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Emotional Intelligence for Sales Success

Connect with Customers and Get Results

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

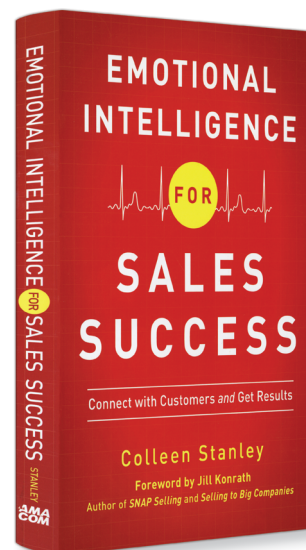
If you find yourself getting flustered with clients, caving to discount pressure, jumping the gun with your sales presentation or wasting time with low-level prospects, adding another sales tactic to your tool kit won't fix the problem. Instead, there's a far more effective way to get your sales back on track: Ignite and develop your emotional intelligence (EI).

Empathizing with your prospects, expressing assertiveness, staying cool when hot buttons are triggered, even recognizing your buttons—this is the powerful inner territory explored in *Emotional Intelligence for Sales Success*, a breakthrough book that extends the range of EI to include common sales scenarios and challenges. Packed with case studies, action steps and research findings, *Emotional Intelligence for Sales Success* teaches you the skills you need to bridge the chasm between knowing what to do and actually doing it.

In an age where customers can bypass salespeople with online research and direct purchasing, emotional intelligence helps you stay in the game by forging personal connections and creating partnerships—soft skills that bring hard results.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The connection between emotional intelligence and sales results.
- Why relationship building is the secret to increasing your customer base.
- How to meet and form better connections with decision makers.
- The key traits of emotionally intelligent sales cultures.



by Colleen Stanley

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SALES SUCCESS

by Colleen Stanley

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PART I: THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SALES RESULTS

Closing the Knowing-and-Doing Gap: When You Know Better, Do Better

The profession of sales has changed dramatically in the last few years. Today's prospects research their potential purchase or vendor, gather the information they need and start self-diagnosing problems before showing up to a sales meeting with you. They ask salespeople more questions, better questions and harder questions.

Emotional Intelligence and Sales Results

Top sales professionals recognize today's changing business environment and are equipping themselves with emotional intelligence skills. In simple terms, emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to correctly identify the emotion you're feeling, know why you're feeling it, and then adjusting your emotional response to the event in order to achieve the best outcomes.

Emotionally intelligent salespeople are strong in both self-management and people management. When a well-informed buyer starts showing off his know-how by firing questions, the emotionally intelligent salesperson is able to manage her emotions and apply interpersonal skills that move the interrogation to a sales dialogue rather than a monologue.

The root cause for poor sales performance is not just about hard skills; it's often linked to the inability to manage your emotions so that you think clearly and react effectively.

Action Steps for Improving Your Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence and understanding the what, why and how of emotions is best discovered through self-awareness and self-discovery. There are three steps you can take that will increase self-awareness:

1. Schedule downtime. Make a daily commitment to be free of distractions and to-do lists. Ask yourself these thoughtful questions:
 - What was the reason for my reaction to the prospect or customer?
 - What would have been a better response during the sales meeting?
 - What can I do differently to prevent getting into a dead-end selling situation?
2. Create technology-free zones. Many salespeople don't allow themselves time to think because they're so busy checking their text messages, email and voice-mail. Devote time to thinking about the following:
 - How do I want to show up today with my boss, colleagues and customers?
 - What caused me to respond ineffectively? Effectively?
 - Where will I be tempted not to manage my emotions today?
3. Name the specific emotion. When analyzing your own knowing-and-doing gap, it's important to be specific about the emotion you're feeling. For example, there's a big difference in prescribing a solution for being nervous and for being intimidated. ●

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The Art and Neuroscience of Sales: The New Way to Influence

Knowledge of neuroscience elevates both the art and science of sales because it ensures that salespeople behave consistently in executing the influence skills they have learned in order to produce sustainable sales results. Unless you actually change your mental pathways, new behaviors, responses and skills will not be executed. So, the better you understand how your brain works, the more likely you are to be successful.

Selling to the Old Brain

The amygdala is the oldest part of the brain and the emotional alarm system that screens all stimuli and decides what's safe or not. When the old brain senses danger, it automatically produces a fight, flight or freeze response.

When working with a hostile prospect, a salesperson may exhibit a fight response by becoming defensive, leaning forward toward the prospect or talking faster and louder.

The salesperson exhibits a flight response when they ignore the hostile prospect or agree to write a practice proposal even though he doesn't have a clue about the prospect's needs.

The Emotionally Intelligent Response

The successful salesperson is aware of negative triggers and chooses not to respond or react to them. Instead of ignoring the obvious, the emotionally intelligent salesperson calmly stops the meeting and states the truth without anger or nervousness. To do this, you must apply two emotional intelligence skills:

1. Self-awareness: The ability to know what you are feeling and why; it's the ability to choose how you want to appear to others.
2. Assertiveness: The ability to state nicely what you need.

Prevent Fight-or-Flight Responses from Your Prospects

It's important to remember that your prospects also have an amygdala, so we want to make them feel safe to avoid sounding the alarm in the amygdala. When prospects feel safe, they share more information.

Action Steps for Improving Your Ability to Influence

So how do we get out of the cycle of fight or flight? There are three steps you can take:

1. Make a decision to change, grow and improve. Many salespeople say they want to get better, but their calendar doesn't show any indication of that. In research, 10,000 hours is the number that comes up again and again to achieve the mastery.
2. Identify triggers and change the response. Top salespeople identify the triggers that threw them off their game and then change their response by changing their story. For example, instead of becoming irritated with the buyer who keeps them waiting, they change the story to, "Wow, this person must be really busy and probably needs someone to solve his problems."
3. Practice, practice, practice. Physical practice requires setting aside time on your calendar to meet with a colleague or coach. Mental practice involves visualizing an activity, which lights up the same parts of the brain as the person who is actually engaged in the activity. ●

PART II: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE SALES PROCESS

Prospecting: The Real Reason for Empty Sales Pipelines

Why do so many salespeople struggle with ineffective prospecting efforts? Sales managers throw various training solutions at this prospecting problem, while soft skills such as delayed gratification, reality testing and stress tolerance are often overlooked.

Fish Where the Fish Are

If you want to catch more fish, then fish where the fish are. Salespeople who are addicted to instant gratification fish in the wrong ponds.

There are two areas to examine when identifying your best-fit clients: demographics and psychographics. Demographics includes criteria such as revenue and number of employees. What is often missed is an important criterion called psychographics, which classifies clients by their attitudes and values. Review your business and analyze your "fish."

The Importance of Building Relationships

Salespeople with high interpersonal skills are connected and are connectors. These good relationship builders ask themselves two questions every day:

1. Who is the best/right person for me to connect with today to help me grow my business?

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2. What can I do today to help a colleague or client grow their business?

The first skill we teach in referral partner training is the “give goal,” which entails setting a weekly sales activity metric for giving and helping clients, colleagues or referral partners. Salespeople who practice the give goal reap the reward of partners and clients wanting to reciprocate.

Hope Versus Reality

Salespeople scoring high in reality testing ask both tough and real-world questions. It's the salesperson's responsibility to manage emotions and test the reality to determine if this prospect is just whining or really ready to make a change.

“Don't Worry, Be Happy”

Salespeople scoring high in the emotional intelligence skill of stress tolerance bounce back quickly after disappointments. When faced with adversity, they ask, “What lesson can I learn from this?” Optimistic salespeople choose their friends wisely and also use humor to relieve stress.

The Neuroscience of Prospecting

Good value propositions need to create “word pictures” in order to influence and persuade the old brain. It needs tangible input. Here's an example:

- An intangible proposition: We have superior customer service.
- A tangible one: We work with clients who are tired of wasting time stuck in voicemail trees and never talk to a live human being.

Action Steps for Improving Your Prospecting Results

Here are a few tips for improving this important selling stage:

1. Make a decision. Determine whether or not you want to be in sales and are willing to do the work required of the entire job, not just the parts you like.
2. Ask yourself the tough questions. Are you taking time to develop relationships with potential partners? Are you doing what it takes to elevate your selling skills and results?
3. Plan for success. Use your delayed-gratification skills to put together a business development plan and establish key performance metrics for each activity.
4. Manage your emotions. Good salespeople manage their emotions by using positive self-talk, like, “The race is not to the swift but to those who keep on running.”

5. Get an accountability partner or a coach. Find someone with whom you can engage in a no-excuses call on sales activity and results every week. ●

Likeability: All Things Being Equal, People Buy from People They Like

Research consistently shows that people scoring high in likeability are hired, promoted and win business more often than peers scoring low in this area.

Would You Buy From You?

The first step to becoming more likeable is to ask yourself a basic question: Do you like yourself? If you are not confident and comfortable with yourself—possessing the quality of self-regard—it will be hard to make others feel confident and comfortable with you.

Confidence, Authenticity and Likeability

If the prospect doesn't think you're authentic, she also won't believe your product or service offering is authentic. Top performers are prepared, and when you are prepared, it's easier to take your authentic self to the sales meeting.

It's All About Them: The Prospect and Customer

Top salespeople scoring high in likeability also score high in the emotional intelligence skill of empathy. The empathetic salesperson lets the prospect know that she can relate to her situation. She is slow to offer solutions and quick to listen and validate.

A Day in the Life of Your Clients and Prospects

Do you really know what your clients' and prospects' lives are like? If you don't, how can you connect on a deeper level? Take your best clients out to lunch, and conduct interviews.

Enthusiastic or Annoying?

Many salespeople have been taught to be enthusiastic, but not all of your prospects are enthusiastic, and people buy from people who are like them. The empathetic salesperson builds rapport by mirroring their prospect's communication style and energy level.

Are You Showing Up or Living It Up?

Salespeople who score high in self-actualization are happy people who enjoy their work and are on a journey of self-improvement. Self-actualized salespeople provide more value to their prospects because they bring new ideas to meetings and don't settle for “good enough.”

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Action Steps for Improving Your Likeability

There are two steps you can take that will improve your likeability and sales results.

1. Examine your self-regard to see if you are showing up confident, relaxed and authentic. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Am I taking myself to the meeting, or is my alter ego showing up?
 - Am I showing up at meetings prepared or nervous?
 - Where am I taking myself too seriously?
 - Am I self-focused or other-focused?

Salespeople who are comfortable with themselves know that success or failure does not define their self-worth.

2. Show up and live it up. As a sales professional, do you see value in your position? Find purpose in your work, and you will find happiness. ●

Expectations: You Get What You Expect

The ability to effectively manage expectations—both our own and our prospects' and clients'—is an integral part of any sales professional's success.

Partnership or Vendor-ship?

Effective salespeople are good at disqualifying prospects from the outset who treat them like vendors instead of valued partners. Salespeople good at managing expectations are assertive and possess good self-regard, comfortably stating what they need. They value their time and ensure that their prospects understand that they expect decision makers to attend meetings.

What's Your Mindset?

Too many salespeople go into a sales meeting with the wrong intention: to close business. We teach our clients to seek the truth and do the right thing. Lose the attachment to the outcome of the meeting, and get comfortable with hearing either a yes or a no. Seeking the truth by having the right mindset creates a peer-to-peer conversation because the prospect isn't being manipulated by obvious leading questions.

Set and Manage Expectations to Create Raving Fans

Discussing expectations regarding potential problems—before they occur—is crucial to success. Here are some questions you might ask to firm up the rules of the partnership:

- What happens if key stakeholders miss meetings?
- What should we do if critical information isn't getting transferred to us?
- Who is accountable for this project on the client's end?

Action Steps for Improving the Way You Manage Expectations

Here are some action steps that will help you get what you expect:

1. Review your last three months of sales appointments, and analyze how you showed up. Were you assertive, stating nicely what you needed, or did you slip into passive sales behavior?
2. Visualize and practice setting and managing expectations. In order to practice becoming more assertive, identify non-threatening environments where you can practice different responses to difficult situations.
3. Revisit the value you bring to your prospects and clients. If you find yourself being treated like a vendor, remind yourself of the value you bring to your customers. Make a list of all the ways your product or service helps your customers. ●

Questioning Skills: What's Your Prospect's Story?

Many salespeople launch into presenting solutions too soon before asking enough questions to diagnose the root cause of the prospect's problem.

Listen Before You Leap

Impulse control is the ability to resist or delay an impulse or temptation to act. A successful salesperson possesses good impulse control. He's not in a hurry to show the prospect how smart he is by offering up solutions too early in the sales process.

Many salespeople are coached to listen for buying signals. These signals are pains that a prospect shares with the salesperson during a meeting. The problem is that salespeople “buy the buying signal” without any evidence that the prospect's problem is real enough or big enough to fix.

Use the “3Ws” Formula

When a prospect shares a pain or problem, you can slow yourself down by asking the following questions:

- The First W: Why is this a problem? You can make assumptions, but that is not an effective approach to closing business.

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- The Second W: What is the impact of the problem? Is the company losing customers? Is this problem affecting the company's reputation?
- The Third W: The third question is also a what? What is the future impact for this prospect if they don't solve this problem? Will it get bigger?

Get to the Real Pain

The problem presented by your prospect is often not the real problem. Good salespeople recognize this and apply their problem-solving skills to uncover the real issue.

In order to save valuable time, you also need to know how committed the client is to curing that pain. It means that salespeople must get better at gathering evidence to see how serious their prospects are about making a change.

Agree and Align

Another reason salespeople don't ask enough questions is because the prospect evokes a fight-or-flight response by stating an objection. The astute salesperson recognizes the potential trigger and manages her emotions by applying a skill we call "agree and align." When a prospect states an objection, avoid the natural response, which is to push back. Instead, agree with the prospect and validate his position.

Action Steps for Improving Your Questioning Skills

There are four steps you can take to elevate your questioning skills:

1. Evaluate how you set up your sales meetings. Set clear expectations that you will be asking numerous questions to better understand the prospect's situation.
2. Ask, don't tell. After each meeting, draw a circle and divide it into the time that you spent talking and the time the prospect talked. If you have a bigger piece of the pie, you probably did more telling than asking.
3. Test the commitment to change. Good salespeople are comfortable asking the prospect about their commitment level to solving an issue or challenge.
4. Learn your prospect's story. Set up your next sales meeting with the sole intent of learning your prospect's story. Gather facts, data and personal stories. ●

Reaching Decision Makers: How to Better Connect and Meet

The emotional intelligence skills covered in earlier chapters are all needed to uncover your prospect's

decision-making criteria and connect with all the buying influences.

How People Make Decisions

Good salespeople can connect and build relationships with a variety of people, not just people like themselves. In order to better understand who is sitting in these decision-making chairs, we teach the DISC model, which describes four personality types:

The Driver. This type is aggressive, competitive and likes to win. He is direct and bottom-line oriented.

When meeting with this buyer, forego the small talk and get down to business. Manage your emotional response, and recognize that bottom-line conversation is just the way this person communicates. It's not personal.

The Influencer. This type is more commonly known as an extrovert. When meeting with this buyer, you need to manage your emotions, especially your optimism, and not get carried away by the prospect's enthusiasm.

The Steady Relator. This type is a pleasant person who is described as amiable and easygoing. Their pace of buying is slower and more methodical than the Driver and Influencer. With this buyer, slow down and build a relationship before talking about your product or service.

The Cautious Thinker. The Cautious Thinker likes data and more data. This buyer will ask a lot of questions to determine your credibility. He likes guarantees and warranties. Cautious Thinkers also like quality, so don't be quick to concede your price, even when they start negotiating.

Are You Meeting with Mr. No?

We have found that many salespeople are intimidated by the C-suite buyer. Ask yourself this important question: What are you doing everyday to make yourself more valuable to this buyer? The lifelong learning salesperson takes time to learn and understand things that make them of more value to every decision maker they work with.

Action Steps for Improving Your Ability to Reach Decision Makers

Here are three steps that will improve your ability to navigate through the decision step of the sales process:

1. Review the way you interact with different personality types. Listen and look for clues to determine what type of buyer you have in front of you so you can adjust and adapt.
2. Have another truth-telling conversation with yourself. If you're not sure of how to have a conversation with a high-level executive, maybe you aren't adding value to the conversation.
3. Ask yourself how good you are at making decisions. If you aren't very good at making decisions, how

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effective are you going to be at asking your prospects and customers to make decisions? ●

Checkbook: Get Paid What You Are Worth

Sales and negotiation skills are absolutely helpful when trying to uncover the prospect's budget. However, these hard selling skills will only be executed if you are able to manage your emotions and apply soft skills, such as self-awareness, assertiveness and self-confidence.

Change Your Response and Change Your Results

Self-aware salespeople understand possible triggers from the past and choose a different response. When the prospect says they don't know the budget or are hesitant to share it, the salesperson uses their empathy, assertiveness and reality-testing skills to qualify the opportunity. They ask further questions to ensure they are not getting set up to write another practice proposal.

Are You Willing to Walk?

Effective salespeople understand the importance of not being attached to the outcome of a negotiation and being willing to walk away. In sales, the skill is often referred to as the "takeaway." Take the offer off the table, and people seem to want it more than ever.

Salespeople with empty sales pipelines have a hard time walking away from anything. When you have a full pipeline, you are willing to walk away from opportunities that are not profitable or are a waste of time.

Action Steps for Improving Your Ability to Get Paid What You Are Worth

Here are three steps to help you conquer this selling stage:

1. Identify your emotional triggers regarding money. What statements, questions or objections from your prospects trigger a response that results in you discounting your fees? Once you identify the triggers, change your response by visualizing and practicing better answers.
2. Educate yourself on negotiation tactics. Here are a few useful negotiating tips from Dr. Chester Karass. Note the emotional intelligence skills involved:
 - Take the win-win approach to negotiations to find a better deal for both parties. (Interpersonal relationships.)
 - Lose the need to be liked, and get used to conflict. (Emotion management.)

- Practice good listening skills—always. (Problem solving and empathy.)
- Always test the resolve of the other party. (Reality testing.)

3. Examine your convictions about the value of your company and your own abilities. Ask your best clients what has improved for them due to working with your company. Keep a "brag folder" in your office. Fill it with testimonials, case studies, thank-you notes and reminders of the value you bring. ●

People Over Process: The Key Traits of Emotionally Intelligent Sales Cultures

Emotional intelligence skills such as self-actualization, self-awareness, social responsibility, interpersonal communication and empathy help companies build effective teams and a winning sales culture.

There Is No "I" in Team

Sales cultures that encourage self-improvement understand that every member of the company contributes to the whole. Sales organizations that desire to thrive in this competitive business climate know they can't afford to have Lone Sales Rangers on their team. These organizations and their team players understand that it takes a "sales village" to compete and win in today's business environment.

One way to eliminate the "I" in your sales culture is by encouraging your strongest producers to help fellow members of the sales team. This type of salesperson understands that their contribution could help their peers elevate their selling skills, become more professional and more likeable. As a result, their organization's reputation will be enhanced.

Working with Your Village

To work effectively as a team, members must understand the challenges other team members face. Use your interpersonal skills to learn more about your peers in other departments. Work as hard on being likeable in the office as you do with your customers. Write thank-you notes to members of your internal team. When people feel valued and part of the big picture, they work harder to improve that big picture.

It's Better to Give

Emotionally intelligent sales cultures see the value of generosity—of contributing on a larger scale.

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High-performing businesses have a strong sense of social responsibility. Research shows that people enjoy working for companies that pursue profits and purpose.

Action Steps for Building Emotionally Intelligent Sales Cultures

Here are four steps to help you become a valuable member of your team:

1. Create a learning environment. Start small and create a book- or audio-of-the-month club with your team. Think of training and development as an investment, not an expense.
2. Get rid of the “Is.” Tap into your social responsibility, and help others. Take the new kid on the block out to lunch, or help out the colleague who has hit a slump.
3. Recognize the efforts of others. Even in very small businesses, non-salespeople contribute greatly to the company’s success and reputation. Make it a goal to be the “Kudos King or Queen” in your organization.
4. Contribute to your community. Make it your cause to get your sales organization or company to be generous, and get involved in charitable and community work. ●

Take the Lead: Sales Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Sales producers who aspire to be in management need soft skills such as impulse control, empathy, self-awareness, delayed gratification and interpersonal skills to improve their ability to lead and develop others.

How Do You Show Up?

Consistency is an important trait for a leader. At a basic level, consistency is connected to self-awareness and impulse control. Effective leaders must be aware of their emotions in order to manage them. Without such awareness, a leader can react to events that occur during the course of a day and behave in a manner that is not congruent with stated values, words or actions.

In addition to inconsistent behavior, one of the quickest ways to destroy credibility and integrity as a sales leader is to say one thing and do another. Emotionally intelligent sales managers value their people, and their actions support that value.

Teaching Rather Than Closing

The job of good sales managers is no longer about opening and closing business; it’s about teaching others to do so. Teaching requires delayed-gratification skills. You must put in the time to teach and coach in order to get

the reward of a self-sufficient team. Effective sales managers have the patience and discipline to listen to the problems their team members are having, and offer guidance.

Tough Love, Sales Leadership Style

A good sales manager sets clear expectations for success. When the sales team accuses this manager of micromanaging or having too high of expectations, she doesn’t give in and lower her standards. Part of tough love also means holding up a mirror to team members to show them the blemishes in their attitudes or actions.

Offering Inspiration and Recognition

Effective sales managers give compliments, create recognition programs and set up events that inspire camaraderie and teamwork. Finally, don’t forget the most overlooked motivator of all: the fun quota. It’s easy for sales managers to get caught up in the pressure of hitting goals, but everyone needs a release valve.

Action Steps for Improving Your Emotional Intelligence in Sales Leadership

There are five steps that will get you on the right path for leading others:

1. Be consistent. Each morning, think about the possible areas where you will be challenged to handle your emotions. Anticipate and visualize your calm response to those situations.
2. Give up your need to be liked. Your sales team may like you as a person; however, they only value and apply input and feedback from people they respect.
3. Show empathy and courtesy. When you meet with a member of your sales team, pretend he is your most important customer, and give him your full attention.
4. Become a teacher. Teaching is a privilege and should not be taken lightly. Apply your delayed-gratification skills and put in the necessary time with each person on your team.
5. Put fun on the weekly to-do list. Take business seriously, but not yourself. Be on the lookout for small and big ways that you can add a smile, a laugh or fun to your sales team’s day. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Emotional Intelligence for Sales Success*, you’ll also like:

1. ***Rainmaking Conversations*** by John E. Doerr and Mike Schultz. Conversations make or break everything in sales. Learn a proven system for leading masterful conversations that increase your results.
2. ***SNAP Selling*** by Jill Konrath. Konrath provides four SNAP rules you can use to win more sales and achieve an outcome rather than a goal.
3. ***The Innovative Sale*** by Mark Donnolo. Discover the six Innovative Sale principles that can be used to create better value propositions and assess your team’s Creative Quotient.