

News Release

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~ Succeeding in Sales ~ **You've Got Questions? We've Got Answers!**

CHICAGO, IL – Salespeople nationwide are anxiously trying to hold on to their jobs in the face of a downward spiraling economy. What's the best way to stay positive and survive these trying times?

Rick Davis, president of Building Leaders, Inc. and author of *Strategic Sales in the Building Industry*, shares answers to several questions he has recently received from “stressed out sales people” who are eager to grow during the economic downturn.

Question: I'm getting shot down a lot right now because of the economy. It's so bad that it's hard to motivate myself to keep going to people and asking for their business. Any advice on how to stay "up" during these "down" times?

Answer: An athlete continues to fight through tough times and puts forth the best effort possible by staying in physical shape and continuing to do the right things with the faith that good results will eventually occur. Keep your mind focused on performing the right tasks without becoming overly concerned about short term results. Remember that your results are relative to others in the market place and your true benchmark of success is market share and not total sales volume. Keep training your brain to continue doing the right things.

Question: Every day I see sales people get cut from our company payroll because of the economy. What extra things can I do to enhance my value to my company so I'm not next on the cut list?

Answer: There are three types of employees – Vacationers, Prisoners and Contributors. Do more than your job definition. This is the advice I give salespeople, and all employees for that matter, at all times, not only the tough times. Too many people are trying to get by or feel stuck. I call them “vacationers and prisoners.” The most valuable people to any

organization are “contributors.” Those are the people who realize they are virtually subcontractors and their value to any organization is assessed only in the value they bring to the table above and beyond their compensation.

Question: I'm getting beaten up on pricing during every sales call. Of course, it's the economy and pressures people are feeling. How can I combat the pricing message to close the sale?

Answer: First, slow down. One of the reasons that price negotiations become combative is that a salesperson has not taken enough time to understand the situation. There are certainly times, particularly during economic downturns, when you may actually need to offer price concessions. But first strive to understand the situation and, before reducing your price, consider offering additional services or benefits as concessions to increase the value of your proposal rather than reduce your price.

Question: My company has almost completely eliminated advertising due to the economy. That means, when I go to make a sale, I'm struggling against the economy and explaining to customers why they don't see us promoting our products. Any advice?

Answer: *You* are the marketing of your company. Sell what your company is about by using literature, testimonials and samples as the means to promote your company. Of course, let your customer know that, in order to provide those customers with the best possible service, your company is stable and reinvesting money in people and service rather than marketing during the economic downturn.

Question: I go to sales seminars, read the books, refine my presentation and still, my sales are down. The building product industry is just dismal. What can I do more to improve my selling skills during these tough times and snag the sale away from my competitors?

Answer: Even as a sales trainer and consultant, I still keep listening to different speakers, read books and attend seminars. Don't stop this excellent practice you have begun. The message will continue to sink in. The problem for most people is that they expect golden bullets that will solve all their problems. Your success lies in the dedication to learning and the trust that will pay off in the long term.

Based in Chicago since 1998, Building Leaders, Inc. has distinguished itself as the premier sales and sales management education specialists in the building materials

industry. The company offers the DriveTime Diploma Series of audio sales training and the book "*Strategic Sales in the Building Industry*" written by company president, Rick Davis. For more information, visit www.buildingleaders.com or call 773-769-4409.

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