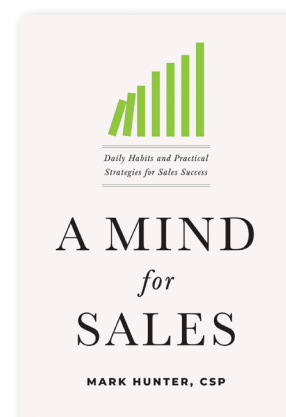


A Mind for Sales

Daily Habits and Practical Strategies
for Sales Success

by **Mark Hunter**



Contents

Section I: Your Mind Drives
Your Success

Page 2

Section II: Your Greatest
Assets

Page 3

Section III: Minefields and
Mind Traps

Page 5

Section IV: Don't Let Your
Customers Control Your
Mind

Page 6

Section V: The Future of
Sales

Page 7

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everybody knows the world of sales can be tough, and it's easy to get discouraged when the rejections start piling up and your customers stop picking up the phone. The wrong thought patterns can start to set in, and pretty soon you aren't making your quota and are looking through job listings on your lunch break.

Mark Hunter's own start in sales was inauspicious, to say the least. He was fired from his first two stints before he began to learn the lessons that he covers in *A Mind for Sales*. He discovered that sales can be incredibly rewarding, such as when your customers call you for advice, thanking you for improving their business and letting you know they just referred you to colleagues. The difference is simply developing mindset and momentum habits.

The good news is that you can learn how to grow a mind for sales like Hunter's. Let *A Mind for Sales* inspire and prepare you to form the new thoughts and habits you need to succeed and to realize the incredible rewards that a successful life in sales makes possible.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why sales is a lifestyle, not a job.
- Practical strategies for how to change your mindset and succeed in sales.
- The daily habits needed to maximize productivity and make hitting the ground running strategy number one.

Section I: Your Mind Drives Your Success

Mondays Are For Selling

There is no doubt that training a mind for sales starts with how you approach the week.

Mondays are, without a doubt, the most powerful day of the week. In the Western world, Monday is the first working day of the week. You have a choice to make every Monday. How you choose to spend it will become a key indicator for how you will spend the rest of your week. For some people, it is the day to kick things into high gear immediately, while for others it is a day to settle into a slow pace of gearing up.

How do you use Monday? Is it a day to get organized for the week or a day to get a jump on everything? Here comes the first of many blunt statements: Your desire to use Monday to get organized is an excuse for your lack of desire to engage with customers.

Do not use this lame excuse! Maybe you are even thinking customers do not want to talk to you anyway. If that is the case, then go ahead and take Monday off and let your competition have all your business. The fact is, there are plenty of customers who will talk with you on Monday and, yes, even Monday morning. By reaching out Monday morning, it puts you in the class of people who say, “I care and want to help you sooner rather than later.”

Your Monday Mission

We need to call out the elephant in the room—stress. For many people, the weekend, especially Sunday night, is stressful, knowing another week is about to begin. Regardless of the root cause of our stress, we cannot forget most stress is self-induced, a result of how we choose to respond to what is going on around us.

Our energy needs to be focused on what we can control. Plan your work and work your plan. Have confidence in what you do, and keep your eyes on the impact you make on others.

Your objective is to make Monday awesome, and it starts with the planning you do on Sunday. To help you do that, here are guidelines for tackling your week. On Sunday,

- Know exactly what you expect to accomplish, how you will accomplish it, and how what you do fits into your long-term goals.
- Build your day around your calendar with specific

time blocks to complete specific activities.

- Schedule three to five calls before 10 a.m., to be proactive in doing what you do best—selling.
- Do not use any time on Monday to get organized. This is an activity you do at the end of the week or on the weekend.

It Is All About You

How many times have you made a sales call without having your head in the game? If you say “never,” you are probably not telling the truth. Or, you have never made a sales call.

It can be easy to say, “Shut out the noise! Do not let one bad situation impede another call!” It becomes far more difficult to actually do that, because our minds can be the greatest obstacle to overcome.

Your own mind is the single greatest obstacle you will need to overcome to be successful.

The challenge remains: How do you overcome the seeds of doubt that grow into mighty oak trees in your mind? Think about the disclaimer written on many financial product advertisements: “Past results are not an indication of future performance.” You have seen this line and probably have heard it hundreds of times. Take a moment to let it sink into your mind. You cannot allow whatever happened in the past to impede whatever you are about to do in the present and future.

Each day you have to make a decision, or the decision will be made for you. The decision is whether you will choose to have a great day full of opportunities or one of responding to what is thrown at you.

You need to master your mind, your time, and your heart to reach the level of success you are capable of achieving long term. If you want to be a leader tomorrow, you need to be a leader today.

Sales Is Not Your Job; Sales Is Your Lifestyle

Does making sales calls excite or drain you? Be honest with yourself. Which one do you most identify with?

When you view sales as taking from others, it’s a job. View sales as helping others, and you’ll be on the path of making sales a lifestyle.

Accept the fact that your prospecting calls will disrupt people. Real transformation typically begins with some sort of disruption. Get past the fact that you are a burden. You are helping others see possibilities! You are simply (and boldly) promoting

Passion is a fuel that drives our energy meter. The more passion we have, the more energetic we are.

possibilities to those who want more for themselves and their companies. No one will know how much you can help them until you make the call and, frankly, disrupt them.

The calls you make, even to those who are just casual leads at best, are still opportunities for you to help. After you reach them the first time or even the tenth time, they still may not know or see your value, but it does not mean you cannot help them. They just have not realized it yet. Sales is about helping others. Sales is about delivering incremental outcomes to people who do not expect it.

Annual Goals Are Just the Starting Point

The bottom line is, sales is about helping people. To help you do that effectively, you will need a scoreboard. Anything you measure should have value.

To increase sales performance, here are some things to measure:

- The percentage of time spent customer-facing: the time spent either physically in front of a customer, talking on the phone with them, or actively corresponding with them via email.
- The percentage of leads that turn into customers: This helps tell us the quality of leads and what the overall effectiveness of the sales process is.
- How many days it takes to turn the average lead into a customer: The shorter the length of cycle, the more efficient you will be.
- The percentage of sales from new customers each year: This is a quick snapshot into the effectiveness of prospecting.
- The number of calls made to find a qualified prospect.
- The ratio between offers made and deals closed.
- The percentage of time spent on administration.

Being Passionate About Sales Is What Your Customers Expect

Being passionate about something is not creepy. Being

passionate about something is a badge of honor to be worn proudly. Being passionate means you care and are committed. Being passionate about something means you value it.

Passion is a fuel that drives our energy meter. The more passion we have, the more energetic we are. The more energetic we are with our customers, the more they see our passion. Energy is a by-product of passion.

Your customers expect you to be passionate. In years past, it may not have been a requirement. As expectations around customer service have increased, so have expectations around passion. Customers have options; they know it; you know it. Unless you break through in a manner others don't, there is no way you will be successful.

When a customer sees you are passionate about helping them, it is amazing to what lengths they will go to share their needs. The more you care, the more they share.

Section II: Your Greatest Assets

Your Three Greatest Assets: Your Time, Your Mind, Your Network

Your three greatest assets are your time, your mind, and your network. The more effectively we manage these three, the more success we will achieve and the more excited we will be for Monday and every day of the week.

Warren Buffett is proud of the time he keeps open on his calendar free of meetings. This does not mean he is kicking back and doing nothing but counting his money. He states he will spend as much as 80 percent of his day reading. He advocates the value of reading 500 pages per day. For Warren, this is a key part of his ability to accumulate knowledge.

He views knowledge as an asset that compounds. He believes knowledge is no different than money; both are assets you want to have working for you as they compound their value each year.

Another reason Warren keeps major blocks of time open

on his calendar is to be ready for opportunities whenever they arise. Ask yourself these three questions at the end of each day:

- What did I learn?
- Whom did I help?
- How will what I did today help me make tomorrow even better?

Protecting Your Time: Discipline Is a Virtue

Regardless of who we are, where we live, or the resources we have, none of us can change a simple fact—there are only 24 hours in a day.

Mastering time is about getting the most out of time. We do not have a time management problem; we have a priority management problem. It comes down to one thing, being prepared to leverage your time and make all the time you have into quality time. Unless you have a plan, getting up early is a waste of valuable sleep.

Here are six guiding questions you need to ask yourself when planning for your day.

- What will I do today that will truly make an impact?
- Is what I intend to do going to move me closer to achieving my goals?
- How will what I do today help my customers?
- What will I do today that will warrant me being paid?
- How much of my time today will be spent with customers?
- What can I do differently or stop doing that will free up more time?

Your Network Is Your Best Investment

Who are the five people in your life who have the most impact on you and from whom you learn the most? The bigger question to ask is, who are the five people you have the privilege to impact and help teach the most?

We do better when we are aligned with others, and it is why your network is such a valuable asset. Your network is what drives who you are. There are three levels of networks you need to have. First is your core group—the ones you mastermind with and to whom you are accountable. Your objective is to find three to four other people you trust, people with whom you can share ideas. Whether you meet formally or merely interact via text and phone, you need these people.

Second is a larger group you draw on regularly for expertise, as they draw on you. These are subject-matter experts. Have people in your network who are authentic, integrity-centered, goal-driven, and seen as a leader in whatever it is they do.

Third are those you influence and who in turn influence you. This is your network triangle. This is the foundation of your network. People in this group may, over time, move up to become subject-matter experts. Those who are subject-matter experts can, in time, become part of your mastermind.

The value of your network will determine the value of your net worth.

Sales Is Not a Solo Activity; It's a Team Sport

We all like to think we are smarter than we really are. The smart people are those who know they are not the smartest. The smartest people are those who know the best way to succeed is by surrounding themselves with people smarter than themselves.

Sales is a team sport. Who is on your team? Unfortunately, too many salespeople approach sales as if it were bowling. It is them standing on one end with the product in their hand and customers at the other end. The objective for them is to jam the product down the customer's throat with such force it knocks them over.

Sales is not bowling. Your customers are not pins to be knocked over.

Your sales team is comprised of both your customers and people in your company and industry. The customer is on your team, and you need to know the players. Your objective is to develop relationships before you need them. When something goes wrong, that is not the time to be contacting a person you have never met.

You can build your team even more by having others in your company developing relationships too. Bringing others into the account broadens the conversations and allows for more learning. The strength of an account manager's relationship with an account is seen when they find out about opportunities. The account manager who finds out about new opportunities at the same time as their competitor does not have a strong relationship with the account.

Who can you add to your team? What relationships do you need to work on?

Section III: Minefields and Mind Traps

Apps and Hacks Don't Control You. You Control Them

Snake oil has merged with the shiny object, and it is suck-ing people into the world of apps and hacks in the form of sales enablement programs. The snake oil comes in shiny colors via emails and social media posts. Reading what these “solutions” provide can leave you drooling. Soon you will question what took you so long to find the holy grail of sales success.

The amount of money being spent on SaaS systems that never realize even 50 percent of their potential is a travesty. What it comes down to is this: People are easily convinced the problems they have can be solved by a piece of software.

First, too many times, these sales productivity tools have been created to solve a problem that does not even exist. Second, there is no such thing as a universal solution. Many times, the solution you are looking for is not to be found in a tool. The solution lies in a modification of your own behavior.

It does not matter what the tool is or what it claims to do. It is still your tool, and it is up to you to do something with it. Apps and hacks do not make you accountable. Only you can do that. Great salespeople drive the app and hack to do what they want it to do.

Social Selling Is Neither Social Nor Selling

It is time to take the phrase “social selling” and park it on a MySpace account or in an AOL chat room and let it rot. The concept of social media sites being the harmonious intersection of buyer and seller is a joke. Social media is a shiny object just like the sun. Stare at the sun too long and you go blind.

The pitch screamed at everyone is how the world has changed and you cannot rely on the telephone or any of the other sales methods that used to work. The pitch continues by saying how everybody is on social media and by embracing social selling you will have all the customers you can handle. Do not go making “blanket statements” unless you are selling blankets.

Social media gurus will have you believe everyone is on LinkedIn. The total number of people with online profiles on just LinkedIn is well over 500 million. But unless you are selling water or toilet paper, most of those people are not your audience.

Stop and think about who the active users are on a site like LinkedIn. Just because you are on it daily does not

mean everyone else is doing the same thing. The big groups on LinkedIn are HR and recruiters, people looking for a job, and salespeople.

The power of social media is when it is used in conjunction with the telephone. Your objective is to take online connections and turn them into offline conversations.

The amount of money being spent on SaaS systems that never realize even 50 percent of their potential is a travesty.

Sales Is Not a Numbers Game; Sales Is a Quality Game

Is sales a numbers game, or is it about quality? This age-old question will always trigger arguments among salespeople.

Salespeople are into keeping score. The challenge is, what are you keeping score on? Just because you can count it doesn't mean it is worth counting.

The only number that matters is the number of satisfied customers you create and their lifetime value. Sales is not a numbers game; it is a quality game.

Customer-Facing Time (CFT) is a number you want to measure. This is a quality number because of what you are doing. You are interacting with a customer of some type. CFT includes such things as face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, or email when used to actively work with the customer.

CFT is not thinking about a customer, and it is not doing research on leads. It is not even entering data on a customer into your CRM system. CFT is about being belly-to-belly, voice-to-voice, brain-to-brain with them. Increase your CFT, and you will increase your sales.

Your Pipeline Needs to Be a Water Faucet, Not a Sewer Pipe

Too many sales pipelines are plugged up with stuff that is not going anywhere. Putting it bluntly, they are nothing more than a sewer pipe, and for that matter, a clogged sewer

er pipe. If you put more into a clogged pipe, the only thing you do is create a bigger mess.

It is time we break out the plunger and unplug that sewer pipe. Quit kidding yourself. You cannot manage the 200 business cards you got last week at a trade show, on top of the 100 you already have. You can also forget the idea that the 346 email addresses you got two years ago but have never touched are somehow still great prospects.

When it comes to prospecting, do not start what you cannot finish. There are some key questions to ask yourself regarding any opportunity in your pipeline and whether it belongs there:

- What firm evidence do I have that this opportunity is moving forward in a timely manner?
- Is the opportunity sizeable enough to warrant my time?
- Do I know the barriers I need to remove in order to close this opportunity?
- Is this an opportunity that will generate sales for me at a later date?
- Do I have a plan to maximize this opportunity without negatively impacting other opportunities that offer greater potential?

Yes, they are tough questions to answer. You cannot afford to have suspect leads in your pipeline that are not going anywhere. Your goal is simple—to be able to spend more time with fewer prospects.

Section IV: Don't Let Your Customers Control Your Mind

Speed Sells. Simplify the Process

The faster you can close a sale, the more time you will have. It is a pretty simple concept, but there is more. The faster you sell, the more value you create for the customer by not taking up their time.

This is not a license to leave out taking the time to understand the customer's needs. It is also not a license to stop asking questions. The objective is for you to use as much of your time listening to the customer as possible. Regardless of the length of time it takes to respond to any inquiry, you cannot be satisfied with it.

Another piece of the puzzle is to know how many inter-

actions it takes to turn a lead into a customer. Interactions might be telephone, email, face-to-face—it does not matter. Count them all, because each one takes time.

How fast can you respond, and how informed are you when you respond? Your goal is to be as focused as possible on specific industries, channels, geographic areas, or whatever you decide. The more focused you are, the more you will be able to understand your customers.

Speed selling is also about making it as easy as possible for the customer to share their needs and being flexible in meeting them. Speed sells when we put the customer and their needs first.

Asking the Tough Questions

When you are confident, you ask better questions. When the customer is confident, they ask better questions. An amazing thing happens when both parties are confident: There is a robust conversation. Your goal is to ask questions neither of you can answer—now this is a great conversation.

Better yet, it can frequently lead to follow-up sales calls and more opportunities. It is also a great way to invite other people into the process.

The key to using this process is to be confident enough to allow the conversation to go wherever it needs to go. This means you also have to know when to bring a wandering conversation back on track. The best approach is to let the conversation run wide open early on. Letting it run wide is a way to allow you to uncover incremental opportunities. As you move further through the sales process, you pull in the questions, keeping them more focused.

The best sales presentation ever made is the sales presentation never given.

The Value of Hearing “No”

Speak with anyone who quit a sales job where the focus was prospecting, and you will get an earful. One of the top reasons you will hear they quit is because they got tired of having doors slammed in their face. Whether it be in person, on the phone, or even through an email, being rejected is not something anyone wakes up desiring to have happen to them.

“No” is merely a word. “No” is never permanent. It is only a moment in time. Many salespeople hear “no,” and they fold up their tent and move on down the road. To these people, once they hear “no,” it is game over. But hearing “no” is a starting point. It is at this point that the

One of the best ways to decrease hearing “no” is by engaging early in the conversation in questions about the customer.

best conversation is about to occur.

The easiest way to deal with this is by being prepared ahead of time with two lists. One is a list of engaging questions you want to ask. The second list is more direct. It is a list of responses you are prepared to give if you hear “no.”

One of the best ways to decrease hearing “no” is by engaging early in the conversation in questions about the customer. Go on the offense to uncover their needs right from the start. Do not shy away from asking tough questions. You want a conversation, which means engaging them quickly. You will not have a way to respond to a “no” until you know what their needs are. The objective is to be prepared with a response if you do hear a “no” at any step along the way.

Not All Prospects and Customers Are the Same

Time to blast another sales myth. We have all been told you never walk away from a customer. But you can walk away from a prospect or a customer, and it can be the best thing you do.

Do not kid yourself. You and everyone else have had prospects who, even after contacting them 1,000 times, would never buy from you. Despite what people will say about never giving up on a prospect regardless of who they are, you do need to be smart. It comes down to five things you need to evaluate:

- Size of the opportunity;
- Probability of closing;
- Number of other potential prospects;
- Value of your time;
- Are there critical reasons to your company you need to consider?

Do not under any circumstances make your decision an emotional one. This gets people into trouble and will have you either cutting off a great opportunity too soon or wasting valuable time beating a dead horse. Keep your pipeline full, but make sure each opportunity has earned the right to be in your pipeline.

Section V: The Future of Sales

You Do Not Close a Sale; You Begin a Relationship

Why do we call it “closing a sale”? If we think we are helping the customer by selling to them, isn’t the word “closing” dumb? It risks putting us in the wrong frame of mind. When we close a sale, we are opening a relationship. It does not matter what it is the customer is buying from you. The last thing you want it to be is an end.

The only good sale is one that leads to the next sale. The easiest business you will ever get is going to come from existing customers. They are either buying more or referring you to someone who will buy from you. From the moment you are about to get the first sale with a customer, you already have to be planning for the next sale.

When your mindset shifts to “opening” rather than “closing,” it is amazing how you will look at things differently. You will be far likelier to contact the customer. You will contact them again because your mindset has shifted.

Viewing what you do as opening a relationship will change how you look at customer records. One of the easiest ways to build your pipeline is by contacting every customer you have in your CRM system. It does not matter if it has been five years. Reach out and make the call. These are people who were buying from you or your company at one point in time. There is no reason they will not buy again.

There are two numbers to start tracking: the amount of business you receive from a customer after the initial purchase and the amount of business created through referrals and other sources as a result of the original customer. Tracking these two numbers will reveal some very interesting facts about how you sell. The number is also a keen indicator of the reputation you have created in the marketplace. In this world of instant communication, the value of your reputation has never been more important.

Fundamentally, you will be able to see the true value of how and what you are selling. If you are meeting and exceeding

customer expectations, these numbers should always be increasing over the long term.

Next-Gen Sales

The future of sales is bright. Our role in sales is much more than selling something to someone. Our role in sales is to be the research and development department to everyone we meet. This includes our customers and everyone else. Do not view sales as something that is in limited supply. Sales is full of unlimited opportunities, and the more we share, the better we all become.

There is something magical about teaching; when you teach, it is amazing how much you learn. If we want to become better salespeople, one way to improve is by teaching others how to sell. We all need to make ourselves available to help others. Who can you be reaching out to today?

Do You Have a Mind for Sales?

Sales is much more than a job. To us, it is a lifestyle. Here is a list of what it takes to be a great salesperson:

- Top salespeople set goals.
- Top salespeople protect their time and the time of everyone they are with each day.
- Top salespeople do not settle for average.
- Top salespeople use each day to influence and impact others with a goal of helping everyone they meet to succeed.
- Top salespeople see themselves as confident servant leaders.
- Top salespeople know the importance of prospecting and make it part of their daily routine.
- Top salespeople never end the day without knowing what they are going to accomplish the next day.
- Top salespeople are optimists not just while they are on the job but also in everything they do.
- Top salespeople never stop learning and continually look for ways to share their learning with others.
- Top salespeople know they must continually evolve their sales process.
- Top salespeople own the process.
- Top salespeople do not stop at the end of the day. A great salesperson views sales as a 24/7 lifestyle.
- Top salespeople have a high degree of integrity others can see every day and in everything.
- Top salespeople are proud of what they do.
- Top salespeople know it is the depth of their questions that will uncover the big opportunities.
- Top salespeople know success is not what they did yesterday but what they will do today.
- Top salespeople have a peer network that holds them accountable and helps drive them forward.
- Top salespeople live each day to make the most of it and see every challenge as an opportunity.



Mark Hunter successfully worked for two global companies in sales and marketing. In 1998, he left the corporate world to become a consultant, speaker, and author—all under the name “The Sales Hunter.” He works with companies including BP, Sony, Kawasaki, and Lenovo, along with hundreds of others. His clients have taken him to more than 25 countries on five continents. His goal is to influence others while helping salespeople and companies find and retain better prospects that they can sell to without discounts.

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