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## Go-Givers Sell More

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

With their national bestseller *The Go-Giver*, Bob Burg and John David Mann took the business world by storm, showing that giving is the most fulfilling and effective path to success. That simple, profound story has inspired hundreds of thousands of readers around the world — but some have wondered how its lessons stand up to the tough challenges of everyday real-world business.

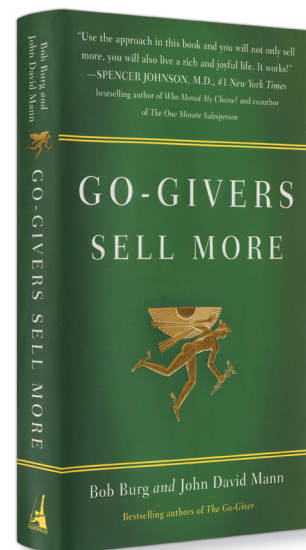
Burg and Mann answer that question in *Go-Givers Sell More*, a practical guide that makes giving the cornerstone of a powerful and effective approach to selling.

As Burg and Mann demonstrate, it's far more productive (and satisfying) when salespeople think like Go-Givers. Cultivate a trusting relationship and focus exclusively on creating value for the other person, say the authors, and great results will follow automatically.

Drawing on a wide range of examples of real-life salespeople who have prospered by giving more, Burg and Mann offer tips and strategies that anyone in sales can start applying right away.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to focus exclusively on creating value for others.
- How to cultivate a trusting relationship with others.
- Tips that you can use in your sales strategy right away.
- Why sales is about giving, not just getting.
- Why Go-Givers really do sell more.



by Bob Burg and  
John David Mann

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: GO-GIVERS SELL MORE

by Bob Burg and John David Mann

**The authors:** Bob Burg is a former top sales professional and also the author of *Endless Referrals* and *Adversaries Into Allies*. He is a highly sought-after speaker who teaches the principles at the core of *The Go-Giver* to audiences worldwide. John David Mann has been writing about business, leadership and the laws of success for more than 20 years; he is also the coauthor of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Flash Foresight* and *The Red Circle*.

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## Introduction: The Truth About Selling

Everyone who is not in sales thinks, “I could *never* sell.” Truth is, most people who are in sales secretly think the same thing.

There is a reason people feel this way: most of us look at sales *backward*. We may see it as convincing people to do something they don’t want to do. But it isn’t; it’s about learning what people *do* want to do and helping them do that. Or we may think it’s about taking advantage of others — while in fact, it’s about giving other people *more* advantage.

Selling is giving: giving time, attention, counsel, education, empathy and value.

Most people who are involved in sales genuinely believe in what they’re selling. But when it comes to the actual selling part, we get performance anxiety and don’t feel comfortable with the idea of “pitching.” We don’t like having things pushed on us and don’t really expect others to like it, either. We want to sell — we just don’t want to be in *selling mode*.

The traditional sales process is viewed as a sequence of specific, controlled events: *prospect - qualify - present - overcome objections - close - follow up - provide customer service*.

*Go-Givers Sell More* takes a different approach. The sales process goes something like this: *create value - touch people’s lives - build networks - be real - stay open*.

These five steps correspond to the Five Laws of Stratospheric Success. ●

## THE FIVE LAWS OF STRATOSPHERIC SUCCESS

### I. The Law of Value

*Your true worth is determined by how much more you give in value than you take in payment.*

#### Create Value

Your job is not to make a sale but to create something else: value. In fact, as a salesperson you can define your job description in three words: I create value. Value is the relative worth or desirability of a thing to the user or beholder.

If your goal as a salesperson or any kind of person is to create value for other people, how do you do that? There are a thousand ways. Here are just five: excellence, consistency, attention, empathy and appreciation.

#### MacGuffin

It doesn’t matter whether you sell cars or homes, legal or financial services, computers or sandwiches: you’re not really in the business of selling any of those things. What you sell is a MacGuffin. A MacGuffin, so dubbed by the late British film director Alfred Hitchcock, is the object around which the whole story focuses. It’s not that your product isn’t important; it is. It’s just not what the sales process is all about.

Remember, this process is not about you, and it’s not about your product. It’s about the other person. It means that no matter what you’re selling, you have the same opportunity to touch people’s lives.



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### Giving

To be successful in sales, it's important to understand how giving actually works. The essence of the Go-Giver philosophy is this: the more you give, the more you have.

Classic business operates by billiard-ball logic: Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. You give me a hundred dollars, and I'll give you a hundred dollars' worth of lumber.

Managing relationships based on the billiard-ball logic of economics isn't very practical, though. It's good for keeping track of widgets, foot-pounds and minutes on the clock, but not of people and their interactions.

Managing a relationship with a scorecard doesn't work because nobody can ever measure up to the subjectivity of another's billiard-ball calculations. Millions of marriages have broken up over scorecards that didn't seem (to either party) to tally fairly.

In the economics of human interaction, spending doesn't deplete; it multiplies. The more knowledge you give, the more you have. The same with appreciation, acknowledgment, wisdom, attention and care. The only way you can get more of it is to continuously give it away.

### Money

Right now, your total job is to focus on one thing and one thing only: providing value to other people. If you do that well, sales — and money — will find you.

Money is an echo of value. Create value, and money follows — it has to. But it's crucial to keep money in its right perspective.

In sales, an excellent way to keep money in perspective is to create the habit of looking at it from the other person's point of view. How can you provide value for *them*? How can you make sure you're watching out for their financial interests? How can you help them increase *their* earnings and build *their* net worth?

### The Paradox

In sales we willingly suspend our self-interest. We don't erase or deny it; we simply set it aside for a moment so we gain emotional access to the full experience of the Law of Value.

You're not putting others' interests first as a stepping stone toward serving your own interests; you're doing it for the self-contained reward and satisfaction of knowing you were able to serve. You give because it's who you are and therefore what you do.

It's a paradox. If you go about creating value for others with the ulterior motive of receiving more value yourself, it tends to show through on some level and sabotage the

result. Instead, give without emotional attachment to the return — knowing full well that there *will* be return.

### Your Economy

Actually, it's especially when times are tough that Go-Giver principles shine. When the economy goes into a tailspin, it's easy to slip into panic mode. But just because economic conditions are always rising and falling, that doesn't mean your own personal economic condition has to rise and fall with them. During down times you can not only hold your own but even get farther ahead.

How? By sharpening your focus like a laser. Focus on what? On creating value. By creating value for others, you make yourself so valuable to the market around you that the demand for you and your business rises even when demand everywhere else is falling.

There is something quite utilitarian about the Law of Value. While you cannot control what others do; you can control what *you* do. If your goal is to *make the sale*, then you are dependent on the buying decisions of others. But if your goal is to *create value for others*, you are dependent on nobody but yourself. ●

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## II. The Law of Compensation

*Your income is determined by how many people you serve and how well you serve them.*

### Touch Lives

Your compensation is not a reflection of your goodness, worthiness, merit or industriousness: it is an echo of impact.

The first law — creating more value than you take in payment — is the bedrock of sales success, but simply creating value for people won't necessarily increase your sales or your cash flow. The second law says that in addition to adding value to the process, you must also touch as many people's lives as possible with that added value.

The second law means that a big part of your job is to continually find more people to meet. In traditional sales training, this is called a funnel or pipeline. But what is that funnel made of? Its substance is personal impact.

It's not that other forms of advertising and marketing are not effective; they are — but only to the degree that they emulate or reinforce the effect of word of mouth: human beings communicating the impact that an experience has had on them.

Your task is not simply to sell your product but to create an experience of value that has a positive impact on others' lives. Money is not a measure of goodness or worthi-

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ness. It is a measure of impact. You want more income? Have more impact.

### People

Your income, says the second law, is directly proportional to how many people you serve and how well you serve them. Notice the wording: not how many *prospects*, not how many *customers* — how many *people*. As long as you're seeing someone as *the possibility of a future event*, you're not seeing the *person*.

Of course you are indeed looking for prospects — but we need to be clear on what we really mean by that. With each new person you meet, you are asking yourself, “What are the prospects of my touching this person's life?”

Being great at sales does not take exceptional verbal ability or an extroverted personality. What it does take is the desire to get to know people and the ability to become comfortable being with people. Some of these people will turn out to be interested in your product or service; others will become excellent sources of referrals. But let's let those results unfold in their own time. Let's make sure we put the cart where it belongs: after the horse.

### Rapport

Why do salespeople traditionally talk so fast? To squeeze in more information. But information is not what makes great sales; what makes great sales is the impact that occurs when you touch people's lives.

What makes a great salesperson is his or her ability to create a bond with other people. A great conversation is one in which you find points of common interest, gracefully forge a bond through those interests, and allow the other person to shine. That strong sense of harmonious accord is rapport.

If your income is directly tied to how many people you serve and how well you serve them, then knowing how to establish rapport with others is the linchpin to your economic future.

The simplest way to establish rapport is to smile. Here are a few others: be polite, don't interrupt, listen, say please and thank you, and be genuinely interested in the other person.

### Skills

There are many skills you can cultivate to the great benefit of both yourself and the people you meet. The problem occurs when using a technique or formula distracts your attention from where it needs to be: on the other person. To the degree that a skill or technique makes you think about what you're doing, it creates separation

between you and the other person. This is why sales techniques can so readily create discomfort: they tend to be me-focused, not you-focused.

One way to keep such skills from becoming artificial is to make a habit of asking yourself, “What is the truth, right here and now?” For example, before you open your mouth to say, “Yeah, I know how your feel,” ask yourself, do you really know how they feel?

Listening to the person and responding genuinely is far more effective than trying to guide the conversation through a preplanned pattern.

Your compensation is an echo of your impact — and you will invariably have more impact on other people when you are focused on them, not on yourself.

### Curiosity

Every one of us is innately curious. It's hardwired; it comes with being human. But we don't all access that faculty with the same ease. It takes practice. At first, it may take consciously pushing yourself to be curious. It's well worth it. The single greatest skill in sales is a highly developed sense of interest in other people.

When you practice accessing your curiosity and genuine interest in others, everyone becomes fascinating. You start to find that with your interest kindled, you can spark a conversation with virtually anyone in virtually any situation.

If you focus on your curiosity and genuine interest in the other person, you won't have time to be nervous, self-conscious, manipulative, awkward, self-critical or anything else. You'll be too busy being interested in them.

### Maturity

To be successful in sales, you have to learn to be in control of your emotions. We're not talking about denying your feelings but about keeping them in perspective and not letting them control you.

We define emotional maturity as the ability to keep your focus on others' feelings even as you acknowledge and honor your own.

No one can make another person feel angry, frustrated, resentful or any other emotion. Other people say what they say and do what they do. What we say and do is up to us.

This is the difference between responding and reacting. When you *react*, you are letting external circumstances call the shots. When you *respond*, you are choosing your actions and feelings. Being mindful of this distinction allows us to live in life's solutions as opposed to its problems. And interestingly, it helps the other person to do the same: when you act with emotional maturity, it also tends to raise the emotional maturity level of all the conversations and exchanges in which you participate. ●

### III. The Law of Influence

*Your influence is determined by how abundantly you place other people's interest first.*

It's fairly straightforward to see the impact you're having on people you meet. The secret to developing a vast and thriving sales business is the impact you have on people you have *not* yet met — people whose lives you touch, at least in some measure, before you ever lay eyes on them or have a conversation with them.

The third law raises the effect of the second law to a higher order of magnitude, multiplying your personal *impact* through the spreading medium of your *influence*.

Genuine influence flows from *reputation*. When you set out to create a career in sales, your single most important task is the building of reputation.

The Law of Influence approaches each business relationship with the question, "What have I done for you lately?" Great salespeople grow great networks because they focus their actions on looking out for the other person's interests and serving their needs. They prefer to give the credit away than to seek it for themselves. They are constantly on the lookout for ways they can help to elevate other people's lives — and in the process they become enormously influential themselves.

#### Fuzzy Influence

Where will your best customers come from? The classic view is that there are two places to look: your *warm market* and *cold market*, that is, people you know and those you don't. But the chances are good that the majority of your best customers will come from neither of those places but from the fuzzy area in between the two — that neither hot nor cold domain that you might call your *fuzzy market*.

Your fuzzy market includes all those people you vaguely know: not exactly friends, but not exactly strangers, either. People whose faces you know, if not their names. And it also includes people who know the people you know: friends of friends of friends. You are far more likely to learn about something new from someone you know vaguely.

You never know where your greatest customers will come from — and it will probably be from where you do not expect.

How do you find your greatest customers? They find you. They are drawn by your influence.

#### The Perfect "Pitch"

The part of selling that most aspiring salespeople have the hardest time with is prospecting. People don't like being

prospected, and we all know it. If you're going to be great at selling, you need to find a way to go about it that feels a lot more comfortable, both for you and for the other person. And that comes down to the question of *the pitch*.

The secret to the perfect sales pitch is to have no pitch. Some salespeople have been taught what is called the "three-foot rule," which says that everyone who comes within three feet is fair game to pitch to about your product. But what if this person doesn't want to hear about your product?

Your first priority in any encounter should be to add value to the other person's life, that is, to enrich or enhance their life in some way. Or at the very least, not to subtract value, which means not to irritate them, suck energy from them, intimidate them, bully them, pressure them or manipulate them.

Part of maturity in sales is coming to grips with the realization that not everyone is a prospective customer, no matter how close to you they may be in feet or in common interests.

The Go-Giver salesperson's three-foot rule goes something like this: Anyone within three feet is worth getting to know better.

That said, when you're at an event with a lot of people, don't feel you need to meet everyone. Your aim is to have fun and make friends. Go for quality, not quantity. And don't pitch. What you do is ask great questions.

#### Great Questions

To become great at sales, learning how to ask great questions is in many ways more important than learning how to make a great presentation. Let's look at a few great questions.

- *How did you get started in the [fill in the blank] business?*  
People love to answer this question. It invites others to tell the story of their life.
- *What do you enjoy most about what you do?*

This question evokes pleasure, appreciation and pride in the other person. Your conversation serves to remind them of the best things in their life.

That is exactly what makes these great questions: they lead the other person into a conversation that makes them feel good.

#### Follow-Through

Sales trainings usually use the term follow-up, which means continuing or repeating something that has already been done. We like the term follow-through even better, since it means completing a process or action and taking it to its fullest conclusion.

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The essence of follow-through is this: in the hours, days and weeks after meeting and talking with your new acquaintance, continue looking for ways to add value to their life.

One of the greatest ways of creating value for people is by connecting them to other people and suggesting ways they can do business with each other or benefit in some other way from the relationship.

### Your Serve

People are not looking for features or what something is; they are looking for benefits or what it can do for them. The most helpful answer to the question, “So, what do you do?” is one that explains what you have to offer in such a way that the other person immediately grasps the benefits of what your product or service will do for them (or for others they know).

A pitch is me-focused. A serve is them-focused. When your new friend asks you what you do, the best way to serve the ball in such a way that they can easily get engaged and hit it back to you is to give an answer that is *pure benefits*.

Listen to these answers and to how they land when you lob them over the net.

- *I'm in the insurance business. (Thud.)*
- *I sell leading-edge, top-of-the-line skin care products. (Thud.)*

They are statements that go nowhere, because they really don't invite any reply. Instead, you want to serve a ball that the other person can lob back: a statement that answers their question in an interesting way and tends to encourage an engaged response. For example,

- *I help people protect their families and plan for a healthy financial future.*
- *I build people's health and confidence through anti-aging technology.*

A serve of benefits tends to draw the other person forward with interest and usually some sort of question in response. You served; they hit it back; the ball is in play.

Will they always hit the ball back perfectly? No, and it doesn't matter. And that brings us to one last — and most crucial of all — aspect of your serve: You don't have to “get it right.”

If you think you have to get this exactly right in order to make your business a success, then this is a perfect time to take the pressure off. Remember that you cannot make a sale. Only they can do that. What you can do is create value.

### Posture

If people want to do business with those they know, like and trust, they generally do not want to do business with

those who appear to need them too much. If being pushy and aggressive repels people (and it does), then so does being overly eager and needy.

The problem here is that you may in fact be needy. This can devolve into a vicious circle: the more strongly you need the income, the more needy you feel; the more you project that feeling, the more others pick up on it and feel like backing away; the harder it is to earn the income you need, the more urgently you need it and so on. This is where emotional clarity and discipline come into play.

Emotional clarity is your understanding that there is a difference between your economic need and your emotional need for this person to be the solution to that economic need. Emotional discipline is your ability to hold onto that clarity and consistently choose your responses to each situation, rather than reacting impulsively. There is a word for this combination of clarity and discipline: posture.

Part of posture is staying clear on what you cannot control. Whether this other person buys your product or is even interested in your product is entirely up to them. You cannot control the outcome.

What you can control are the actions you take, the words you speak, and especially the thoughts you hold. Why “especially” your thoughts? Because your thoughts often communicate just as loudly as your words and deeds — and sometimes even more so.

Your success does not depend on this person saying yes — but their getting the full benefits of what you have to offer does. So, breathe, relax and give this conversation your very best. Know who you are. Have posture.

### The Competition

Whenever you're speaking to a prospect and they bring up your competitor, go out of your way to say something nice about him or her. Because when you compliment your competitor, you are also demonstrating respect — and respect earns respect. If in a conversation you tear down your competitor, it actually diminishes you in the other person's eyes. On the other hand, when you take care to say something positive about your competition, it actually builds you up in their eyes.

These are the messages that register for the other person, consciously or not: You are confident, you are successful, you are safe. If you speak that highly of your competition, then this person knows they'll never have to worry about what you say about them behind their back. ●

### IV. The Law of Authenticity

*The most valuable gift you have to offer is yourself.*

#### Be Real

Genuinely great salespeople make sales look easy. How? By stepping into who they are. They don't put on some artificial persona.

Authentic is not something you become; it's something you already are. Authenticity is not something you seek or take on; it's something you simply embrace.

Closely related to authenticity is the term *integrity*. Integrity means being whole, that is, not being divided. Being whole means your words and actions are not separate things. When you do what you say and say what you do, you are a man or woman of your word.

#### Present

The secret to being effective when you present is to stay present. Today, information is freely available. Giving people information doesn't give people value; it simply steals their time. Because of this, presenting is no longer about giving information. It's about giving *meaning*.

Truly great presenters know how to take their focus completely off themselves. When great presenters face their audience, here are the kinds of questions they ask themselves: What do these people want most? Who are they? What are they searching for? Why are they here? And what is the single most valuable thing I could possibly convey to them?

Of course you want to have a firm grasp of your informational key points, product benefits, vignettes and anecdotes you might share — but relax. You will not be graded on how well you've mastered delivery of this information. What you will be graded on is the quality of the interaction. And remind yourself: it's not about you; it's about them.

Authenticity doesn't mean you can't use preplanned words. It just means that when you do, you have to make them your own, in both your head and your heart.

#### Undersell

Great salespeople never try to convince anyone of anything. "Believe me ... Trust me ... Take it from me ... If you want my opinion ..." If you notice these phrases appearing in your language, we recommend you ferret them out and eliminate them. None of them is effective at conveying genuine value. First off, they are all me-focused. More important, they are the kind of forceful assertions that cast long shadows of doubt in the mind of the listener.

There is a wonderful expression in sales: *It's better to underpromise and overdeliver than the other way around.* This is an excellent way of stating the Law of Value, and it's the core philosophy of great salesmanship: Follow through on your promises — every one of them.

Hype is the ultimate oversell. The worst thing about hype is that by definition it is impossible to fulfill its promise. Hype and overselling almost invariably achieve the opposite of their intended goal. They make people want to back away, turn around and run.

Forced or rampant enthusiasm often ends up looking and sounding like hype or its cousin bravado. Beneath bravado there often lurks a hidden core of ambivalence, doubt and insecurity, and even though it's hidden, people sense it clearly.

There are two classes of positive declaration. There is the forceful assertion, and then there is the simple statement of fact that springs from the quiet stillness of authenticity. The first is born from bravado, the effort to appear confident; the second, from the realm of simple knowing.

Confidence and genuine enthusiasm are not missiles that work only when they are launched at others; they are lights that glow from within.

#### Listen

The real secret of great communicators is not their talk but their empathy: before they open their mouths, they have a clear grasp of their audience's experience. And there is only one sure way to arrive at that clear grasp: listening.

How you listen depends on what questions you are asking yourself. You can listen from a context that says, "What do I think about what this person is saying, and how am I going to respond when they're finished?" Or you can listen from a context that simply says, "What exactly is this person saying?"

The problem with the first is that your focus is not on what the person is saying but on what you are going to say back — which generally means that you're not really hearing what the person is saying. In the second case, you're focusing on the other person and trusting that when it's your turn to respond, you'll simply do that.

One of the powerful things about listening is that it is often the only way to really get to the heart of the matter. People often don't voice their real thoughts and concerns right away. In fact, people often don't know what their real thoughts and concerns are, at least not at first.

The ultimate benefit of genuine listening is you honor the other person. You let them know that they are important and that you value them. And that is the bedrock of a great relationship.

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### Objections

The natural impulse upon getting an objection is to counter it. In other words, when you sense that another person has an issue, concern, criticism or hesitation, you suit up and prepare to do battle. The truth about objections is that most of the time, they aren't really objections.

The point the other person actually puts into words is probably not the totality of what they're really thinking. In fact, chances are excellent that they aren't quite sure just what they think — and in the effort to clarify their own position, they seize on the first thought that comes to mind and toss it out to you as a way of saying, "Hang on, not so fast."

In a very real sense, what they end up deciding they really do think depends on you and how you treat them in the next 30 seconds. You can do one of two things. You can challenge them, which will probably harden their thoughts into a firm negative position. Or you can reframe their point as a request for clarification (which is what it really is) and join them as a partner in the process.

The Go-Giver's approach to another person's objection is empathy: instead of facing off and staking out a debate position, step over to where the person is standing, stand next to them, and look at their objection with them.

When you say, "That's a great question" or "That's a good point" and then join with them to examine the issue they raised, you let them know it's welcome and appreciated.

You don't necessarily agree with the objection, but it's a great point because it is their point. And not only is it a great point, it will very possibly be the moment when the sale really happens.

### The "Close"

There will be those rare moments when the other person will come right out and say, "Okay, look, I'm sold, I want to get this right now..." But most of the time, you need to ask the question.

If we keep our focus on the other person, then our question comes from a place of authentic asking. Is this what the other person wants? Would this be of genuine value to them? The simplest way to ask is the simplest way to ask: *Jack, are you at a point where you'd like to go ahead and purchase?* or *Jack, would you like to buy one of these?*

Even in the best of situations, when you come to the point of purchase, chances are good the other person is feeling some degree of pressure, even if it's only self-imposed.

There are two things you can do to serve the other person here. First, apply no pressure. Zero. And second, as a way of honoring the possibility that they may be

feeling the urge to seek an escape route, provide one. Instead of trying to close the prospect, open the dialogue to more possibilities.

As with objections, this may at times feel counterintuitive. It may feel like you're giving the other person an "out" and relinquishing control of the process. That's because you are. You're treating Jack as a partner in the process rather than as a passive subject. It puts you together on the same side of the question. ●

## V. The Law of Receptivity

*The key to effective giving is to stay open to receiving.*

### Stay Open

While the first four laws are all about giving, the fifth law is the part where you actually *receive*.

Whether or not we are aware of it, there is often a part of us that silently disapproves of and even actively resists our receiving. And nowhere does this insidious self-sabotage do more damage than in sales.

If you do not feel naturally graceful about receiving this sale from the other person, then you will bring that feeling of discomfort to the sales process itself. Often this surfaces as a sense of the transaction being forced or uneasy.

If you don't let yourself receive, you're refusing the gifts of others, and you shut down the flow. And that flow is exactly what your business is all about. That flow is the goal and purpose of sales and selling.

The genuinely successful see receiving as an integral part of generosity. They eagerly receive, delight in the receiving, and just as eagerly pass it on. They don't stop the flow; they join in with the flow.

When you live generously and focus on creating value for others, great value will come to you, suddenly and unexpectedly.

Create value; touch people's lives; build networks; be real; stay open. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Go-Givers Sell More*, you'll also like:

1. ***Rainmaking Conversations* by John E. Doerr and Mike Schultz.** Doerr and Schultz offer a research-based, field-tested and practical selling approach that will help you master the art of the sales conversation.

2. ***Snap Selling* by Jill Konrath.** Konrath offers four SNAP rules to win more sales, and she teaches us that sales is an outcome not a goal.

3. ***The Perfect Salesforce* by Derek Gatehouse.** Gatehouse argues that sales is about people, not a process. And there are different types of people who excel naturally in different types of sales jobs.