

Executive White Paper

# MASTERING THE SALES MINDSET

## Winning at the Inner Game of Selling



**The Sales Coaching Institute**  
PRODUCTIVITY TRAINING FOR SALES AND SALES MANAGEMENT

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## **MASTER YOUR SALES MINDSET AND WIN AT THE INNER GAME OF SELLING**

How often have you looked at salespeople and wondered why they were able to sell on a consistent basis when you may struggle to simply get a meeting with a client? Have you ever felt the latest strategies and techniques for sales may be effective for some people, but they certainly did not match your sales methods and your sales experience? Do you ever find yourself thinking a sales meeting is a waste of time based on your past interactions with the customer or the company?

If this sounds familiar, it may not be the tools, the techniques or even some effective sales skills and practices which are holding you back from realizing your potential. In fact, it may be your own thinking about sales and your belief in your personal sales abilities which are creating the negative obstacles in your path to selling success.

Selling is a passion for many people. It is an area of interest, of personal growth, and one with its own rewards which go beyond excellent compensation and life style. Highly motivated and empowered salespeople are not driven by their income, but rather from the personal satisfaction, challenge and the personal achievement that the profession affords.

For most, this is not an initial mindset. Instead, these sales professionals have honed their internal vision of sales to create a mindset of sales success and confidence in their ability to work with customers in a meaningful and positive way. They focus on relationship building, understating the clients' business issues and challenges and on making connections and in helping their customers find value in the products and services they offer.

In this way, these highly successful salespeople are problem solvers and barrier breakers for their customers. They are not salespeople per say; rather, they see themselves as solution providers with creative options and practical methods of overcoming challenges their customers are experiencing or may yet to have identified.

Turning from a sales-oriented approach to a problem solver perspective is one of the key factors in moving to a winning sales mindset. With the right internal vision and mindset, average salespeople can become great sales representatives and entry-level sales professionals can set a foundation for success throughout their career. This White Paper reviews the key factors to master the inner game of sales.



## GET OUT OF THE SALES MINDSET

CHANGE  
THE WAY YOU  
LOOK AT THINGS  
—  
AND THE THINGS  
YOU LOOK AT  
CHANGE

WAYNE DYER

Approaching a customer or a client with the mindset of meeting a sales quota or bettering a previous sale is already putting a sales professional at a disadvantage. This creates a focus or a sales agenda which will block out the information the customer is providing.

By going into a sales meeting with an open mind and a goal of actively listening to really hear what the customer is saying, there is more potential for seeing the problem or the challenge and creating the solution.

Customers, particularly C-suite customers, need to see how a product or service addresses their unique needs in their business. Being open to hearing the story and not trying to drive the bottom line sales numbers provides undivided attention and boosts creativity. This allows the sales rep to provide a story about the benefits of the product or the service as it relates directly to the challenge for the customer.

To be able to match the product or service with the needs of the client, sales professionals need to stop memorizing the specifications and details of the products or services and focus on the value to the customer. The value and the benefits of the products and services will create the sale - not the specs and details.

**Related Article:** [\*The One Percent Principle in Selling\*](#)



## STOP MANIPULATING AND START PERSUADING

A lot of the sales techniques and tools are, at best, ways to manipulate people into making a purchase. This may include playing on fears or concerns or creating a type of pressure around the sale and driving for a close.

Spending time in a sales meeting in trying to manipulate the potential buyer creates a palpable atmosphere of

distrust and distance. While these tools may work for some buyers, they usually only work once. At the same time, the use of manipulation may provide a one-time sale, but may also prevent even a second meeting if the buyer walks away feeling manipulated.

Additionally, when playing these mental games with the client, the sales professional is not being authentic, genuine and effective as a co-creator of a solution for a problem. Using persuasion by providing information on value, benefits, and advantages of a product or service is a great mindset, but it must be provided naturally in the conversation with the customer.

Being persuasive also starts with understanding the specifics of how the product or service can help the customer. This knowledge is invaluable to a sales rep and provides a natural stepping stone in the dialog to turn from hearing the customer's story and challenge to providing a working solution for the products and services.

persuade  
↓  
~~I will tell you~~

***"I think the power of persuasion would be the greatest superpower of all time"***

**- Anonymous**



## **A No Is Not a Personal Rejection**

One of the most important mindsets for success for any sales professional is the ability to see a "no" answer to a sales proposal as an opportunity to learn more about the company and the challenges it faces rather than as a rejection at a personal level.

Too often sales professionals equate a "no" with a "not you" answer. In fact, there may be many reasons why the customer is saying no. Taking the time to mentally review the conversation and be curious about the information you learned in the meeting can help to prepare for a follow-up conversation or a few more questions which will provide additional information on the challenge or problem the potential buyer is facing.

Learning to let rejection of a product or service offer go and not take it at a personal level is one of the most effective tools for any sales rep. Letting those negative messages build up in the mind creates limiting thoughts about sales effectiveness in the future.

Evaluating the meeting and noting areas of increased knowledge about the buyer or company as well as noting areas of agreement and understanding during the conversation is helpful and positive. These can form the stepping stones for the next meeting, opening up new possibilities both with that customer as well as with others.

**KEEP CALM AND  
DON'T TAKE IT  
PERSONALLY**



## BE CURIOUS AND LISTEN



“

*Listen in ways that  
suspend judgment  
and communicate  
curiosity and respect.*

Some of the most successful salespeople are those who have learned the value of asking open-ended questions and listening carefully to the response. Most average salespeople listen to the story politely and then go into their sales pitch. The winning mindset salespeople think about the key words and themes in the customer's story and become curious for more information.

Open-ended questions are questions that allow more information to come forward. With additional information comes additional insights as to how the product or service can address the specific needs of the customer.

For example, if a customer is concerned about being able to track production through a plant with better software than currently in use, some great open-ended questions to get more information would include:

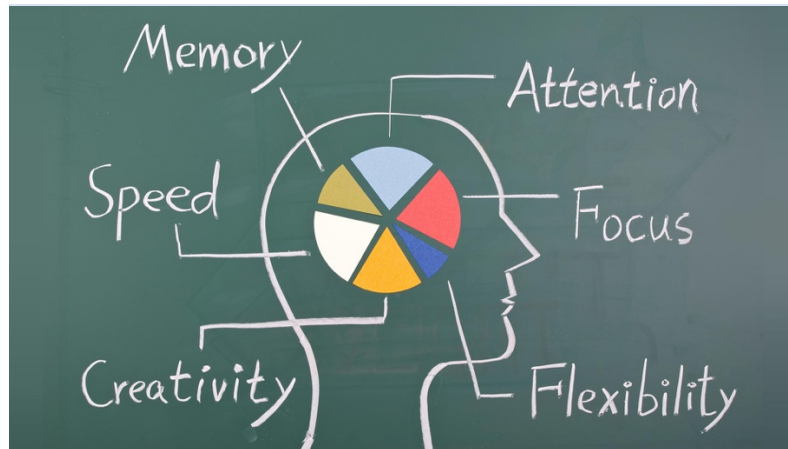
- What areas of tracking is your current software missing?
- How would you see the ideal tracking software working in your facility?
- What specific requirements do you have for tracking software?

By allowing the customer the time to talk about more information and listening carefully, you have a more complete picture of the problem, which allows you then to provide a more specific description of how your software can solve those gaps and issues.



## **SPEND TIME MENTALLY PREPARING**

Top salespeople do not just have meetings; they mentally prepare for meetings. Just as you make sure you have the demo, the samples, the PowerPoint or brochures as well as the product video all keyed up on the tablet, the top salespeople also take the time to prepare mentally.



Keeping great records on clients is a tool of all successful salespeople. They have the names of their clients' children and spouses, information about their passions and hobbies, and they also know about the industry they are selling into.

Mental preparation for sales presentations and meetings are a part of mental discipline. It is often not boring or a lot of memorization, particularly if sales reps are genuine, authentic and in a problem solving rather than sales mode with clients.

Mentally preparing also means considering the information on the client already known, what would be helpful to know in this meeting, and how the product or service offers value and benefits for the customer given this known information.

In this way, mental preparation is a lot like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. In going over current information, the sales rep may find pieces missing, which provides a framework for details and data the sales rep will need to fully understand the story and the challenge the customer is facing. By discovering these details in authentic and genuine conversations, the product or service becomes the solution rather than just a part of the puzzle.



## BE OPEN TO NEW THINGS

It is very common for a sales professional to find a method of selling which works very well with one client. A common mistake is to develop a thought that this sales technique or method is the "perfect" option for all customers.

Customers are very different, and this difference extends even to companies within the same industry. What works as a solution for one company may not be needed or effective in another company. Locking into a mindset of one sales solution for all customers is not only self-limiting, but it is likely to be self-destructive.



A better option is to maintain an open mindset to trying new things. This also goes back to not taking rejection personally. In some cases, it may be the approach used which was the deal-breaker for the customer, so trying things differently will keep the sales professional focused on the buying signals sent by the client.

For example, one customer may want to spend 10 or 15 minutes sharing personal stories and getting to know you as an individual. Another client may want to talk about the problems they are experiencing, and a third client may want to include a team approach to making a purchasing decision. Some customers may want information emailed while others will want to hear your presentation at the meeting, which will impact how you structure and plan your time with the customer.

By being flexible and carefully discerning what approach is best for the client, top salespeople vary their presentations, communication styles and interactions with the customers. This flexibility comes across as authentic and natural and not stilted or forced. It also gives you additional ideas for how to be comfortable in trying new approaches with future customers.

Not being rigid also allows the successful sales rep to quickly read a customer and adjust their style in the first few minutes of a meeting. Challenging yourself to meet the best style for working with a customer is a great mindset for success and one which will have an immediate positive impact on any meeting.





## FIND YOUR SALES PASSION

Think of a time you were talking to someone who had a passion about something you had limited knowledge, interest or experience with. During the conversation did you find their passion contagious? Did you change your mind about the relevance, interest or excitement about the topic? Did you find yourself wanting to know more?



When people are passionate about a subject, they have the ability to create a sense of passion, interest, urgency and excitement in others. For sales professionals, this is a very important mindset for success.

Internally, or in your own thoughts and value system, when you see the product or service as a widget to be marketed, the lack of passion will negatively impact the ability to sell. On the other hand, if you are highly motivated and excited about the potential for the widget, that will be communicated to the buyer in your voice, excitement level, and your body language when talking about the product or service.

You cannot fake passion or excitement as this comes across as an act. Instead, the mindset of a highly successful sales professional is to find an area of passion, interest, and excitement. Sell what you know and what you believe in, and the message will be clearly transmitted to the customer.

The same is true if you have a passion and an interest in a specific industry. Experience alone will not create sales, but a mindset of industry knowledge combined with a passion for the products and the solutions offered is a powerful point for sales success.

**Related Article:** [\*Selling Big: How to Find Your Mission Message & Purpose in Sales\*](#)



## DEVELOP A DRIVE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING



One of the most limited mindsets of all for salespeople is to assume they know everything about their industry and their products. Once this is fixed in their mind, the individual stops growing, changing, and adapting and becomes stuck in a mental state that limits their ability for growth.

Successful salespeople see every opportunity to learn as a personal growth possibility. They continue to attend conferences on the industries they sell into, keeping abreast of current trends and changes.

This not only allows the sales professional to continue to grow, but it provides the potential to be able to communicate and creatively problem solve with the real-world issue the customer is facing. There is nothing more counterproductive for a sales rep than to be out of step with the industry.

In addition to continuing to stay in touch with industry changes, it is also critical to continue to grow as an individual. There is a wealth of ways to stay curious about research and best practices. Many of these are as simple as listening to podcasts when driving to appointments or spending some time reading blogs from recognized thought leaders in selling.

Other opportunities for growth include conferences, training, and even personal coaching. These types of growth and learning opportunities continue to add to your sales toolbox, giving sales reps a sense of confidence, options and approaches to work with both current and new clients.



## BE POSITIVE

Many salespeople talk themselves out a sale. This is different from personalizing a rejection of a sales presentation or losing a sale; it is a mental movie or a mental tape playing in their mind prior to the sales meeting or call.

When people think they cannot do something, their language, emotional level, and body language all convey this information to those around them. People who see failure as the outcome of any interaction are naturally low energy, distracted, quick to end a meeting and even faster to turn off the listener.

Being positive is a choice, and so is being negative. Changing the inner voice messages from "I cannot make this sale" to "I can make a great presentation to this customer" is a very different message. Remember, as the sales rep; you can only control your inner-dialog, language, behavior, and choices. The customer will control his or her own choices, without any possibility for you to have that control.

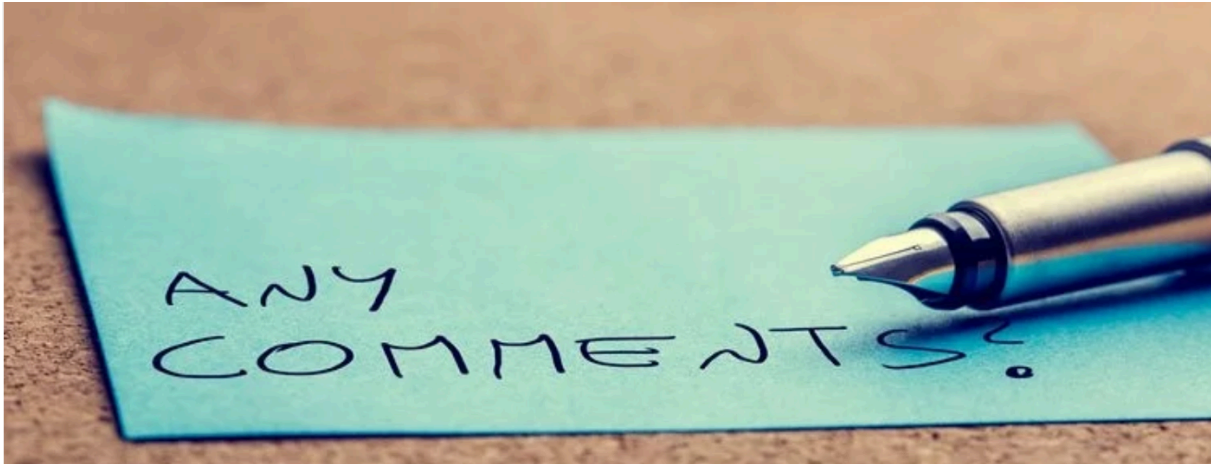
Being positive takes practice. Listening to motivational messages is only a start. It also includes keeping tabs on what goes well, what you want to learn more about and how challenges provide an opportunity for growth.

Positivity is not simply ignoring areas where there is a need for growth and development. However, seeing those areas and places to focus your lifelong drive for learning and improving is positive, effective and helpful in meeting and mastering short and long-term career goals.



## ASKING AND LISTENING FOR FEEDBACK

Sales can be a lonely profession with limited feedback and information on how you are doing and what areas may be a focus for improvement. The great sales professionals are interested in getting feedback about their job performance and their communication and interpersonal skills.



In most cases, it is not appropriate or professional to ask customers for feedback, but they may be providing it to you in less direct ways. Look for customers saying "thanks" or "I had not thought of that before" as affirmations of the value of your communication and interactions. This type of feedback is very effective as the salesperson can replay the conversation and think about the language, tone, and story and how those factors contributed to a successful sale.

In a growing number of sales organizations, mentors are offered for new or current sales staff. Pairing a successful, senior sales person with a newer sales rep is an ideal way to get feedback through a weekly meeting or even a job shadowing type of situation.

Take advantage of these opportunities as a part of building on success. If they aren't offered by your company, perhaps finding a role model in the sales industry and working with them in a coaching relationship may also be to your advantage. Knowing why things work and creating options when things are not effective is all part of learning through doing and thinking about better alternatives.

**[Discover our What to Ask & How to Listen Online Sales Training Module](#)**



## SELF-CARE AND DOWNTIME



Self-care is a buzzword in every industry, but it is critical to be mentally focused and emotionally happy. Salespeople are often workaholics, striving to continue to improve while giving up days off, working late hours or traveling across the country to meet with clients.

Being successful means having a mindset of being good to yourself. Taking regular vacations, scheduling time to do what you enjoy and spending time with family and friends is critical to your mental health and well-being.

In addition to being kind to yourself through vacations, time spent with meaningful people in your life and just having downtime, physical exercise is also critical for mental clarity and well-being.

Take a walk with the dog, join a gym, get on a sports team or take up an activity you have always wanted to try. People in any profession who regularly engage in exercise self-report as happier, more confident and more competent, all traits of a winning mindset in sales.



## SUMMARY

Physically making a sale is only part of the solution to be a great sales professional. People can learn to use effective techniques for getting an appointment to engaging the client, but they will not have the sales results they want if they fail to believe in themselves.

Learning to believe in yourself is a process. Focusing on one behavior at a time can change your mindset from one of limitations and doubts to one of endless possibilities and confidence in your role as becoming the best you and sales professional in any industry.



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