand your highest priority!

Step 3 – Invest your “Truly Productive Time” to work with and coach your sales people one on one, in the office and in the field.

Step three segues nicely into the second of the two highest value activities you can employ, “sales coaching”. As New York Times, bestselling author wrote: “Sales management without coaching is equivalent to managing a sports team without a coach”

Sales coaching - The 19% factor

The research data has proven overwhelmingly that this one primary activity will have the greatest impact on your sales people and thereby there sales, more than any other you perform as a sales leader. But hey, forget about the stats for a moment, even though they all consistently point to sales coaching as being the number one success factor of world class selling organisations. Come into my common-sense corner for just a moment. Just for a moment take yourself back to your first three to six months of your sales career. Imagine if you were fortunate enough to have had a sales coach who worked with you regularly, one on one. Imagine if you had a coach that went out on sales calls with you, not to do the selling, but only to observe, and provide you with corrective feedback after every call. How much quicker would your ramp up time have been? How much sooner would your confidence have increased? How many bad sales habits could you have avoided? I rest my case!

The number one reason sales managers put forward as the

reason why they don’t coach their sales people enough is...lack of time! Well we have just removed that as your number one objection by ensuring that you carve time out of your diary to work on **Increasing the Profitable Sales Revenue Generation of the Sales Team**. This primary activity requires that at a minimum, once every fortnight, you invest between, one hour and ninety minutes, with each of your salespeople, individually. This time needs to be devoted entirely to coaching.

Now what if you have had no coaching training or you have never had a role model to emulate? How do you go about making sure your time invested with your people is valuable? Well it would probably be a worthwhile investment of your time if you attended a public coaching course in your area, or at the very least picked up and read a book or two on the subject.

Having said that, there are three core principles you will need to follow to get you started immediately. If you will keep these three values in mind your coaching sessions will be worthwhile.

1. Listening and clarifying- Just as in selling, listen more than you speak.
2. Transfer responsibility – It’s their life, it’s their career, their success is ultimately their responsibility.
3. Action learning – True learning happens on the job, not in the classroom. Make sure they leave the session with key actions that they will attempt. Then have them note their experiences and learning’s and have them share them with you in your next session.

Increase your sales by 19%

There was a study done by The Corporate Executive Board which happens to be one of the world premiere research organisations – Their regular studies and benchmarks over the years very clearly demonstrate that sales performance coaching alone contributes to a 19% increase in sales. 19%! Right now, if you had an extra 19% sales how close would you be towards achieving your numbers?

Here's a simple two-step process you can employ during your one on one coaching sessions that will drive the quickest sales success result.

Step 1

Help your coachee (in detail) plan the week coming up – Who is going to do what, by when?

Step 2

Unpack the week just past (in detail) – What happened (the outcomes of the previous week's plans) and what were the learning's.

If you will just focus your time on those two areas, you will see the individual's productivity increase along with their sales results.

By the way there are two other powerful benefits that will arise for you as a result of implementing a regular coaching practice. Firstly you will reduce the sales peoples reporting paperwork and secondly because you will have an intimate understanding of where they are at with regards to their pipelines, your forecasting accuracy will improve immeasurably.

In the next edition we will look at the final piece of the "Double Your Sales in 90 Days" formula, optimising the value your salespeople's time spent with the customer/prospect. So until then your task for this month is twofold, 1) implement the 3 Step "Most Productive Time" formula and 2) begin the fortnightly practice of coaching your sales people.

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About the author:

Ian Segail, Sales Strategic Sales Performance Coach www.salesmanagerprofits.com
Ian Segail, is one of Australia's and New Zealand's leading sales strategists and authorities on sales management. Ian works internationally as a Strategic Sales Performance Coach and is the author of the sales management book 'Bullet Proof Your Sales Team', which is regarded as Australia's's number 1 book written to enable sales leaders to maximise the performance of their salespeople and measurably increase their sales numbers.

Bestsellers



- 1 The Secret**
(Hardback) By Rhonda Byrne
Simon & Schuster Ltd (4 Dec 2006)
Price: £8.44



- 2 What You See is What You Get**
(Hardback) By Alan Sugar
Macmillan (30 Sep 2010)
Price: £17.00



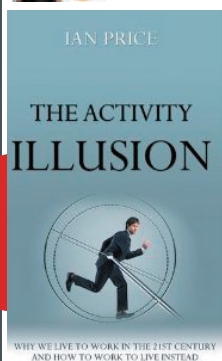
- 3 Memoirs of a Fruitcake**
(Hardback) By Chris Evans
HarperCollins; First Edition edition (14 Oct 2010)
Price: £14.00



- 4 Treasure Island: Tax Havens and the Men who Stole the World**
(Paperback) By Nicholas Shaxson
Bodley Head (6 Jan 2011)
Price: £14.24



- 5 Get The Job You Really Want**
(Hardback) By James Caan
Viking (6 Jan 2011)
Price: £11.04



BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Activity Illusion
Why we live to work in the 21st century - and how to work to live instead
By Ian Price
Published by Troubador
Price £11.89 plus P&P

Email addict?
Parent to "BlackBerry Orphans"?

Why are we working harder than ever and yet being less effective? Why do we let work bleed into family life and holidays? "The Activity Illusion" breaks open the vicious circle of hyperactive work practices and shows how to fix it for you and your organisation.

You will discover:

- How to work less and be more effective in your job
- Why activity has become the new status
- How up to 20% of your organisation's payroll gets soaked up by ineffective use of email
- Why we get "addicted" to email and BlackBerry
- How to create the virtuous circle of an effective work life and a great life outside the office

To buy the book of the month online from the Better Business Focus bookshop for just £11.89 plus P&P, or for further information please call: (01730) 233 870 and quote BBF Bookshop. Source: <http://www.global-investor.com/bbf>



Journey, vision and mission

By Penny Power

In 1998 Glenn, Thomas and I launched Ecademy. We knew we wanted to connect business people, we knew we were early in our adoption of social networking, we had a challenge ahead, critically we had a commitment to a belief system. We believed that technology existed to serve and support people, it was not just an e-commerce solution, transactions could occur but in a different way.

Our drive has been to spread a philosophy. That philosophy was articulated by Thomas through three words 'Open, Random and Supportive'. We knew one of our biggest challenges and our biggest joys was when people understood the philosophy of the new world. Helping people shift their mindset from being 'Closed, Selective and Controlling' became our mission, our focus and our attention.

Teaching, mentoring, coaching and writing have been at the core of daily life. When we look back at the last 12 years Thomas and I have spent over 80% of our time offline. Enabled by Glenn and his team, we have been able to meet, speak and travel to over 55 countries, speak at hundreds of conferences, be invited onto numerous action groups and have intimate knowledge of the pains, challenges and fears of business people as they see a changing world.

In 2009 we were devastated by some changes that we sensed online as more and more business people flocked to the online world for a solution to their recessionary and economic fears and experiences. We saw social networks being assaulted and abused and the old mindsets of

'transact and sell' entering a social world, which we all knew existed in a different way. I remember breaking down (and blogging about) an experience I had at a Conference that I chaired where for the first time in 11 years I felt the promise of a better world being taken away. I witnessed greed and a gold rush mentality, suddenly I could forecast that the belief system that the Founder of the world wide web, Tim Berners Lee, had which was that it existed to support and strengthen humanity being lost to 20th century mindsets.

Now I know you are thinking I am an idealist and that I am driven by emotional, idealist goals; but stop for one moment and think about this.

The Internet is not about websites and keyboards connecting to one another. It is about people connecting, having conversations and finding solutions to their small or large problems. Online, people seek knowledge, friendship, support and occasionally love. Yet businesses seek ROI (return on investment) and transactions.

This mismatch is creating massive frustration and is causing the divide between commerce and people to widen, not deepen.

At the beginning of 2010 Glenn, Thomas and I decided to build a school. A Digital School. It is with great excitement that we have now launched it..

The Ecademy Digital School will teach and spread the reality of how to make money in the 'social world'. It will teach a philosophy,

a method and provide coaching tools. It will accredit Coaches and it will build a Global Digital Coaching program enabling people who are passionate and knowledgeable about the online world to brand themselves as Ecademy Digital Coaches, stay up to date and display their skills.

We are starting this in the UK and we are now seeking our first group of Coaches to become qualified as a Digital Coach.

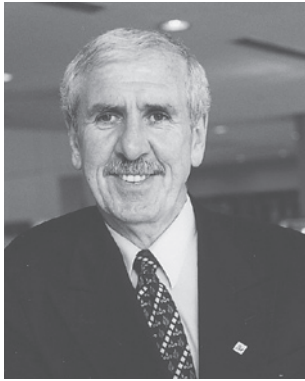
We anticipate people who have trained as Business or Life Coaches, we anticipate people who want to create their own business, we anticipate social media experts and enthusiasts and we welcome them and will serve them as our valued Digital Coaches.

The global economy is in transition. Technology is creating disruption to many industries and many lives. We can make a difference to the adoption of this technology and we can all ensure that as the world shifts, it shifts positively and we bring people together not pull them apart.

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About the author:

Penny Power is the Founder of Ecademy, a global social network for business people, helping local businesses trade globally and learn from one another in a supportive environment. Recently Penny published her book 'Know Me, Like Me, Follow Me' to assist in the understanding of the online world of social networking for business, available at UK retailers and online through Amazon.



Fun, funds and fundamentals

By Barry Urquhart

In an era of cuts, rationalisations and restructures, the following article cuts to the core. Figuratively, it speaks about the unspeakable. The issue need to be brought onto business agendas. Therefore, we invite you to share it with those in your network.

Be careful of what is cut.

The unintended consequences of brutal cost cutting, restructuring and outsourcing decisions throughout the corporate sectors and around the world are conspicuous. They are evident in inadequate stock levels, lower staff member totals, insufficient IT infrastructures, poor and spasmodic customer service standards, as well as many other profiling characteristics.

Most devastating are the instances of despondent staff morale, negative self images and dysfunctional corporate cultures.

One common thread in too many such instances is the outright ownership or dominating control of funds managers, hedge funds and private equity investors.

During the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the current one, the broader finance industry assumed top mantle of international, national and local business. As a consequence key performance indicators were oriented to financial ratios. Financial gearing, debt and fiscal instruments have become the overriding drivers and measures of business productivity, competitiveness and worth.

With the changes in philosophies and focus, past corporate values, histories, achievements and beliefs were and are not recognised, respected or valued. Sustaining corporate cultures were dismantled or fractured. In short, many entities became and often remain soul-less.

Long term strategic plans, goals and objectives have been discarded. These financial-geared corporate leaders typically had and have trading horizons of two, three or, at a push, possibly five years.

The targets of such senior management actions centre on stripping out excess "fat" and infrastructure, complemented by increased transaction volumes, margins and profit, often underwritten by reduced inventory and tighter cost controls.

Brand names appear to be the only constant. However, behind the signage, billboards, advertising and positioning statements it was a very different atmosphere and working or business environment.

Correspondingly, funds and funds managers have become increasingly mobile. There is a seeming perennial pursuit of optimal returns, capital growth and the liquidation of equity in specific entities, products and services.

In the wake of these broad trend-line are the littered remains of undercapitalised, highly geared corporations, retail investors who carry book losses for investments in restructured public listings and IPOs (Initial Public Offerings) and a deep pool of disillusioned executives who were previously dedicated professionals with a strong commitment to specific

industry ideals.

National governments appear to be in tail spins, their taxation offices bewildered by "Barbarians" who are no longer at the gate or located in the head office, but rather long departed for locations, opportunities and prospective investments beyond country and regional borders.

Consumers, clients, the media, suppliers, investors and political leaders need not look far to be confronted by the ubiquitous presence of such case studies. Few, if any, sectors appear to be immune. Examples are evident in retail department stores, fashion and food networks, engineering groups, property development, commercial shopping centre investment vehicles, construction, human resource practices and yes, even funeral directors.

Alternatives prevail

For those business owners, leaders and managers who choose not to be involved or overwhelmed by this all too common trend, there is considerable scope available to establish distinctive presences in the marketplace, recruit and retain professional staff members who are dedicated to certain positive corporate cultures, values and philosophies and to foster closer, mutually rewarding relationships with manufacturers, distributors and supply chain management groups who assign considerable value to belief systems in which satisfaction, service, professionalism and respect are immutable foundations to sustainable success.

A new landscape

The new order or subset of corporate owners and leaders cannot be ignored. It is assertive, focussed, driven and often well resourced to pursue and achieve short term financial outcomes.

However, its success ratio is not high. The root causes of many liquidations, mergers, acquisitions and floundering business entities can be traced back to the emergence on shareholder listings and ownerships of fund management, hedge funds and private equity ownership.

As the green shoots of new business growth and opportunities appear on the corporate landscape it is significant that a re-emergence of the small entrepreneur, females in particular, is apparent.

Creative and widespread use of the countless forms of low cost social media is impacting on the value and nature of brand names and images. Everyone, it seems, has an opinion to express and a point to be made. They simply need a channel and a platform.

The balance of power is hanging.

Marketing power is shifting to consumers, networks and entrepreneurs. Corporations and business entities are being made to participate and engage with customers and non customers, or to suffer the consequences.

High energy, expressive and open entrepreneurs have the capacity to avoid or overcome previous impediments of size, worth and established presence by ongoing use of social media, like You Tube, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Significantly, the attributes which appeal to and most influence on-line savvy consumers are the philosophies, values, cultures and beliefs of the people behind the brand. It can be fun.

Callous, disciplined adherence to objective and detailed financial

ratios, benchmarks and goals appear to have little market appeal.

Behold, the evolving presence and competitive advantage of "local". That includes delegated authority to corporate executives, greater commitment by local members of buying, marketing, supply chain and franchise networks.

Flexibility, adaptability, engagement with local customers and direct responsiveness will be the foundations of sustainable development in the ensuing months and years.

There is a new growing force in the marketplace and it is not dependent on capital, debt, gearing and financial ratios.

May the force be with you.

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About the author:

Barry Urquhart, Managing Director of Marketing Focus, Perth is an internationally recognised business analyst, strategist and conference keynote speaker.

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“**Management is nothing more than motivating other people.**
Lee Iacocca”

Empower your customers

Season Tickets

Whether you have permanent seats to football, rugby or cricket matches or to philharmonic recitals, rock concerts, or theatre groups, let your customer select the people to enjoy an event.

Lottery Tickets

Create a draw for either products you make or products you acquire.

Ultimate Black Book

If you have created a good premium, developed a proprietary product, or found an unusual gift, make it available for your best customer to give away on your behalf.

Double Message Cards

Create a mailing piece that your best customer can send to their contacts.

Message about a Resort

The key to messages is finding a way to encourage the recipient to take a moment to address the accompanying postcards and send them on.

Postcards

Retail stores, civic groups, and others should reproduce a photograph, logo or other symbol on a post card for the use of their customers.

Client Vouchers

Professionals can create an original certificate - with a special offer or discount - to give to their best clients to award in turn to their friends, contacts and associates.

Customer Speak

Place a guest book on the counter near the cash register inviting customers to note their favourite employee, aspect of the business or the best product offered by the establishment.

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Sales resolutions for 2011

By Andy Preston

In this article, leading sales expert Andy Preston explains what the successful sales leaders and salespeople are implementing right now to make sure they have a great 2011... The New Year is always an interesting time for salespeople and sales teams. Plenty of people make New Years' Resolutions at this time of year, and some even make them for their sales, their career or for their business.

I thought it would be useful therefore, to give you an idea what I'm working on with the sales leaders and salespeople of my clients, to help them make great sales in 2011 – so that you can implement the same things to get great results for yourself (or your team) as well.

Here are my suggestions for the top ten New Years' Resolutions for your sales team.....

Increase your prospecting activity

If your goal or outcome for 2011 is to increase your sales, or that of your team, one of the things to look at is to increase your prospecting activities.

Most salespeople tend not to have enough prospects, and therefore rely on most of their deals coming off, in order to hit their targets. That's a recipe for failure.

Take a look at whatever prospecting activities you've been doing (that have been working for you, of course) and look at how you can increase them. You might also want to

increase the 'range' of activities as well.

Whether your prospecting activities include networking, cold calling, referrals, cold canvassing or anything else, simply upping the activity will generate better results. Once you've done this, it's now time for the second step.....

'Filter' your prospects better

You can only do this step, when you have a lot of prospects (hence my recommendation in 'Resolution 1', above), so if you haven't got enough prospects yet, go back to the first step until you have.

When you have enough prospects, the next step is to 'filter' them. What I mean by that is to look at which prospects are better for you. So how on earth do you judge which are better than others?

If you've already 'profiled' your prospects, then you'll already know what I mean. If you haven't, here are some quick tips. From experience either you or your manager will have an idea which of your prospects are most likely to convert, which will do so faster than others, and which will be worth the most money.

This might be based on their industry, the level of decision maker you're talking to (or not), their buying motivation (you have found that out, haven't you?) size of project, approval process and impending deadlines etc.

Based on the results of your 'filtering', you can now work out which prospects you need

to focus on, and which ones require you to qualify them a little harder. Please note, if the thought of doing this makes you hesitant or concerned that you might 'lose' a prospect or two, then you probably haven't got enough prospects in the first place – go back to increasing your prospecting activity.

Improve your pipeline control

Pretty much every sales leader I speak to wishes their salespeople were better at controlling their sales pipeline.

Most salespeople have deals in their pipeline that actually have no hope of coming off, yet they often don't realise it! Also, when I ask salespeople to talk me through their pipeline, it quickly becomes apparent that they're not 'on top' of it, they don't know where they stand in relation to others in their deals, and often don't have a concrete plan for bringing that piece of business in, rather than losing it to a competitor.

That needs addressing, right now! Every salesperson should be on top of their sales pipeline. They should know where they stand in relation to their competitors in every deal. They should know the buying motivation of the client, who they need to influence, and what timescales are at work as a minimum. They should also know what actions they need to take (and by when) in order to win the business, rather than lose it to a competitor.

If you're not on top of your pipeline, it might be time to look at your qualification of prospects,

or your ability to get the deeper needs from the client earlier in the sales process. Or it could be down to your failure to stand out from the competition right at the start of the process. Find out which one it is and do something about it, now.

Improve your online networking

For those of you that read my articles regularly, or have seen me speak at one of my events, you'll know I'm a big fan of salespeople using online networking to win more business.

However, I say that only when it's used in the right way. Social Media and Online Networking can be the biggest waste of time in the world when done badly, or a great contributor to your new business activities when done well.

As you'll know, the network I most recommend (and has proven so far to get the best return-on-effort for salespeople is LinkedIn. If you're not on there yet, go to www.linkedin.com now! If you are, search for 'Andy Preston' and connect with me on there – and I can then give you some more tips on getting the best out of it.

As far as I'm concerned, the results I've seen from showing clients how to use it effectively as a sales tool have been nothing short of astounding. When I run courses on how to get the best sales results from it, delegates often see extra sales very quickly – so if you're not on there yet, you can bet your competitors are already doing business from it.

If you'd like a copy of my article 'The 10 Biggest Sales Mistakes Most People Make On LinkedIn', then go to <http://www.andy-preston.com/ask-andy/> and request the 'linkedin article' – and I'll send it to you with my compliments.

Develop consistent focus

When I'm working with sales leaders all over the world, many ask me how they can keep their sales team focused on a more

consistent basis. They're often finding that their salespeople are distracted by other things, they lose their focus and they fall into habit, of doing the same things over and over again, and don't generate the sales results that they should.

One of the things I work on with my clients is developing a 'monthly' focus. It can be difficult for anyone to maintain focus on a consistent basis over a long period. By making it a monthly focus instead, it makes it much simpler, and by changing the focus every month, it's kept 'fresh' and interesting for the team.

All you have to do is make the focus for that month relevant to the goals of the Sales Leader, or the company – and looking at what behaviour you want to encourage from within the team itself.

One of the biggest barriers to improved sales results is changing the everyday sales behaviour of the team. They've got results (at some level) so far by doing what they've done, so many don't see the point in changing it! Or even worse – they're resistant to changing it because they haven't got much else apart from it.

By implementing some simple things within their existing sales behaviour you can see some small changes have an impact on their sales results almost immediately. Drop me a line if you're struggling for some ideas...

Good luck with your sales for 2011, and if you have any questions about this article, or I can help you further, get in touch with me at www.andypreston.com

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About the author:

Andy Preston is a leading expert on Sales and Selling, and helps individuals and companies increase their sales. You can see more about Andy at www.andypreston.com

Time to grow

Great relationships build great business. When clients (and staff) are attracted by referral and recommendations, the sales lead-time is shorter, and the cost of the sale is less.

Consider flexi-time arrangements for staff who have family responsibilities. They will work at their best when not worrying about a family member.

Welcome your clients warmly; many of them may be suffering financial or legal distress that they may not divulge immediately. A welcome should be conveyed at all times: from the initial call to the business, by reserving them a parking space, to their arrival and through to their departure. This will accelerate the process by which they come to trust you.

Involve your clients in the process of making recommendations. Explaining and exploring options and consequences will prove invaluable in your relationship and will save you time in the long run.

Invest in consultation skills; so that time is not wasted discussing unimportant issues. Involve your team members in communication skills training and coaching.

Honour appointment times. Try to avoid even a few minutes' delay.

Confirm appointment date, time, duration and location by e-mail immediately after the appointment is made. This minimises forgotten appointments, turning up at the wrong office, etc.

Make it easy for new clients to get their first appointment. If necessary, reserve some space in your schedule for new clients.

Give clients good reason to tell friends and colleagues about the high standard of your work. Personal referral is worth hundreds of adverts or sales-calls. When most of your business comes by referral, you can spend less time networking or marketing.

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May, I have your attention please?

By Mindy Gibbins-Klein

Thought leadership can win you more business, and all it takes is for one person to recognise that you have those qualities. Once you have established yourself as a thought leader there is real scope for you to transform your business.

I developed my own standard for thought leadership, and discovered four simple steps to identify yourself as one. Real thought leadership defines four key attributes which, if achieved, will give businesses a greater chance of being seen as a thought leader in their industry.

Real thought leadership contains four elements: **Reach**, **Engagement**, **Authority** and **Longevity**.

Reach simply involves the recognition amongst the community of would-be clients or customers. However, just being known is not enough. You need to be liked enough to trust, and we call this **Engagement**. This needs to be seen in you and when you achieve it, you are sure to stand out easily from the crowd. Simply having an Engagement strategy puts you ahead of most other organisations.

Then you must become a true **Authority** in your industry. This is what secures you as the trusted brand and no one else. In other words, you are beginning to stand out in your field. One of the best ways to begin is to establish yourself as bold – boldness is what enables you to speak out

with confidence about what your business has to offer.

Finally, **Longevity** depends on your ideas being remembered long after you have left a meeting or long after someone has read material of yours. **Longevity** means you and your organisation stay in people's minds for the right reasons.

I have found in my work that the most difficult element to establish is **Engagement**.

All human beings have a basic need for attention. We are hard-wired to want others to listen to us and care about us. We need it in our business lives as much as in our personal lives; in fact, it is only by customers or clients paying attention to us that we have any business.

People have a limited amount of attention that they are willing or able to give, and this needs to be shared amongst all of the people competing for it. Just think about your Inbox for a second. Does it fill up with unwanted emails, newsletters and other demands on your attention as well as your time? Of course it does, and it is the same for your clients.

Let's assume for a moment that people are not paying the right amount of attention to you and your business. You have several choices. Firstly, you can shout louder. This is the knee-jerk reaction that most business owners make. They begin to bombard their market with more

articles, more newsletters and emails. They put more and more emphatic and dramatic wording into those communication tools and chuck them at the market at an accelerated rate.

The problem with just doing more is that you are adding to the information overload which is already a problem for your clients. So approach number two is to be cleverer. I'm sure you can think of some television adverts which really broke the mould and got your attention. But can you name the brand from every advert? Not many people can, and that is because the message is not always relevant to us at that time.

I am convinced that **Engagement** is the key to real connection with your clients and hence more business. You want to consider writing and speaking in a more intimate way, and share more of yourself in every communication.

As people share and are recognised as individuals with valuable ideas, the organisation experiences improved retention, especially of the most talented employees. Everyone knows what the company stands for, since it is clearly articulated at every level from the CEO or MD, to every employee, anyone can stand out for important ideas that add real value to your customers and clients.

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About the author:

Mindy Gibbins-Klein MBA FRSA is an international speaker and thought leadership strategist. She is the author of four published books, the latest of which, 24 Carat BOLD: The Standard for REAL Thought Leaders (£10.99, Ecademy Press), outlines the four attributes found in true thought leaders.

Mindy is best known as founder of The Book Midwife® and co-founder and managing director of Ecademy Press.

Don't worry if you don't know what the words **Information Society** mean, here's an explanation:

A society where communication and information technologies influence everyday lives. Helped by the advance of the Internet and a 'wired' culture, technology is used for a wide range of personal, social, educational and business activities, and to transmit receive and exchange digital data rapidly between places despite great distances.

In an information society, information is as powerful a resource as the manufacturing and agricultural industries were in previous eras. Also known as the knowledge economy, digital era or information superhighway.

Source: Bizezia's Glossary of Workplace Terms available through Bizezia's Online Business Library the UK's leading online business library with 750+ publications.

Web: www.bizezia.com

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Are you one of those people who gets excited that it's a new year... a new beginning? This year is the year you will have more time with your family, get fit, get healthy, enjoy more holidays, make much more money and so on

What will you do this year to turn your 'wishes' into a plan, with a clear focus, deadlines and actually make things happen?

It's really easy to fall back into your past habits and get the same results. If you haven't already done so, you need to plan right now and seriously knuckle down and take consistent action.

To get you going follow these tips:

Clear out the clutter

Remove the stuff you don't need or seldom use...do this in your office and your home.

Do what you do best and delegate the rest

Figure out what your strengths are and focus on improving those. Delegate your weaknesses.

You have more important things to do than waste your time and energy on the small stuff.

Get yourself fit and healthy

Work out what you need to do to get into shape and operate at peak performance and get moving. Get the help you need so you are functioning on 8 cylinders.

Talk with your team

If you have staff, speak with them. Get their input on how your business could improve and how you can help each other. Find out what you can do to improve too.

I have developed a Productivity and Leadership Profile which will uncover

Profit more in 2011

By Lorraine Pirih

the real truth about how effective you are and what your team really believe about you. If you're serious about making major improvements in 2011, this would be of huge benefit to you.

Your clients...look after them

Without them you don't have a business. Ask them for feedback on your products and services. Also look after them...a thank-you card, phone call or gift occasionally can easily boost your profits if you make the effort.

Take control of your time

Set a work schedule for yourself and plan each day. Say 'no' regularly so you can focus on your goals.

Avoid negative people, misery loves company

They'll wear you down and weaken your motivation. Find people who are uplifting and you enjoy being around. You'll become like the people you associate with.

Don't expect everyone else to change

To achieve what you want, you are the one who has to change. Your actions speak louder than your words.

Invest in yourself

Remove these words from your vocabulary: "I can't afford it". Instead ask yourself "How can I afford it?". To take your business and your life to a higher level you will have to invest time, energy and money...that's if you want results quickly!

Be very careful who you listen to

When you know what you want to achieve in 2011, it will be much easier to find the course, products and services that are right for you. There's many people who are ready, willing and able to relieve you of your money...just make sure they



can deliver on their promises!

What to do next? Set time aside this week to write out what you want and get your plan organised.

And if it all seems too overwhelming and you need some personal help, send an e-mail to admin@productivityqueen.com and I'll personally advise you on the best course of action to suit your specific needs.

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About the author:

Lorraine Pirihi, The Productivity Queen is Australia's Leading Productivity Specialist. She's committed to helping small business owners and entrepreneurs work less, earn more and have a life!"

Through her workshops, courses, coaching programs, and products, Lorraine shows her clients how to overcome stress, frustration and overwhelm so they reduce their hours, make more money and get a life!

She's also a powerful speaker and her dynamic presentations are ideal for conferences and business events.

You can learn more about Lorraine a www.productivityqueen.com

All successful people have a goal. No one can get anywhere unless he knows where he wants to go and what he wants to be or do.

Norman Vincent Peale



Imagine you are the manager of a fast-food service restaurant.

A mother comes in for lunch with her young son. Half way through the meal the child knocks his drink on the floor creating a big mess!

What's the first thing your well-trained crew members should do? Clean the floor? Replace the drink?

Not if you care about your customers and your reputation for customer service quality.

First, take care of the mother. For her there's personal upset, social embarrassment, a disappointed child and good money spilled on the floor. With a genuine smile you say, "Don't worry. This happens all the time."

Let her know the spill will be cleaned up quickly and a replacement drink brought over right away. This will do wonders for perceptions of your customer service quality.

Second, put the child at ease. In his mind there may be loss or sadness about the drink, and concern (even fear) about his mother's reaction. With a cheery face, you say brightly, "Well, accidents do happen!"

Tell him to watch carefully as your "service professionals" clean up the spill. "And by the way, a brand new drink for you is already on the way."

Third, clean up the mess. Your service professionals should do the work with speed and obvious pride to demonstrate your commitment to customer service quality.

Fourth, replace the drink. But bring a new drink one size larger than the original order. Or, if the spilled drink was already a "large," then bring along a side-order of french fries or a nice piece of pie.

Accident reactions

By Ron Kaufman

Give them something extra, something unexpected, something that will be joyfully remembered long after the spill is forgotten to improve customer service quality.

"But wait," you wonder. "Won't everyone start spilling drinks if one person gets this extra generous service?"

In a single word, no.

If other customers have been watching from the beginning (and everyone does when a drink hits the floor), they'll be as relieved as the mother and child.

The only thing to increase will be your reputation for superior customer service quality, not the number of spilled drinks!

Key learning point

When things go wrong, take good care of the people first, the technical issues after. Your procedures should turn your upset customers into enthusiastic advocates. When your customers win, you win.

Action steps

Check your service recovery procedures. Make sure the first thing on the list is making a positive personal connection through competent customer service quality.

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About the author:

Ron Kaufman is the world's leading educator and motivator for upgrading customer service and uplifting service culture. He is author of the bestselling "UP Your Service!" books and founder of UP Your Service! College. To enjoy more customer service training and service culture articles, visit UpYourService.com.



Price yourself back into the market

By John Stanley

The downturn in retail sales has resulted in many retailers around the world introducing a discount strategy to try and survive. This strategy is a relatively a short term measure and many retailers were hoping the downturn would be a short lived phenomena. The downturn, in many countries, has been longer than most experts predicted and the discount strategy has now completed its lifecycle. Purchasing at a discounted price has become a norm for many consumers and it is time to break the cycle for many businesses to develop.

To continue a discount retail strategy will result in more retail businesses closing their doors for good and as a result reduce the choice available to the consumer.

So where does the retailer go from here in the pricing game?

% Sales

A number of ideas have come to light over the last few months that could help us rethink how we price products and get consumers to start buying again.

The January sales seem to be starting earlier and earlier. I was in Germany in mid December and they had already started in the clothing sector, even before the Christmas rush of shopping. What intrigued me was that it was obvious that a sale was taking place, but it was not obvious how big the sale offer was. Gone were the 50% off, 70% off signs that I discussed on my internet TV program Retail Globe Report in the past twelve months. These were replaced with a “%” signs

over products and on promotions. The consumer actually had to look at the individual price signs to gauge the discount. This meant that the retailer could alter the discount as they felt appropriate.

This was a common retail technique across the whole of retailing and was not just the odd store that has taken on this practice. What I liked about the system was that it caught the consumers' eye, encouraged them into the store and forced them to be more focused on their browse shopping. One store I went into cleverly placed the products. The new, full priced products were displayed at the front of the store and the biggest discounted sale items were located to the rear of the store.

Decoy pricing

This is a technique that has proved to work in the restaurant industry and I am sure will work for some other retailers. I came across it in a blog by Roger Dooley entitled “Neuro-Menus and Restaurant Psychology”.

The principle is that you price an inferior product at a close price point to a genuine great quality product with the aim of boosting sales of the higher priced product. The two products need to be located near to each other to enable the consumer to price compare and they both need to be heavily signed. This system could work where you are offering a small and large version of the same product. Put the price up of the smaller product to make the larger product look more attractive to the consumer.

Romance the sale

This is a technique used by the perfume industry, food retailers and plant sellers. It is a simple technique where you literally romance the product in the words you use to promote the product. If you are not sure how the system works, pick up a women's magazine and look at the words used to promote products in the adverts. As I write this article I have a magazine next to me and the words in the adverts include:

“This season the rules are being rewritten with a trend ... ” what a great way to sell a new product, in this case it was lipstick.

“Feel, Imagine, Enjoy” to sell a perfume.

And

“Splash out on Timeless Treats” to sell blouses.

How can you develop in-store romance promotions using emotional selling?

Priceless pricing

Priceless Pricing is another example from the restaurant industry that I have seen used many times in my webinars on my Members Club. The research indicates that if you remove the “\$” sign when pricing the average sale goes up. If restaurants price a meal at \$14.55 it will sell less than if it was priced at 14.55. The removal of the \$, £, or € sign can make a big difference to the bottom line.

Take a fresh look at your pricing strategy and consider how you can manipulate it to increase sales. Often the consumer will not notice. I worked with one client in the garden industry where we changed the price based on whether a plant was in flower or not. The consumer expects to pay more when the plant is in flower. Your job is not to disappoint them.

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About the author:

John Stanley is a retail business coach, speaker and author. He has authored several successful marketing and retail books, produces a monthly internet TV program Retail Globe Report on retail trends as well as monthly e-training for his Club Members on his website. As a CSP John is considered one of the top ten percent of speakers in the world. John Stanley helps retailers: Increase sales per square metre, increase the average sale per customer, better manage stock, merchandise and display to maximise potential, market more effectively to convert lookers into buyers. Visit www.johnstanley.com.au to join his Members Club or for information on how he can help you grow your business or e-mail linda@johnstanley.com.au

Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Benefits and rewards of starting an online business

In this article I would like to tell you about the benefits and rewards you could achieve by starting and growing your own Online Internet Marketing Business. For me personally my main benefit was to stop working endless hours and getting up early in the mornings. These two benefits alone have enabled me to spend more time with my family, especially with my daughter. Trust me I know what it's like to be stuck in a rut and in a job you hate.

Seventeen years I worked in a factory, until I finally decided to enrol onto an Internet Marketing Course and haven't looked back since. It took a lot of courage for me to make that decision as I am not very computer literate, but I found the right course with the right mentors, which gave me the confidence to follow a step by step guide and become an Internet Marketer selling Information Products online. Listed below are more benefits you could enjoy by making the same decision as I did and furthermore changing your life:

Quit your day job
Work less hours
Have more family time
Gain financial freedom
More time for hobbies
Work from home
More holidays

As I have already stated, not working endless hours and not getting up early were the two benefits that motivated me to make that decision to change my life. But those seven benefits were also cemented in the back of my mind, which kept telling me "there had to be something better than this". Also what encouraged me to try Internet Marketing was the fact I did not need much capital to start with and the overheads were low. I started this business in my spare room with an old computer and I still work from that spare room with the same old computer. So my risk was minimal and as I began to find out there were literally thousands of customers just waiting to buy my products.

My main reward is the sense of peacefulness and satisfaction I get, knowing that I do not have to worry about paying the bills again. The feeling of satisfaction is a personal sense of pride of making that decision to get out of the rut I was in and the peacefulness means I can just take life a lot easier than before. I hope after reading this article, you understand the Benefits and Rewards of starting and growing an Internet Marketing Business and it will help you decide to take action and change your life for the better.

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