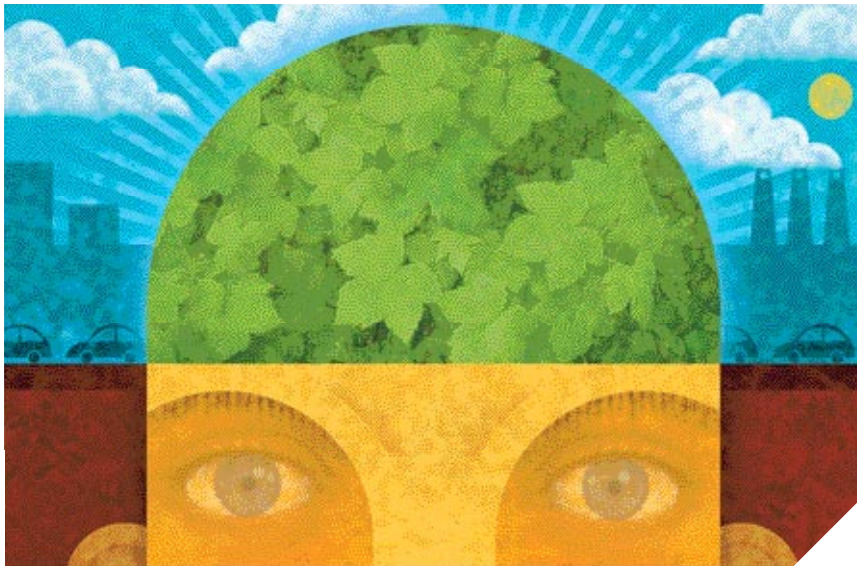


Re: Source Management

There are keys to green selling: be efficient, know your products—and control your appetite. By Rick Davis



Rick Davis is president of Building Leaders, Inc., a Chicago-based sales training organization. 773.769.4409. E-mail: rickdavis@buildingleaders.com

When I learned this month's PROSALES would focus on running green, I had some skepticism on the subject of "selling green." You may feel the same regarding your ability to make a difference. Then I considered what each salesperson can do to contribute to make this a better world and become more profitable in the process.

First, we use up our natural resources as if there was an infinite supply. We also assume that our ability to conquer the planet will let us heap a new solution on top of the old problem and continue in this vain mode. Our tacit belief is that humankind must create solutions, and individuals cannot be held individually responsible.

The reality is that each of us can make a difference, and it already is profitable for us to think green. And failure to do so will lead to our own demise as an industry...or worse.

As Sales Leaders, we must be more aware and not assume that our job is merely to sell "more," letting someone else worry about the implications of our actions. And while there are hardly simple answers, here are a few suggestions on ways that you as a Sales Leader can do to make this a better world while creating a powerful future.

1. Manage your personal resources.

Recycle conscientiously. Think carefully about how you

use gasoline. Too many salespeople simply hop into the SUV confusing activity with accomplishment. If you don't have a plan before you hit the road, then create a plan or stay off the road until you do. Consider using greener resources, like the phone and e-mail. When you travel in your territory, minimize your windshield time by planning ahead. Not only will you save our precious resources, you will be more productive in the process.

2. Investigate. Salespeople blithely rationalize the "greenness" of their product during presentations and when making career decisions. Synthetic is not always a better alternative to a renewable resource like wood. Additionally, not all woods are harvested in equally conscientious ways. Some products are coated with materials that emit significant amounts of volatile organic compounds, and some companies manage the emission of these harmful compounds more carefully than others. Stop taking the word of others that know as little (or less) as you and do your own research. Sell with integrity and legitimate knowledge of how

products are made. You will do wonders for the world, and gain a tremendous amount of credibility that leads to more career success.

3. Spend your company's money as you would your own. A strange thing happened on the way to the business boom: everybody started overeating...and golfing...and taking corporate trips. As a professional sales trainer, I am all in favor of meetings that can improve performance and morale. There is no doubt that a periodic round of golf or ticket to the football game can be a great way to enhance a business relationship. But corporate entertainment expenses have been taken to absurd levels. Most readers would agree that meal portions we eat during business meetings are significantly larger than those we enjoy at home. The group appetizer satiates thousands of humans even before the entrées arrive—and yet we continue to gorge. Think about the necessity of what you do before you do it. This is one of the simplest ways to manage corporate budgets, increase profits and—as difficult as you may find it to believe—impress your clients with your conscientious frugality.

We waste our natural resources by using them up. We waste our human resources by not using them at all. Think. ■

