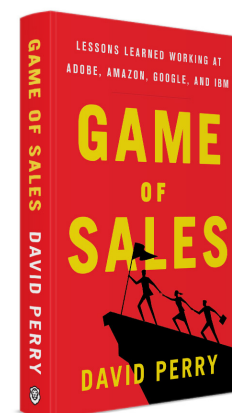


Game of Sales

Lessons Learned Working at Adobe,
Amazon, Google, and IBM

by **David Perry**



Contents

Inspiration and Perspective

Page 2

Automatic Pipeline

Page 2

Unshakable Resilience

Page 3

Peak Performance

Page 3

Capturing Hidden Value

Page 4

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A career in enterprise sales is one of the most exciting, interesting, and potentially lucrative ways to make a living. While the road to success isn't always lined with champagne and rose petals, the rewards of mastering the craft can be glorious. That's what this book is all about.

Author David Perry draws on years of sales experience to introduce the game-changers he discovered to survive and thrive in a competitive market. He focuses on a mindset based on caring and a genuine desire to have the best interest of all stakeholders. He knows a client-centered deal is far more efficient than any hardball negotiating tactics. In *Game of Sales*, you'll learn about the art of finding hidden value, which can level up your deal-making. You'll also learn about proven systems that can help you maintain a consistent pipeline of deals. Perry dedicates time to hard lessons learned through temporary setbacks like horrible meetings and tough conversations; both are experiences every enterprise salesperson must confront at some point in their careers.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Enterprise sales is awesome for career potential.
- Frameworks are necessary organizing your sales pipeline.
- Resilience is foundational for thriving in sales.
- Managing risk ensures peak performance.

Inspiration and Perspective

Our society offers a nearly infinite number of choices to earn a respectable living. You could be an accountant, web designer, greeting card writer, or stunt double. None of those professions, however, offer the same potential for reward, freedom, and excitement as a career in sales. Okay, maybe being a stunt double is more exciting than sales, but there's significantly more risk involved with that as a career choice.

Why Enterprise Sales is Awesome

Sales allows people to move from one opportunity to the next without any crippling fear of extended joblessness. In a worst-case scenario, you could find yourself in a company that isn't a good fit—for whatever reason—and you need to leave. As long as you're committed to success, you'll soon land another role. If you've demonstrated an aptitude for selling, you'll have multiple offers from other companies lined up, perhaps before you depart. If you are committed to your craft and have the desire to create revenue for a company, sales will allow you to write your own ticket.

Enterprise sales is an elite profession with significant lateral and upward mobility. Outside of executive leadership, the highest earners at most companies, large and small, are the top salespeople.

Ramp-Up on Industry Leaders and Technology

Getting a handle on the industry landscape is one of the most important things you can do to take your sales career to the next level. By ramping up your knowledge in whatever industry you work in (oil and gas, retail, healthcare, technology, or anything else), as well as the leaders who control those organizations, you'll build instant credibility to secure meetings, win over senior executives, and seamlessly convert conversations into opportunities without pitching.

Technology is another key aspect of your knowledge arsenal. It's eating the world, as we know it. Everything from watches and refrigerators to light bulbs and televisions is smart and on-demand. Therefore, it doesn't matter if you work for Google or Walmart, you must know as much as possible about trending technology. Match industry knowledge with the specific value proposition of your company to win credibility and open opportunities with senior executives.

Dare to Care

Deeply understanding your customers is an important aspect of today's game of sales. This understanding comes

from a genuine sense of caring to do what's right for all the stakeholders of a deal. By simply trying to do the right thing, everyone reaps the rewards. Demonstrate your dedication and caring for your client's success early in the process by spending time to get ingrained within their business and focusing on how to drive results. Consider caring to be the foundation of your sales success. It is the starting point that makes everything more achievable.

Automatic Pipeline

Eric Schmidt of Google, said, "Persistence is the single biggest predictor of employee success." When you create something simple, reliable, and effective, use it for as long as you can, because that is one of the rarest and most valuable commodities in any profession. The key to the Game of Sales is developing the foundational knowledge about systems and frameworks to build a reliable and sustainable routine to make pipeline development automatic.

The Pipeline Activator

It's a waste of valuable time to incessantly look up who to contact or decide what call to make next. Instead, create a reliable system that drives continuous action, test it, retest, and iterate over time. Draft a simple spreadsheet and use it as a reference guide to kickstart or invigorate your efforts.

Opportunity Basket

Break down your opportunities into smaller and larger deals and balance your time in both categories. Ideally, you want to be progressing on one or two large opportunities at all times. Your level of focus on each client must remain consistent, whether they're considered smaller deals or larger ones. Otherwise, you'll risk throwing off the balance in your opportunity basket, which can make it difficult to maintain an effective pipeline in the long run. Your opportunity basket should begin with a fifty-fifty allocation of your time spent between small and large deals. It's a waste of valuable time to incessantly look up who to contact or decide what call to make next. Instead, create a reliable system that drives continuous action, test it, retest, and iterate over time.

The Prioritization List

A timesaving spreadsheet can help you locate the best deals among your list of clients. By spending a day or two on this task before engaging your territory, you'll optimize your time and energy. After you bring this list to review with others, you can collaborate on whether or not each

opportunity seems to be worth pursuing. You can either proceed with the confidence of knowing you're spending your time wisely or focus the bulk of your energy elsewhere if anything major was missing when you set your criteria. No matter what the result is, at least you'll have saved time and achieved peace of mind; two highly valuable assets in today's game of sales. To ensure you don't get overly focused on small or large transactions, create periodic checkpoints (perhaps every month or so) to ensure you're balancing your time properly.

Visualize the End

Align your sales strategies with the contractual realities within your company, so you don't chase leads that aren't practical, overpromise things you can't deliver, or leave money on the table due to ineffective deal structure. Track down the contract from a top deal, pour through every single detail and visualize how you would go about arriving at the same with your prospects. Go through all the processes listed in this chapter and stick to your system religiously. Be sure to balance your time appropriately and you'll find the next level of success becomes a natural progression.

Unshakable Resilience

Resilience is an essential part of every salesperson's makeup. Michael Jordan once said, "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed."

The Certainty of Horrible Meetings

When horrible meetings surface, call upon your ability to shake off the experience and maintain a positive outlook about your next opportunity. Horrible meetings provide a good checkpoint for you to regroup and rework your plans. Don't let the ominous nature of the potential for horrible meetings loom over you to create any negative energy, however. Allow optimism to prevail in your approach because just as a great meeting can turn into a horrible one, a bad meeting can occasionally pave the way for surprisingly great interaction.

Facing the Dark Side (of Sales)

The dark side of sales can present a difficult challenge that you're guaranteed to confront at some point if you haven't already. It was easy to see who represented the dark side in Star Wars. Start with the guy who's deep breathing and

wearing all black. The dark side of sales is a little harder to recognize and may not be exactly what you'd expect.

Challenge yourself to embrace change, condition yourself to expect it, and consider it an opportunity. It's not easy, but you'll be much better off if you learn how to deal with change effectively. Others may get so frustrated when organizational plans are altered that they leave the company. That could create an opening for you to add prime territories and have an amazing year. When others surrender, it may be a good idea to keep fighting. Their loss could be your gain. Expect and embrace change by stepping outside of your situation to see the big picture for your company, team, and yourself. Bide your time, keep an open mind, adjust your approach, and course-correct when necessary.

Initiating Tough Conversations

Tough conversations can be related to urgent issues like changing expectations, deal opposition, technical issues, and unreasonable demands, or to equally important issues that are non-urgent like complacency. Many salespeople fear tough conversations because they worry about drawing an adverse response from a client, colleague, or manager. So, they say nothing, and as a result, they get nowhere. Business decisions rooted in fear alone will often lead to poor results and occasionally to disastrous consequences.

No matter how well you run your sales process, you can't avoid tough conversations. Get comfortable and learn to anticipate them to lessen their potential for negative impact. Interactions that make you feel the most uncomfortable can have the biggest impact. Run towards them. You'll know you've mastered initiating tough conversations when you routinely convert them into moments of deal progression, expansion, and creation.

Peak Performance

Average salespeople sell products. Great salespeople reframe and educate to challenge their client's perspective, and they do it with credibility that leads to positive change. Closing a deal is one of the most exciting experiences in business. Each time you make it happen, you'll learn how to do it bigger, better, and faster.

Don't Just Manage Risk, Attack It!

Attack risk early and throughout the sales cycle. Become familiar with all the ways your deal can get derailed, so you can anticipate and adjust accordingly. Put yourself in your

client's shoes, and make sure to understand and eliminate all the reasons why they might not be able to sign.

A condition called Happy Ears happens to all of us. That's when you hear everything you want to hear, encounter zero resistance, and your expectations fly through the roof. Happy Ears allows risk to creep into a deal and can cause salespeople to think their deals are larger and more of a sure thing than they actually are. You need to understand precisely why the client won't buy. What you don't know about the deal can kill it. Don't let Happy Ears stop you from identifying risks early and attacking them before they derail the whole process.

Assembling the Dream Team

Deals are rarely closed by one person. A carefully orchestrated team effort, made up of individuals with various special skills and expertise, is required to close a deal. Assemble your deal team expansively across departments, levels of management, and external parties.

Each team member will have certain areas of high skill, as well as areas of vulnerability. Find a way to enable everybody to succeed by assigning them tasks and ownership of areas that leverage their unique strengths. Meanwhile, address whatever areas of weakness they have by providing proper assistance or eliminating those aspects from a person's responsibilities when possible.

You'll also need to have an accurate view of your weaknesses because you'll need to find people on your team who have the skills you lack to fill those gaps as well. If you've never come to terms with your weaknesses before, it's not hard. All you need to do is listen.

Capturing Hidden Value

Instead of treating a sales deal like some sort of mixed martial arts event, where each side uses various kicks, punches, and strangleholds to force the other into submission, try the easier, friendlier, and far more productive method of capturing hidden value. Sources of value are unmet client wants or needs that may exist. Some of these value sources may be fairly obvious, but others may be hidden. By focusing on abundance and expanding the pie vs. scarcity and zero-sum game, you dramatically increase your chances of capturing hidden value. Some sources of value may be common across clients, yet there are always new interpretations, prioritization, and sources for you to discover. Each deal has its own unique value fingerprint.

Throughout your career, you'll encounter multitudes of decision points regarding the management of your pipeline and the use of different frameworks. You'll need to have tough conversations and you'll have an occasional horrible meeting. Furthermore, you'll need to find value where it's not readily apparent. It can be daunting to keep searching for that value, but you need to believe in your abilities and persevere.



David Perry advises world-class brands on how to transform their marketing organizations through the acquisition and effective use of enterprise technology solutions. Since 1999, David has worked with more than 100 companies across a wide range of industries including financial services, consumer products, technology, and healthcare. In the process, he's driven over \$125 million in new business and managed revenues. In addition to his work, David serves as a startup advisor and investor, and organizes technology entrepreneurship events in New York City.

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