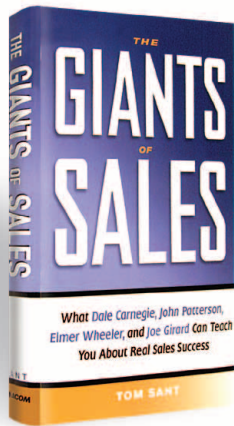




Executive Book Summaries®



By Tom Sant

What Dale Carnegie, John Patterson, Elmer Wheeler and Joe Girard Can Teach You About Real Sales Success

THE GIANTS OF SALES

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

John Henry Patterson faced financial ruin from his investment in the first cash register, but he turned National Cash Register into one of the most important companies of its day. He also introduced a highly organized sales process that focuses on understanding customers' needs and selling a solution that meets those needs.

Dale Carnegie began his life as the son of a pig farmer in Missouri, but his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* has been a bestseller for nearly 70 years. In that book, Carnegie made famous many lasting principles, such as tapping into the power of enthusiasm, that would lead to the relationship-oriented approach to selling.

Elmer Wheeler tested thousands of sentences on millions of consumers in his Wheeler World Laboratories, searching for combinations of words that produced the best results. In the process, he developed an influential selling program and wrote more than 20 hit books. His classic selling points include, "Don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle!"

Joe Girard was born into deep poverty in Detroit. He took his first job at the age of 8, shining shoes in a hardscrabble saloon. After drifting from one bad job to another, he turned to car sales. Soon, he was single-handedly selling more cars than 95 percent of all the dealerships in North America. His system for generating leads and gaining referrals still forms the basis of today's permission marketing and closed-loop marketing.

The stories of these four sales gurus and their key sales innovations offer readers a broad and deep understanding of the entire selling field.

In addition, this summary will show you:

- ✓ *How to tap into the power of the selling methods spurred by these sales pioneers.*
- ✓ *The difference between linguistic approaches and tactical methods.*
- ✓ *How process-oriented sales methods can improve sales.*
- ✓ *How to make some of the most powerful ideas in the history of selling work for you.*

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THE GIANTS OF SALES

by Tom Sant

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

Selling in the 21st Century

Professional selling is the most important American invention of the 20th century. Without professional sales methods, the development of our society and our economy would have been delayed. Professional selling is the engine that has powered our economy for the past 100 years.

Our predecessors figured out how to sell effectively by figuring out what works.

John Henry Patterson, for example, developed a process for selling that kept his company growing even in the midst of recessions, and that became the foundation for the methods used today by the most successful sales organizations in the world.

Dale Carnegie discovered truths about human relationships that have been used by such powerhouse business leaders as Lee Iacocca, Mary Kay Ash and Tom Monahan to build businesses.

Elmer Wheeler developed and tested ways of delivering sales messages, boiled down to brief statements, to figure out which ways worked the best.

'The World's Greatest Salesman'

And Joe Girard, born into abject poverty in the slums of Detroit, discovered a technique for generating qualified leads that put him in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as "the world's greatest salesman."

Different methods of selling may work wonderfully in one environment and rather poorly in another. Matching the method to the situation is one of the challenges the salesperson, the sales manager and the company all face. By going back and looking at what the early masters of modern selling taught us, we can avoid wasting our time on fads and foolishness. More important, we can avoid damaging our customer relationships by adopting lousy advice. Most important of all, we can sell more effectively.

Four Ways to Sell

Generally speaking, sales methods fall into four broad categories. Each of the four basic ways to approach selling has some real strengths and can improve results. But each also has some significant limitations. The goal is to understand the basic approaches and to recognize when and why each of them works. Then we can match the method to the particular selling environment in which we are working.

Here are the four categories of sales methods:

1. Process-Oriented Sales Methods. This type of approach treats sales as a process, a series of identifiable steps. The assumption is that when salespeople follow the steps correctly, they will be successful — provided they have a reasonably competitive product or service to offer. These process-oriented approaches have dominated the sales-training market for the past generation. Their success stems from a number of factors:

- They are relatively easy to teach.
- They address the needs of sales management.
- They tend to be effective in complex sales.
- They have been adopted by highly influential corporations.

2. Relationship-Driven Sales Methods. In the view of the trainers and authors who recommend this kind of selling strategy, what matters the most in winning a sale is how strong a bond you forge with the decision maker. That bond, that individual relationship, which is based on trust and mutual respect, is the basis on which one vendor will be chosen over another. For a long time, these methods dominated sales training, but about 20 years ago they began to fall out of favor. However, they have a number of unique strengths that make them effective in the right situation:

- People prefer to buy from people they trust.
- Relationship-driven approaches tend to result in more repeat business.
- The salesperson's value is maximized.
- These methods work well in selling intangibles,

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Selling in the 21st Century

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such as intellectual capital or services, and in selling commodities, where there is little differentiation between products.

3. Linguistic Approaches. For some reason, people believe that certain words or phrases can exert tremendous power over a customer's mind. As a result, salespeople eagerly seek insights into both verbal and body language. Although fewer in number, the sales experts who advocate these methods have tremendously loyal followings. Why? There are two reasons:

- Scientific research backs them up. Linguistic approaches are often tied to empirical research in cognition.
- They are testable. A salesperson can quickly determine whether or not the method is working simply by trying it in the course of a sales call.

4. Tactical Methods. This type of sales training focuses on tricks and techniques. Often this kind of training tends toward the manipulative, but there are sound techniques in selling that can make a person's job easier. The reasons why salespeople support these methods include:

- They believe that their success is limited only by a particular skill deficiency. Specific, tactical training can be exactly what the salesperson needs.
- Techniques are often trainable in short, focused sessions. ■

For additional information on process-oriented sales methods, go to: <http://mj.summary.com>

John Henry Patterson: The Process of Selling

In 1884, when John Henry Patterson was 40 years old, he and his brother sold their coal business and made a fateful decision: They decided to invest in high technology.

The cash register had been invented and patented in 1879 by James Ritty, a saloon keeper in Dayton, Ohio. Ritty founded the National Manufacturing Co. in Dayton to manufacture and sell cash registers. The company was barely staying afloat when Patterson bought it. He knew about Ritty's machine because he was one of the few people who had bought one. Once the register had proved its value in one of his retail outlets, he ordered two more. Patterson concluded that every retailer should have a cash register and that every intelligent retailer would quickly buy one. And so, for \$6,500, he bought the rights to Ritty's patent and operation.

Patterson took over the business, which he renamed The National Cash Register Co. Patterson faced the

classic dilemma faced by many contemporary entrepreneurs: He was producing a product so innovative that there was no market for it, a product in which the world had no interest, a product so complex that its largest group of potential users couldn't understand it. He had to find a way to sell his complicated, innovative product to skeptical consumers.

The answers he found have had repercussions throughout American business for more than 100 years. Some of the most powerful and influential leaders in American industry worked for Patterson and took his methods to their next assignments as leaders at IBM, General Motors Corp., Packard Motor Car Co., Burroughs Adding Machine Co. and other top companies.

The First Sales Convention

In 1886, Patterson organized the first sales convention. He had all five of his sales agents come to Dayton where they received training on some new features of the cash registers and how these features increased value for the customer. He also had his top-producing sales reps share their selling tips with the others. In this sales conference, Patterson had come up with two of many innovations in modern selling: holding a regular sales meeting, and having sales reps trained not just in product features but in sales techniques as well.

Patterson's brother-in-law, Joseph Crane, also attended the sales conference as an observer and offered his advice. Once Crane had joined NCR as a sales agent, he developed a process in which he would uncover the customer's biggest worry, problem or fear; show which feature addressed that issue; and then demonstrate the value of buying the machine to the merchant in a systematic way so that the prospective purchaser fully understood it. By quickly focusing on the particular set of problems that the given customer worried about, Crane was able to position the cash register as a solution, not merely a piece of equipment. He was selling value, not technology. And he was saying the same basic words in the same order, time after time.

Systematizing the Sales Force

Patterson realized what he had in Crane's method: a way of systematizing the sales force to maximize its results. He had Crane give his presentation while a secretary transcribed it. Patterson sent the script out to the other salesmen with a note: "Crane sells more machines than any of you fellows, and he sells them this way. I suggest you all learn this."

Patterson soon revised the text, making it a bit more flexible, and issued it again, this time as the *NCR*

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For additional information on the NCR employees who rose to the tops of other companies, go to: <http://mj.summary.com>

John Henry Patterson: The Process of Selling

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Primer. He presented it at the sales conference in 1887 and told the men they had to learn it.

A Primer on Process

After Patterson insisted that every sales agent in the field use the sales method that Crane had developed, the company's sales began to soar. Crane's approach was so powerful because it focused entirely on the customer's needs rather than on the company's product. Although Patterson didn't use the term, what he was developing was the first sales force to use a *consultative* approach.

The four steps of Crane's process are:

- **First, the approach — identify the customer's problems.** Where are customers losing money? What goals are they failing to achieve? What gaps in their current capabilities are keeping them from being successful?
- **Second, the proposition — develop a specific value proposition.** Identify the specific areas where losses are occurring, and quantify them. Summarize the losses and show the potential for increased profitability in concrete dollars and cents.
- **Third, the demonstration — show how the solution fits.** Summarize the customer's problems and the potential for increasing profits. Then show how the solution works, not in terms of its technical functions, but in terms of its business impact.
- **Fourth, the close — ask for the order.** Assume that an intelligent businessperson will want to buy. If a cus-

The First Sales Training School

National Cash Register sponsored a display at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. A group of young men was hired specifically to staff the display, but Patterson found to his horror that they knew almost nothing about cash registers. He pulled them all into a hotel room, where he created a short, focused presentation based on the *Primer*. He also listed the most common questions that the crowd was likely to ask, along with the best answers. Patterson then drilled the young men in small groups until they were all perfect.

Patterson decided that he could do the same thing with his sales reps. The first sales training school was held on April 4, 1894. It was attended by 37 men. The company paid all expenses. Crane was in charge of the instruction, and the men were drilled on the *Primer* and the newly developed *Book of Arguments*, a handy guide to overcoming objections.

As usual, Patterson kept records of everything. By tracking performance, he was soon able to see that sales veterans who went through the training doubled their sales afterward.

tomers has objections, answer them and close again.

For the first time in history, a selling argument was consistently developed from the customer's point of view rather than from the company's desire to make a sale. It was also the first time that selling was seen as a process, something that could be repeated over and over, rather than as a transactional event. This was Patterson's most important contribution to modern selling. Defining sales as a process — a sequence of specific steps that can be identified, tracked and measured — means that sales can be taught, measured and improved.

Making It Work for You

Take an objective look at your sales process. If it's not explicitly defined, go ahead and identify the typical steps that must occur for you to close business. Once you have a firm grasp of the steps in the process, whether there are three or seven or nine or some other number, identify what you must accomplish in each step in order to move to the next one. How do you know when this step has been completed? Identify training or resources that can help you improve your execution in those steps.

For some people, thinking about sales as a project to be managed or a process to be executed is not a natural way to view the job. That was true for many of Patterson's sales reps, and it's no different today. But if you have that feeling of resistance, it's worth overcoming. Knowing your process and following it will make your job as a sales professional easier and will enable you to work more efficiently and effectively. You'll close more deals faster if you know what it takes to get to a close.

Learn your process, use it and respect it. In return, the process will make you more successful than you could ever be without it. ■

Dale Carnegie: The Apostle of Influence

Dale Carnegie was born in 1888 in a small farmhouse in Missouri and was raised on hog farms in rural parts of the state. After a streak of bad luck, his family moved to a farm near Warrensburg, Mo., so that he could attend the state teachers college nearby. Dressed in shabby, ill-fitting clothes, beset by insecurities and worries, he sought recognition by becoming a champion debater. Carnegie saw that the winners "were regarded as the intellectual leaders in college," he said. The public speaking contests and debate competitions drew crowds from the town as well as the college community. This, Carnegie thought, was his opportunity.

His first year at Missouri State Teachers College, Carnegie entered a dozen competitions. He lost every time.

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Dale Carnegie: The Apostle of Influence

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Yet he was stubborn enough to try again. So he practiced every night, reciting passages from Abraham Lincoln and Richard Harding Davis, a popular journalist who became the managing editor of *Harper's Weekly*. A year later, he won the schoolwide public speaking contest by delivering Davis' "The Boy Orator of Zapata" and Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." He also won the debating contest.

Other students sought him out to coach them in public speaking. During his last year in school he won the debating contest again, a boy he had tutored won the public speaking contest and a girl he had trained won the declamatory contest.

With his recognized skill for talking, he decided to become a salesman. After a short stint selling courses for the International Correspondence Schools, he was hired as a sales rep by Armour and Co. in Omaha, Neb. Carnegie thrived in his new job and eventually became the top salesman in his territory. When his managers approached him about a promotion, he declined.

From Selling to Acting to Selling

Taking the money he had made selling for Armour, he quit his job, headed to New York and enrolled in the American Academy of Dramatic Arts to become an actor. After graduation, he was hired for the road company of a goofy musical about life in a circus. After the tour ended, Carnegie couldn't find work as an actor anywhere, so he went back to selling. He wanted to stay in New York, so he took a job as a car salesman for the Packard automobile company. He found that he hated it.

The 125th Street YMCA in Harlem offered a few courses in an evening school that it ran to help working-class men and women get ahead. Carnegie wanted to become a night school instructor there so he could free up his days to write the Great American Novel. Since the YMCA director wasn't sure that anybody would sign up for Carnegie's class in public speaking, he refused to pay him the standard salary of \$2 a class.

"So I said," Carnegie later remembered, "I will work on a profit-sharing basis."

The director agreed. Some 3 years later, Carnegie was making \$30 a night in commissions. His class had become a huge success.

The 25-Year Overnight Success

Carnegie never planned to write his most famous book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. He was sailing along running his popular public speaking workshops, which were making him a lot of money even in the middle of the Great Depression. For nearly 25 years, he had delivered the same basic course. After a representative of the publisher Simon & Schuster

attended one of Carnegie's public speaking courses, he approached Carnegie about writing a book about getting along with people. Although Carnegie initially refused, he eventually agreed. Two years later, in 1936, the first edition of *How to Win Friends and Influence People* appeared in bookstores. Within weeks, more than 5,000 copies had been sold. Sales continued to build quickly until the book was selling almost 5,000 copies a week. The book went through 17 printings in 5 months. In the first year, Carnegie made \$150,000 in royalties, based on 25 cents a copy.

Overnight, Dale Carnegie was famous, wealthy and eagerly sought after by business leaders, politicians and celebrities.

Why Does It Work?

At the heart of Carnegie's philosophy is a simple idea: Influence is linked to trust. Gaining influence means building trust, and trust is fundamentally a relationship. Carnegie correctly surmised that unless you get the other person to like you, you're not going to get very far in your efforts to persuade him or her. It's the emotional connection between people that will get you started on the road to trust. The second most important element is displaying interest in the other person — in other words, minimizing the appearance of self-interest. Research studies into buyer/seller relationships have indicated that these are exactly the variables that are most likely to produce a successful relationship.

How to Establish Rapport

Here are some tips for establishing rapport and building conscious relationships with your prospects:

1. Be your professional self. Don't try to act like somebody other than who you are. If you do, it'll come across as insincere or fake.

2. Dress simply and professionally. Minimize jewelry, wear a good watch and polished shoes. Keep the focus on the customer and away from your wardrobe.

3. Be forthright. Extend your hand, look the other person in the eye and tell him or her how good it is to meet with him or her.

4. Take a second to scan his or her office. Do you see signs of a similar interest? Are there pictures of the family or a hobby? Are there awards? Make a connection. If you truly don't have the same personal interests, look for a professional connection.

5. Always set a time frame at the beginning of the meeting, whether it is on the telephone or in person.

6. At the start of a meeting, resist the temptation to show off all you have learned about the customer's

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For additional information on being your professional self, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Dale Carnegie: The Apostle of Influence

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business and industry from reading the company's 10-K and annual report. You'll make a bigger impression if you wait to display your knowledge by asking incisive questions later, after you've established rapport.

7. When the customer talks, listen. Look directly at him or her. Nod. Don't interrupt. If you like to take extensive notes, ask permission to do so. When the other person has made his or her point, wait for three counts before you say anything back to him or her. Linger on what was said. Give the person a chance to take a breath. Show that you are listening by stopping to absorb what was just said.

8. After listening, always feed back what you heard. This is the highest compliment you can pay someone. It is the most important sign of a truly conscious relationship. You listened, and you want to get it right.

9. Stay on the topic, but don't try to control the conversation too tightly. As need statements emerge, be sure to write them down so that you can later match a solution or benefit to each need.

10. Treat your customers or prospects as your equals, as partners in having a successful meeting. Let them explain their problems and how their business and their decision process work, and then carefully explain to them how your sales cycle usually progresses.

11. Never argue with the customer. Instead, if you disagree, take a few minutes to make sure you understand his or her position. Make sure you truly see the customer's point of view. One of the best ways to resolve conflict is to ask, "Why?"

12. When leaving, extend your hand and offer a firm handshake and a smile, look the customer in the eyes, and thank him or her for his or her hospitality. Remind the customer of your next agreed-upon step.

The Carnegie Approach

The Dale Carnegie approach is fundamentally about improving our relationships with other people, not about selling them more stuff. It's about getting what you want by helping someone else get what he or she wants. It's about establishing a trusting relationship built on sincere acceptance of the other person's point of view, on honest communication and on sharing an open agenda.

You want to do your homework before you meet with a client, so that you can come to the meeting prepared with insights and information relevant to the client's business. But the most important thing you can do is to listen closely and attentively. Nothing builds trust and rapport faster than listening. ■

For additional information on a way to stay focused and interested, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Elmer Wheeler: The Magic of Words

Elmer Wheeler did some of the 20th century's most innovative thinking about how to sell and came up with phrases that have shaped American culture. For example, he coined the phrase, "Don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle," as a way of making the point that bland, factual details don't work. You have to show the customer what the benefits are.

Wheeler came by his interest in language naturally — early in his career he sold display advertising for newspapers. Wheeler was pretty successful working for the *Los Angeles Herald*, the *Rochester Journal*, the *Albany Times-Union* and the *Baltimore News-Post*, but he became frustrated because he wasn't able to establish a causal link between the ads a merchant placed in a paper and an increase in that merchant's business.

'Wheelerpoints'

In 1937, after some research and experimentation, Wheeler published *Tested Sentences That Sell*, his first major book. In it, he presented five "Wheelerpoints," gave his readers examples of how they work and even speculated about why they work. Here they are:

● **Wheelerpoint 1: Don't sell the steak, sell the sizzle!** People want to know, *what's in it for me?*

● **Wheelerpoint 2: Don't write — telegraph.** He said you need to get the customer's "IMMEDIATE and FAVORABLE attention in the fewest possible words."

● **Wheelerpoint 3: Say it with flowers.** You must prove your claims. He said, "Give a quick customer benefit — but then prove it the next second."

● **Wheelerpoint 4: Don't ask if — ask which!** He explained, "We mean you should always frame your words (especially at the close) so that you give the prospect a choice between something and **SOME-THING**, never between something and **NOTHING**."

● **Wheelerpoint 5: Watch your bark!** It's not just using the right words, it's saying them in the right way that delivers results.

Over the next 20 years, *Tested Sentences That Sell* outsold all other books on selling ever written. Wheeler became one of the best-known speakers in the country, delivering thousands of speeches to businesses, associations and conferences. He established training programs that were taught at 125 business schools and colleges around the world. He also wrote more than 20 books on retail sales, direct sales, overcoming shyness, losing weight, setting goals and quitting cigarettes!

The psychological insights that were the foundation of Wheeler's points were based on his own common sense and his observations — his "testing" of the various approaches embodied in specific words, phrases and

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Elmer Wheeler: The Magic of Words

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sentences. Today we would use different words to make the points and different examples to illustrate them, but that doesn't mean they don't still work.

Wheeler's genius was in recognizing that the way you say something can make a huge difference in whether or not you convince the customer. He tried wording sales messages in different ways and testing them to find the wording that produced the best results. In both respects — focusing on the power of language to influence a customer and using empirical methods to find out what really works — he was way ahead of his time.

Language, used effectively, is an enabling mechanism that allows people to connect. There are no magic words. There is only word magic: the skillful and insightful use of words to communicate a message clearly and persuasively.

Elmer's Wheelerpoints work in sales calls and writing. Here are some additional tips for communicating effectively with your prospects:

Oral Communications

1. Questions are more effective than statements in engaging a customer, particularly during the early stages of a sales process. Think about the questions you need to ask in order to guide the customer's thinking and to obtain the right information.

2. Create a printed agenda and share it with the customer. Even informal, one-on-one meetings will benefit from having an agenda.

3. Stay flexible and responsive to your audience's interests. If your meeting goes off on a tangent, but you build rapport or gain insight into your client's concerns and values, it's still a successful meeting.

4. If you have a written proposal, a price quote or other printed material, don't hand it out until the end of your presentation. Otherwise, your audience will be distracted, reading the text while listening to your presentation and getting little from either source.

5. Welcome interruptions, objections and questions from your audience. They indicate interest and involvement.

6. Share responsibility for the outcome of your presentation with the audience. That means giving up some of the control, being flexible and articulating common objectives.

7. Use visual aids in formal presentations and don't skimp on them. It's better to have many charts and move through them quickly than to have only a few and spend a lot of time on each.

8. Practice important presentations using videotape to identify distracting mannerisms or habits.

9. Learn to control your nervousness. Develop a rou-

tine for calming yourself. Visualize success and breathe!

10. Use the following pattern during initial meetings with the client to begin the probing and fact-finding process: Establish your purpose, probe for needs and goals, gain concurrence and close the call.

Written Communications

1. Check whether your sales proposals are client-centered or self-centered.

2. Put the important stuff first.

3. Send out the best work you're capable of producing. Have someone you trust proofread and edit documents that you are sending to a client before you send them.

4. Always use your spelling and grammar checker.

5. Kill the marketing fluff. Be ruthless about removing it from anything you send to a client.

6. Eliminate weasel words and booster words while you're at it. Booster words are words thrown into a sentence when we suspect we're not making a point very well, such as *very*, *really*, *certainly*, *obviously*, *somewhat* and *significant*. Weasel words try to imply that we're saying one thing when we're actually saying the exact opposite. For example, the words "can be" in "can be of value ..." don't necessarily mean it *will* be.

7. Keep your documents as short as possible. Short documents are easier to understand and make a stronger impression.

8. Highlight your documents. Use headlines, sub-headings, boldface type, lists and other devices to make sure that the reader who skims sees key points.

9. Use familiar, everyday language. When in doubt, leave it out. Instead of *implement*, *optimum* and *utilize*, write *do*, *best* and *use*. ■

Joe Girard: Priming the Pump

Joe Girard was born at the start of the Great Depression. His father was a physically abusive Sicilian immigrant with no trade and no skills, and he seldom worked more than a few days at a time. Mainly his family survived on relief checks and handouts. The six of them lived in a tiny apartment in one of the worst neighborhoods in Detroit, Mich.

Girard started working in saloons when he was 8 years old, shining shoes late into the night for a few nickels. Later he took another job delivering the *Detroit Free Press* before heading off to school. When the paper had a contest for signing up new subscribers, he sold enough new subscriptions to win the prize — a case of Pepsi, which he turned around and sold one bottle at a time for still more nickels.

After getting expelled from high school for fighting, he drifted from one lousy job to another. After getting turned down for a car salesman position, one sales manager hired

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Joe Girard: Priming the Pump

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him on straight commission. Not long afterwards, he went to a funeral home to pay his respects to the deceased mother of one of his friends. At the Catholic funeral, he wondered how the funeral director knew how many Mass cards to print. After some research, he discovered that the average number of people who come to a funeral was about 250.

When Girard and his wife were attending a wedding, he asked the caterer what the average number of guests was at a wedding. “About 250 from the bride’s side, and another 250 from the groom’s,” he was told. Girard discovered that there was a principle at work here, one that he could use to build business.

Joe Girard’s Law of 250

The principle is this: Most people have about 250 other people in their lives who are important enough to invite to a wedding or to a funeral. In other words, each person with whom I do business represents 250 other people. If I do a great job, 250 more people are likely to get a recommendation to buy from me. If I do a lousy job, I have just made 250 enemies. Consistently doing a good job — building strong relationships, treating people fairly, and giving them what they want — will make selling much easier in the long run. What Girard had realized was that it made more sense to “prime the pump” by generating awareness and interest among prospects well before they ever needed a car.

Using the Law of 250, Girard became the greatest car salesman in the world, and the only one ever honored with admission to the Automobile Hall of Fame. From 1963 to 1977, Girard sold more than 13,000 cars, all at retail, one customer at a time. He sold more retail automobiles from his small office at Merollis Chevrolet in Eastpointe, Mich., than anyone else anywhere in the world.

Girard learned that one satisfied customer can lead to referrals that can dramatically shorten the sales cycle and help fill the pipeline. Each customer has a circle of influence that potentially includes many people who might also become customers.

The system of generating leads and maintaining awareness among prospects that Girard developed has been revived in recent years under several new names: permission marketing, nurture marketing, relationship marketing

How to Nurture Relationships

To turn happy customers into willing recommenders, Girard realized that he had to take action. He had to nurture the relationship and keep it alive. One way he did this was by sending out a greeting card every month to every one of the 9,000 people in his prospect file. By the time he had been selling for a decade, nearly two-thirds of his sales were to repeat customers.

and closed-loop marketing. Even today, the idea of priming the pump with creative presale activities that generate leads and keep prospects aware of you has tremendous potential for improving sales force efficiency.

The first step is to create a profile of your best customers. Next, you have to figure out how to approach the prospect. You have to earn the right to communicate with these people who have never heard of you. Write a series of brief and focused messages that will be of interest to your target customers. Then, start sending them. This is the kind of activity you need to do every day.

It’s all about marketing yourself. And it’s about recognizing that for every impression you make on somebody, you potentially are making an impression on 250 other people as well. ■

Looking Back to Look Ahead

Which sales methodology is the best? The answer depends on you, on your typical customers, on what you are selling and on the competitive environment in which you are working. There are six characteristics for which you should look in your current methods. If you find that your sales methodology is lacking in one, take steps to correct the deficiency:

1. **The sales method matches the customer’s preferred mode of buying.**
2. **The sales method is flexible enough to be self-correcting, incorporating lessons learned.**
3. **The sales process itself creates value, usually in the form of intellectual capital, for both the customer and the vendor.**
4. **The methodology we follow increases the efficiency of the sales process, making the sales cycle shorter or enabling the salesperson to handle a larger volume of accounts successfully.**
5. **The methodology should be transferable across all skill levels.**
6. **The methodology is based on objectively measured events or tasks.** ■

If you liked *The Giants of Sales*, you’ll also like:

1. ***Sales Management* by Robert J. Calvin.** Calvin covers everything from hiring to training to structuring your sales force according to your company’s channel needs.
2. ***Secrets of Power Negotiating for Salespeople* by Roger Dawson.** Dawson offers a tool kit of opening, middle and closing sales gambits to help salespeople walk away from the negotiating table with all parties satisfied.
3. ***Rethinking the Sales Force* by Neil Rackham and John De Vincentis.** The authors write that the purpose of a sales force should be to find ways to create value, not just communicate it.
4. ***The Anatomy of Persuasion* by Norbert Aubuchon.** The author describes ways to persuade others to act on your ideas, accept your proposals, buy your products or services, hire you and promote you.
5. ***How to Be a Great Communicator* by Nido R. Qubein.** Qubein helps readers get their message across when speaking.