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“The means are finally at hand to improve productivity in education.”

Peter Drucker • *Forbes*, May 2000

“People more frequently require to be reminded than informed.”

Samuel Johnson • A long time ago!

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

JACK FALVEY

To Create a Job, Make a Sale

Economic growth doesn't come from Washington. It's built one customer at a time

When Pat Hughes was a salesman for Employee Benefits Plans Associates in Hampton, N. H., his job was to convince his prospects to self-insure their basic health-care costs, and then let his company provide the needed claims services on a per-employee basis. His Third Party Administration business grew rapidly.

Each new account required the addition of more service people at EBPA to work with new clients.

Hughes not only created jobs; his company had to add temporary buildings to house all the new people. At one point, the premises looked like one of those elementary schools with a half-dozen portable classrooms connected to the main facility.

Five or six million American sales professionals get up each business morning to spend their days driving the growth of our economy by selling new business, which spawns yet more jobs—those dedicated to producing the goods and services to fulfill customer orders. Three trillion dollars' worth of gross domestic product is fueled in this way, one sale at a time. (Initial jobless claims rose by 10,000 the week before last, the highest number in several months.) The nation's salespeople must make more calls and close more sales to attempt to turn this tide yet again.

Selling new business is what creates jobs. Our economy's not a weather front that passes overhead while we wait for sunshine or brace for a storm. It's a gigantic, man-made enterprise that creates wealth and jobs in direct proportion to the rate of development of new businesses.

But, too often, we're led to believe in a fairy tale: that the president, Congress and the Federal Reserve chairman can go to their offices and flip switches that somehow will turn the U.S. economy on (or up, or down) and create jobs.

The tale continues thus: The companies then make profits, put them in the bank or pay them out as dividends to shareholders. And then, if the companies are not too greedy, on occasion they might buy some new equipment. Finally, the tale ends when, out of the goodness of their hearts, they add a few jobs.

Not so.

Not All Inventors Sit in Research Labs

"Nothing happens 'til somebody sells something," was the motto of the late Arthur "Red" Motley, onetime chairman of Parade magazine. He sold the advertising that moved the goods of his time.

It is as true today as it was then that, in order to thrive, sales professionals have to be as imaginative as the inventors of the products and services they sell. By creating the desire for new products and services in their customers, salespeople create jobs and wealth.

Before you can consider profit and loss, of course, you must first deal daily with revenue and expenses. You forecast revenues and then budget your expenses accordingly. You then must generate revenues and

control expenses to produce the earnings.

The last thing most companies want to do is add people—because people are still the most costly component of business. Companies add to their payrolls only when increasing sales drive them to it. The engine that drives growth and job increases has always been rising sales.

The Knock-On Effect(s) of Knowledge

Sales professionals are the ultimate knowledge workers in our society. They listen to what their target account is trying to accomplish. They also tell their prospects what others have been able to achieve with the goods and services being proffered.

If common goals are found, the two sides might then agree to take some risks together and move a new product or service successfully into circulation. (Trusting business relationships are critical to business and economic progress.) Economists can tell us about the results of such activity, but they must recognize the causal relationship of sales to jobs to wealth creation if they want to offer valuable analysis or policy judgments about economic growth.

The price of oil or onions is of importance only to those in the petrochemical field and those selling vegetables. Everyone else can make minor adjustments to changing prices of oil or gas by doing with less energy. Or if the prices of cabbage or cucumbers get out of hand, they can go without salad.

Daily Grind

Tax incentives and the cost of money are factors, but the driving force is the chance of future gain. Encouraging clients to take that chance is what salesmen must do, often against great odds. For example, almost daily, they must overcome the doom and gloom being forecasted by the nightly TV news anchors.

Conversely, each morning, to get business moving, sales professionals must establish the good news they hope to spread in order to win the contracts that will keep them—the salespeople—in business and the economy humming. They sell the hope of future gain, cost reductions, or profits, against the caution and wait-and-see attitude engendered by the talking heads of the evening before.

This is what gives birth to jobs—a promise of reward for risk. Few clients will take risk without good reason, and good reasons are what sales agents must provide. They must work vigorously, too, against that well-known international company, "Status Quo Inc."

In down times, sales professionals must work harder with a smaller return on the effort invested. They have to make more calls to set up more meetings, to gather more information to put more deals

on the table. Risk aversion and caution will reduce the number of deals that close. Minor bad news delivered 24/7 has major economic impact.

Harder to Drive Than an 18-Wheeler

In business, the hardest number to drive upward always has been the sales line of the income statement. But when that number finally rises, everything else follows. And only then can new products or services be developed, new facilities built and new jobs created.

Not every sales proposal will work; that's the variable in the dynamic. There is nothing as frustrating as an idea whose time has not yet come. Yet on occasion, an idea can be brought to the light of day, after great effort—and if it's cleverly conceived and executed, a new concept, a new approach or a new product results that rewards its creators handsomely.

This is how our system works: As new sales are created and new jobs result, the old order slowly changeth—and the new order must be joined in order to assure survival. It is not quite Darwinian evolution, but it is close enough to keep us all on our toes, and constantly talking to the in-the-field salespeople that are out there, acting as the eyes and ears of our economy, as well as its drivers.

A Dynamo Grows One Client at a Time

Pat Hughes adjusted to the changing times of the group health-care marketplace. After becoming sales manager and eventually president of EBPA, he has moved on to found W.P. Hughes & Co., his own group benefits agency, to offer different approaches to the challenges his new customers face. He's now a consultant in the group health-insurance field, and a licensed insurance broker.

After he won his first new account, he had to hire an inside person to respond to his clients' needs. A job was created. He went back into the field and convinced a former associate that it was time to upgrade his company's health-benefits package.

Similarly, a former vice president of Fleet has started a new bank in Worcester, Mass., that offers more individually-tailored services than the behemoth banks. New jobs created so far: about 50.

Additional jobs are being created one new client at a time, as new ways of solving business problems are being developed. All this is slow going. Creating jobs is hard work. Creating confidence is even harder, but it's key to driving sales, profits and the need for additional people to get what's being sold out the door.

Our economy does it better than any economy in human history, but we still do it one sales call at a time. We win some, we lose some and some are postponed but those in sales are out there every business day doing their best to create jobs.

When the next monthly payroll numbers are reported, remember where those jobs came from and who made them happen. ■

JACK FALVEY is a freelance business writer living in Londonderry, N. H. He is founder of MakingTheNumbers.com, a best-practices advisory service for sales professionals.

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When you light a light bulb, nothing changes except you see day-to-day realities more clearly.



Delivery of sales principles each day reminds everyone of the need to apply the basics of the discipline constantly. (The five thousand habits of successful sales people.)



Sales and sales management best practices are universal. Your business, your customers, and your sales professionals are all different. The challenge is to constantly seek specific applications that will work for you.



The “Sales Tip of the Day” is a free daily one-line business reminder with a brief explanation. It is designed to put each day in professional perspective.



A daily reinforcing Sales Management Strategy component mates with each basic sales principle, and is the revenue-producing segment of the product line. It is delivered by e-mail to the sales manager and reminds the manager to reinforce the Sales Tip of the Day. (The cost of this management development tool is \$50 per manager per month.)

MAKING THE NUMBERS.COM

Q: What is **MakingTheNumbers.com** and how does it work?

A: Every business day of the year a one-line selling skill development Tip of the Day is sent free by e-mail to all participants. A brief paragraph explains how other top sales professionals apply the strategy. MakingTheNumbers.com will help your sales force increase their selling skills every day, for free, forever!

Q: How does **MakingTheNumbers.com** make money?

A: Our service contributes to the professional development of sales people for free. But we charge a fee to help sales managers with their very different development needs. Every business day of the year a Sales Management Strategy is sent out by e-mail. It includes the Sales Tip of the Day one day ahead of when sales people receive it, and it tells what other sales managers have done to support the selling skills recommended. This service is provided at a cost of \$50 per manager per month.

Q: How do you get on these professional development programs?

A: Send an e-mail address to MakingTheNumbers.com for each sales recipient and the service will begin free at once.

Send an e-mail address and billing address for each manager to MakingTheNumbers.com and the service will begin at once and will be billed monthly (or whatever increment is best for your business).

Sample daily Sales Tips and daily Sales Management Strategies follow:

Sample Daily E-Mail

FREE!

Sales Tip: If you don't ask, you will never know!

Selling demands personal courage. No need to be confrontational, but you must be able to ask the tough questions when big consequences are on the line. Closing the sale means asking a closing question. There are only two answers possible. We would all prefer a maybe, which means things are still going our way, and we all dread "The other supplier is our choice." We focus on the negative, and that is human nature, but what about "Yes." What about "Can we begin right away?" What about "Can I get you a check, purchase order, letter of acceptance, a signed agreement, a verbal okay, to proceed?" The up side is there, but we have to want it and we have to prove to our customers that we value their business enough to ask for it. Write down the closing questions you are comfortable with. Try them out on the bathroom mirror, on the windshield of your car, and then your friends who are sure orders. With all that preparation, take a deep breath, look down at your pre-call notes, and then ask the tough customer the tough question. "Can I have the business?" "Can we work together on this project?" "Is it a deal?" Selling means closing, not presenting, not calling back, not sending along back-up. It means having the courage to ask for the order.

BY SUBSCRIPTION

Sales Management Strategy:

We all know that when a sales professional interviews for a job they must demonstrate selling skills in asking for the job. It's that simple. If they won't ask for the job, how can you ever expect them to ask for an order? The reason a sales job is not for everybody is that it requires a great deal of self-confidence and courage to face potential adversity on a regular basis and attempt to turn it into business. One of the reasons sales managers must constantly bite their tongues on the little details and must take any and all successes and blow them out of all reasonable proportions is to fuel the fire of self-image and self-confidence.

You cannot expect people to press on regardless with one extra call, with one more phone call, with one more overnight to a distant city, just because the job description says it should be done. Even the greatest of selling professionals are human and no one likes to lose. The nature of selling is that you win some, you lose some, and some are rained out! You only get paid for the wins. The pay may be good, but the personal courage required to constantly, politely, and appropriately ask for the order is a unique human trait of discipline and skill. Sales professionals earn their income by their ability to ask tough questions in tough situations. Few people understand how difficult that is. You do because you have done it. You can identify and you can support the effort required. Cheerleading is a big part of your job. Cheerleaders provide inspiration when things are not going as planned. Keep your pom-poms ready at all times. "Great closing question!" "How did you ever get that one?" "You asked for what?" "They said what?" "You are unbelievable. You earned your paycheck today. Great job! Great work! Well done!" That's what it takes to keep even the best in the business asking tough closing questions.

(There are five hundred of these essays in the MakingTheNumbers.com system.)

Sample Daily E-Mail

FREE!

Sales Tip: When you lose momentum, go back to basics. The fundamentals always work.

Momentum is a mystery. When you have it, things just drop into place. You can skip steps. Everything you try works. You are bullet proof. Momentum shifts. When the “big mo” moves on, we wonder what hit us. The answer is, reality. In order to prevent an equal and opposite reaction, we have to check the slide and come back to an even keel. The strategy calls for putting all the steps that we skipped without consequence back into the mix. We have to go back to making more calls. We have to go back to follow-up and follow-through responses to the details of everyday sales life. We have to put a hold on the big play and content ourselves with the daily details.

Enjoy the momentous moments when momentum has you moving at Mach I—as Steve Sullivan, the famous author of *Selling at Mach I*, would tell you—but go back to your mundane checklist and you will come down off cloud nine without undue damage. Go back to getting up a little earlier. Go back to visiting your friends. Go back to picking up routine orders. Go back to getting the job done and, as it always does, momentum will eventually swing back your way. It will do so in its own sweet, mysterious time. Meanwhile, look busy.

BY SUBSCRIPTION

Sales Management Strategy:

Along with everything else, you are in charge of momentum. You must be the driving force behind forward sales progress. As you know, you cannot drive people. People must be managed to supply their own momentum in the direction of your goals. Forward progress with some carry-through versus fits and starts are what you are looking for. Steady as she goes is what you are trying to achieve in a herky-jerky world. Your task is to smooth out the ups and downs your sales reps must live through and to get them to press on regardless. We all know that life’s little twists and turns for some reason do not arrive in a daily balance. We go hard and then crash. People do not react well to the jolts. How do you cushion the crash? You hold down, a little bit, the accelerations. When someone is riding high, they want to push the envelope. It is human nature for the high achievers we attempt to hire. Your job is to cool down the high end. Don’t throw cold water on it, don’t kill it, just cool it down a bit. Not a wet blanket, but a cool towel—or whatever it takes to make sure high enthusiasm doesn’t fuel a high error rate.

When momentum is going for you, you want to not only go for it, but go for everything. As a manager, you must play to the enthusiasm (inspiration from God), but you must be sure that people realize they are finite and can only do so much, even when being encouraged by an infinite source. We are all divinely inspired at times, and to heights we have not dreamed of attaining. Make sure that as your people hit new heights they don’t fall off the pinnacles but rather, intelligently, rationally, consolidate their gains and build on what they have achieved. Sales management means you control momentum to gain sustainable as well as maximum return. Don’t be a spoil sport. Cheer ’em on, but call time out and make sure everyone knows the snap count. Focus on the basics. When things begin to cool, as they always do, you will be there with step one, two, three, on the agenda as always. If nothing else, what we do is fun! (As it should be!)

(There are five hundred of these essays in the MakingTheNumbers.com system.)

Sample Daily E-Mail

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Sales Tip: Want more sales? Make more calls.

Working hard is working smart. In a twenty-two year study of the most productive sales professionals in the world, the one common trait that all shared is that they made more calls and worked harder than anyone else. Not only did they work harder than their competitors, but harder than anyone else in their organization. Hard work pays off.

Sales are not made from behind a desk or through a computer screen. Sales is a person-to-person business. A trust relationship must develop. The more people you get face to face with, the more chances you will have to develop these trust relationships and build your business. Screen in suspects and prospects, don't pre-qualify them out. Business comes from the least likely place at the oddest of hours. Your chances of being at the right place at the right time are greatly increased if you are at a great many places every working hour of every business day, and a few non-business hours thrown in for extra measure. Quality time is a myth. Quantity counts. "See a lot of people." If there were an easier or better way, it would have been discovered by now. There isn't, and it hasn't. Make more calls. More sales will result.

BY SUBSCRIPTION

Sales Management Strategy:

Office time, planning days, paperwork, administration, and all the reasons your sales people are not in the field, are sales killers. Your job as a sales manager is to kill the sales killers. Step one is to insist, require, and set the example of working full field days and full field weeks. No need to run weekend sales meetings or crack-of-dawn or end-of-the-day gatherings, if you will just insist that from the first thing Monday morning until the last thing Friday afternoon your troops are face to face with customers. It is traditional to hold Monday morning sales meetings in some businesses. That is permissible, but if they are every week, skip a week every now and then. If they are once a month, skip a month. Try not to be a part of the problem. Don't ask for things that take away from selling time.

New accounts, number of presentations, number of appointments, and average number of calls per day are all indicators of who is working hard. Those hard workers must be held up as positive examples. This must be done continuously. (Weekly tallies are best!) Whoever leads your group should get a personal phone call from you before close of business every Friday afternoon. (Leave them a voice mail if they are still in the field selling!)

Be sure that all field training days are full field selling days. Numbers of calls count. Once a standard is set, it is your job to see that the standard is met. Market research is best done by those trained in the discipline. Using field sales people this way is not only costly in lost productivity, but the resulting research data will be marginal at best. You do not want your sales professionals being junior assistant office workers, either at home or in their cars. Sales professionals should not have desks, offices, office space, or anything that would require office work. The analogy of a fighter pilot is applicable. They are highly trained and skilled. They do not supervise the maintenance of their aircraft. After-action reports are taken verbally by others trained to do so. Everything is done for them to keep them in the air, face to face with the targets and objectives. So be it with your sales producers.

(There are five hundred of these essays in the MakingTheNumbers.com system.)

Sample Daily E-Mail

FREE!

Sales Tip: You will be paid for everything you do. You just don't know when.

Some days it seems as if we couldn't even close a door, let alone close a sale. Fortunately, we know that our day will come if we just keep doing the things that we know will produce results. Not getting results instantly or on a regular or predictable schedule is what builds sales character. We would just as soon have less character building and more results, but that is not how our world turns. Our challenge is to keep our performance level high when our returns are low. We live in a profession characterized by highs and lows. When we hit one, we can see clearly why we were able to write the business. When we miss one, there are too many uncontrollable factors and unknown elements in the mix to make analysis meaningful. Obvious errors are painful, but we are not perfect, and we can only take the strengths and talents we have been given and take another shot. Deferred income, long selling cycles, major account conversions, capital equipment sales—all require hard work every working day. That's why we make more calls, follow up and follow through, and end each day knowing that we did just about everything we could and, as always, we will get fully compensated when the time is right. Few have the fortitude and strength required in our line of work.

BY SUBSCRIPTION

Sales Management Strategy:

Results come in bunches. Days come one at a time. You have to sell each day's work to your sales organization by keeping them focused on the future payoff. It requires a combination of realistic goal setting and cheerleading which every sales professional needs to a greater or lesser degree. The big bonus or commission check comes eventually. That is not your management challenge. What must be done today? When a day falls apart, what can you do to encourage a full professional effort on the next business day? Remind people of their strengths and skills. Remind them of past or recent accomplishments. Reinforce the work ethic that works. The job of a sales manager is not terribly complex. You have to smooth out the bumps in the selling world with encouragement. Speed bumps slow things down, but they are a fact of life. A goal-oriented sales professional wants to win. When things don't drop into place perfectly, it's your job and your place to be sure everyone understands that counterpunching, getting back on the horse, or whatever it takes, is what it takes. Keep describing what the goal looks like, tastes like, feels like, and the bumps along the way will be easier for all to take. Your job is focus. Make distant objects seem as close as you realistically can.

(There are five hundred of these essays in the MakingTheNumbers.com system.)

The Art of Selling

Does the Information Age herald the death of the salesman? We often hear that electronic customer databases, telemarketing and selling via the Internet will render the old-fashioned sales call obsolete. Such a view reflects little understanding of what sales professionals actually do. High-tech data collection will never substitute for the human touch: a good salesman's

Manager's Journal

By Jack Falvey

ability to establish trust with customers, respond to subtle and unexpected cues, and deal flexibly with customers' needs while protecting his company's interests.

A couple months ago I spent a day in the field with Joe Kennedy, a national account representative for Spalding, the sporting-goods manufacturer. He gave me a first-class demonstration of the art and science of selling.

As we pulled into the parking lot of a major retailer's headquarters, Joe told me this wasn't going to be a good sales call. "To begin with," he said, "two years ago we couldn't have parked anywhere near where we are." He said we were, in effect, going to the wake of this troubled retailer, on the outside chance that it might someday rise from the dead. His immediate objectives were to protect a couple of key items and to set up a plan for shipping goods as payment for a balance Spalding owed the retailer from a cooperative advertising arrangement. Not a bad strategy, to have a company with credit difficulties owed money by its supplier.

As we waited in the reception area, Joe commented on the traffic going in and out.

He knew who many of the other salespeople were representing, and the quality of their products was well below what the chain was known for—further evidence of its woes. Eventually we met with the key buyer and Joe established a reduced but livable flow of merchandise to tide the account over until possible new financing materialized. Unfortunately Joe was right. Six weeks later, the retailer went into liquidation. But Joe's smart management of the account ensured that Spalding was protected against any loss.

Later during our day together, Joe dealt with the buyer at another major chain who was facing a smaller crisis: the discovery of a substantial overstock. The tension was heavy in the room as the buyer made clear that he would be in trouble unless Joe let him renege on previously committed orders. Joe listened, and agreed to the buyer's request. Then he seized opportunity from a potential disaster. He offered the grateful buyer some items he hadn't purchased before. Joe wrote a good order.

Back in the car, I asked him what prompted him to ask for the new order. When the buyer's hands had stopped shaking, he answered, he figured he had relieved the pressure of the situation and could move on to new business. *My* palms had been sweating just watching the action; I missed the transition completely. The lesson is clear: Finely tuned intuitive and emotional skills are far more important to a good salesman than the mere mechanics of processing orders.

Also critical is the ability to go the extra mile for a valued customer. My former student Christine McCooe, a sales representative for KMS Cos., a Massachusetts-based printing concern, is a good example. In one typical case, she called a client late on a Friday to say that a rush job was on press. She offered to meet him outside

church on Sunday morning, with enough product so that he could open on Monday—"if you don't mind lifting a few heavy cartons." That's the kind of attention that builds customer loyalty.

In-person sales calls have one more advantage: They enable the salesman to gather information he might otherwise not know to look for. Tom O'Loughlin, who sells and delivers logistic consulting services, is a believer in cold calls—no appointments, he just shows up. In checking on a freight loss claim for a client, he arrived unannounced at the loading dock of a plant to see if he could talk to the shipper. Following company procedure, the shipper called someone from customer service, who promptly ushered Mr. O'Loughlin into the cafeteria to find out what he wanted. A man at the next table overheard the conversation, came over and introduced himself as the plant owner. He not only offered several useful ideas about what might have happened to the order, but also gave Mr. O'Loughlin a tour of the plant, to show how product was accounted for—information that could well prove useful in the future.

No database or Web page can ever substitute for the expertise of Mr. Kennedy, Ms. McCooe and Mr. O'Loughlin. Those who bring in the top line of the income statement—the sales dollars—contribute far more than just numbers to the business equation. They are the eyes and ears of a company; they make things work. They provide the flexible link to the marketplace over which cash, goods, services, information and the life blood of business flows. Technology can make some things more efficient, but it can't replace face-to-face contact. The salesman is alive and well in all those organizations that strive to remain a force in their business.

Mr. Falvey is a speaker and writer in Londonderry, N.H.

Fly by Night, Sell by Day

Managing sales is different from any other kind of management—and thus sometimes difficult for outsiders to understand. For one thing, it is an external management function, focused on bringing in orders and revenue from outside the company. But it also requires coordination and cooperation with almost every internal department, including marketing, finance, traffic and distribution. Everyone must have at least an idea of how sales management works. These examples may illuminate some of the things the sales manager must do:

• *Traverse the field.* Jay Romasco is vice president of sales for Bell Sports, a bicycle-helmet maker. He is based in San Jose, Calif.—but he's never there. I get notes from Jay written at 30,000 feet, or on some distant hotel's stationery. For him, sales management is literally a fly-by-night job. He spends eight- to ten-hour days in the field with his regional managers and his sales representatives. He makes the key account calls with his people, not to sell for them or to give away some discount from headquarters, but to give them support and recognition in front of the customer, see firsthand how they're doing and learn exactly what is happening in the marketplace. His experienced eyes and ears can sort out what Bell's customers—independent bicycle store owners and managers—see as their problems and opportunities. What is building traffic? What merchandising, pricing and even color and style will move product? As Mr. Romasco says, sales management is much more than making the numbers—he also must know what the numbers mean.

• *Search for talent.* Janice Bell, who works for Paychex, the Rochester, N.Y.-based payroll services company, stresses the importance of finding the best sales talent. Her approach: Never stop looking. "You can't hire to fill vacancies," she says. "The best selection decisions are made when you have a full staff." Superstars are few and far between; if she interviewed

candidates only when she had openings to fill, she would limit the prospective talent pool. Nor can she find good salespeople by screening résumés or picking the best of three candidates sent up by personnel. Instead, she has a network of people who pass along prospective sales professionals. In return, if she runs across someone who would fit better with another organization, she will make a referral.

• *Lead the troops.* For Pat Hughes, a senior vice president at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts, sales manage-

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ment is a matter of leadership. A physically powerful man—once a linebacker in the National Football League—he exudes self-confidence. "If you're not afraid to die, you cannot be killed," he says. Mr. Hughes has as strong a following as any sales manager I've ever met, and his aplomb serves him especially well when he needs to rally his troops. Once, at a previous job, a big account—25% of his company's business—was threatening to go to a competitor. Mr. Hughes pulled his team together, working around the clock to document why the customer should stay. They produced a massive presentation book, and the day after it went out Mr. Hughes wrote a memo to all 200 of his employees, telling them how much he appreciated their effort. He ended with the thought: "Light a candle." The next morning when he came to work, his office was filled with hundreds of candles. His company kept the account.

• *Present a message.* In the face of sometimes daunting circumstances, a sales manager has to be able to convince others that the task can be done. When Steve White was vice president for sales of Gillette Co.'s Paper Mate division, he had an unusual technique. After summing up

his programs at his national sales meetings, he would go onstage in front of his 100-plus managers and account people and sit on a high stool. Speaking into a hand-held mike, he would describe in detail what had to be done, why and how. For 35 to 40 minutes he would speak, without notes or visual aids. He then would open the meeting to any questions, using them as an opportunity to build an even stronger case for his strategy. Mr. White didn't learn his stagecraft in business school, but it was essential for his success.

You can now begin to understand why sales management is such a challenging discipline. Sales managers need to find people who have the courage to ask the tough closing questions when the quarterly results, and their own well-being, depend on it. They have to find people who can take no for an answer time after time and keep coming back with a rationale for one more sales call, one more presentation. They have to be with their people on a regular basis while they succeed, or sometimes fail; and they have to assure talented performers that "you can't win 'em all" and that when they do win it is sincerely appreciated. Add on top of all that the ability to get ideas across clearly—one-on-one or one-to-100—and it is little wonder that many CEOs come from the ranks of sales management.

The discipline is so different and its practitioners are such a breed apart that they can easily be misunderstood in organizations. Few realize the price they pay for the red-eye flights, the endless candidate interviews and the long hours spent entertaining customers. It all looks like fun and games, until you do it for a while. When the hours add up, it's not quite a minimum wage job, but it is physically, emotionally and mentally grueling. As Pat Hughes says, results make it all worth the effort.

Mr. Falvey is a writer and speaker in Londonderry, N.H.

HOW THE BEST GET BETTER IN SALES

Since 1977, I have been presenting this keynote address to the Fortune 100 at national meetings. Prior to each engagement, I spend a day in the field calling on customers with a meeting participant. They don't send me out with the dead wood, so I have worked with some of the best sales professionals in the world.

This presentation shares what they do that makes them so successful and challenges the audience to apply the same strategy to their own markets and customers.

Content: By means of a dialog with the audience (45 to 90 minutes, with 60-70 minutes being ideal), the running time is adjusted with full content being delivered at all lengths.

How professionals build selling skills is addressed using a brief tennis analogy. The audience is asked to participate in a three-minute clinic! The exercise illustrates the point that an overall strategy can apply to all levels, and that skills are developed by being a student of the game on a daily basis.

The time it takes to become a proficient professional is normally greatly underestimated. The task becomes one of making every sales call a "sales training" call.

- ▷ The best sales people don't always make the best sales presentations. But they always ask the best questions.
- ▷ The best sales people are students of their customers' business and often know more about a customer's situation in their area of expertise than the client themselves!
- ▷ The best sales people are students of the selling process and what works best for them with their customers in their marketplace.
- ▷ The best sales people are always subject experts. They never stop learning. Current customers provide the best source of application knowledge.
- ▷ Without a pre-call objective and a set of closing questions, sales people are merely well paid tourists. Sales professionals know where they are going and how to get there.

The presentation includes a couple of summary handouts and can be recorded with reproduction rights granted to the client organization.

Fees: \$12,000 plus first-class air transportation and hotel accommodations. The advance field day is included on an "expenses only" basis.

CLIENT LIST

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Astra	Micro Fridge
AT&T	Morton Thiokol
Auto-Trol Technology	New England Telephone
B.S.P. Transportation	Northwestern Mutual Financial Network
Babcock and Wilcox	NYNEX
Balzers (Liechtenstein)	Polaroid
Barclay Water Management	Primary Bank
Baritzan Corporation	Public Service of New Hampshire
Barry Wright	Puritan Bennett
Bassett Furniture	Purity Spring Resort
Bellcore	Ray-O-Vac
Bell Sports	Royal Appliance, Inc.
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts	Salem Five
BMC Strategies	Sarnafil (Swiss)
Boston Realty Advisors	Scheicher & Schnell
CBRE / Richard Ellis	Service Star
Circulo Dos Profissionais de Vendas (Brazil)	Shareholder.com
Colonial Management Assoc.	Simmons
Compugraphics	Southwest Bank
Computervision	Spalding
Data General	Stepic Medical
Del Labs	The Carlisle Collection
Digital Equipment Corporation	The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company
Enco Hoechst	Tri-Wall
EnergyNorth	Tufts Associated Health Plans
Federal Home Loan Bank	United States Marine Corps
Foster Grant	Velcro USA
Freedom Data	W. R. Gore
General Electric	Wang
Hewlett Packard	WBVF-FM
Hynes Convention Center	Winn Management Company
IBM	WOKQ-FM
Indiana Farm Bureau Co-Op	WZID-FM
Ingersoll Rand	Zehndor Associates
Internal Revenue Service	

ASSOCIATIONS AND NON-PROFITS

Ad Club of New Hampshire
Ad Club of Vermont
American Cancer Society—Florida
American Marketing Association—Boston
American Red Cross - Massachusetts Bay
American Society for Training and Development
Automotive Wholesalers Association of N.E.
B-Dry Owners Association
The Border Area Mutual Fire Aid Association
Carpet Manufacturers Association of the West
Design Management Institute
Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
International Racquet Sports Association
Marketing Mecca—Maine
McIntosh College
Muscular Dystrophy Association—Boston/Albany
National Association of General Merchandise Mfg. Reps
National Investor Relations Institute—Boston
National Society for Sales Training Executives
Neponset Valley Health Systems
New England Fastener Distributors Association
New Hampshire Bankers Association
New Hampshire Society of CPAs
Northeast Human Resource Association
Sales and Marketing Executives of Boston
Sales and Marketing Executives of Chicago
Sales and Marketing Executives of Minneapolis
Sales and Marketing Executives of Rochester
Sales Executives Club of New York
Seacoast Communications Network
Smaller Business Association of New England
Workforce Opportunities, Inc.
Yellow Pages Publishers Association

Corporations embracing online training

The Washington Post

THE ALLING economy may have slammed the brakes on growth in Web-based learning, but the e-learning train didn't roll to a stop.

Innovation in the fledgling field remains so robust that some pundits think electronic learning will eventually be one of the Internet's top uses — right up there with e-mail.

While plenty of commercial education ventures have flopped, many big companies are pursuing training strategies that integrate virtual learning with traditional human coaching.

Home Depot recently installed Internet-connected kiosks in all its stores so its 300,000 employees can bone up on forklift safety and product details with electronic tutorials.

Employees now click through simulations to learn which aisles to close when restocking shelves and to improve their knowledge of, say, plumbing when they switch departments.

Tests of the in-store computer training were so positive that Home Depot's chief executive ordered his staff to speed up the nationwide deployment of the online store learning program.

"We think we cut the total time to deliver the instructional material in half, and we believe, based on testing, that we have doubled the retention," said Gary Jusela, vice president of learning at Home Depot.

Jusela credits the boost in retention on the fact that most employees are no longer passively listening to a classroom lecture but instead must click through questions on computers until they answer them correctly.

Jusela predicted an expanded role for Web-based learning part-

ly because of the volume of information that companies like his must convey to so many people.

Each Home Depot typically carries 30,000 products. "There is no other way than the Web to really handle that scale," he said.

Check in with other big companies and you are likely to hear similar stories.

Black & Decker was so gung-ho about moving staff training online that it bought expensive Internet course-creation software a few years ago and began developing its own curriculum.

"We have 27 courses online now through our Black & Decker University, ranging from basic electricity to selling skills and residential construction," said Matt DeFoe, the company's vice president in charge of recruitment, training and sales services. "We estimate each hour of e-learning is replacing three to four hours in the classroom."

McDonald's has long been known for flying new restaurant managers to Illinois to attend "Hamburger University," partly to make sure that Big Macs taste the same everywhere.

Now it, too, is moving toward a more virtual learning environment, especially with rank-and-file food handlers.

In addition to sending traditional coaches to help new employees learn the ropes, McDonald's has put electronic learning stations in the "crew rooms" of 4,000 U.S. restaurants, about a third of its total. The goal is to have Internet-connected learning posts in all 30,000 McDonald's outlets worldwide.

"Our restaurant crew members are learning faster and retaining

Dot-Com

LESLIE WALKER

it better," said Mike Hendon, director of curriculum and e-learning for the chain. He estimated that electronic training costs the company 15 to 25 percent less than the old method, which required more human coaching.

Federal agencies are doing more online training, too.

The FBI Academy puts new cadets in Quantico, Va., through a motivational video training course that blends Internet delivery with offline computer disks.

The Agriculture Department offered an Internet course on commodity trading to dairy farmers and found that most farmers preferred the online version to classroom lectures.

The Army has enabled soldiers to enroll in degree programs and take college courses via the Web. Its two-year-old "EArmyU" (www.earmyu.com) enrolls 34,924 soldiers, including some who have continued attending virtual classes while in the Persian Gulf.

Quantifying savings isn't easy, but the Justice Department took a stab at it in evaluating a pilot for leadership training.

In a report released Thursday, the department said it could train more than 10 times the number of managers in leadership skills at less cost using electronic courses from a commercial vendor. The department estimated that it saved \$10.5 million by allowing managers to take 4,247 electronic courses over two years,

compared with the cost of classroom training.

The report focused in part on a leadership seminar based on the teachings of management guru Ken Blanchard that was available in classrooms in Georgia as well as in electronic form, complete with Hollywood-style videos.

The Justice Department found that 71 percent of those who took the online courses — produced by a San Francisco vendor, Ninth House Network — rated them "equal or superior" to classroom training.

None of this means the e-learning market is booming — just that companies and governments are doing more of it.

During the dot-com boom, hundreds of startups launched Internet-based training programs, figuring they would sell them to students directly online or to businesses.

"Unfortunately most of those startups are gone today," said Jeff Snipes, who in 1996 founded Ninth House Network. "Simply having the technology in place doesn't ensure the learning will be a high-quality learning experience."

John Higgins, chief learning officer for the consultant BearingPoint Inc., said e-learning is in its infancy and predicted that its social impact will be huge: "We now have a platform and vehicle that gives educational access to many people who were not able to access it before. The implications will be nothing short of overwhelming in our lifetime."

Walker's e-mail address is walkerl@washpost.com.

Writer puts sales savvy on the Net

It's the key phrase in the liturgy of business: "Praise sales from whom all things flow."

The top line. You don't sell it, nobody has a job.

Even high-flying e-business firms — the "dot-coms" — that have been in the habit of losing money the past few years are now sinking quickly to earth. Have you looked at their stock prices lately?

Jack Falvey of Londonderry (yes, the same Jack Falvey who writes business columns for *The Union Leader* and *New Hampshire Sunday News*) believes he has an idea that will help



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BUSINESS

Chris Herbert

these companies reach their sales goals. Ironically, his idea is a dot-com called *MakingTheNumbers.com*, and it officially rolls out on the Fourth of July.

"It's a free forever, daily sales training system. Each day, a sales training tip is sent by e-mail to all registrants. The tip is a one-

liner. An expanded explanation and application strategy is attached," Falvey explains.

OK. How does *MakingTheNumbers.com* make any money itself if it's sending out everything free?

"It offers a sales management package by subscription at a \$50 per month per manager fee. The sales management package arrives a day ahead of the tip, so when the sales tip arrives in every salesman's e-mail, managers are ready to take full advantage," Falvey says.

An example Falvey gives for a sales tip is one about how "working hard is working smart."

"Quality time is a myth. Quantity counts. 'See a lot of people.' If there were an easier or better way, it would have been found by now. There isn't, and it hasn't. Make more calls. More sales will result."

So what does Falvey advise sales managers after their salespeople receive the sales tip about working hard?

"Office time, planning days, paperwork, administration, and any reason your salespeople are not in the field, are sales killers. Your job as a sales

manager is to kill the killers." Those are just the opening two sentences in Falvey's sales manager package.

The package goes on to explain in more detail how to accomplish this goal. Eight bulleted items are

listed, plus a summary. Among them are ones to protect your field people from questionnaires and customer surveys — leave these to professionals in the discipline; if sales people go out into the field, ensure they schedule a full day; all field training days must be full field selling days; numbers of calls count — once a standard is set, it is your job to see that the standard is met; and relieve salespeople of paperwork whenever possible — like a fighter pilot, everything is done "to keep them in the air, face to face with the targets and objectives."

To Falvey, the "great weakness" in most organizations is not salespeople, it's "the first-line managers."

"Sales managers often get no training at all. You can screw up really good salespeople with a poorly trained manager. And normally, it's the best ones you screw up. Suddenly, they are leaving the company. They'll tell you it's for more money, but that's not the case," he says.

Although most New Hampshire readers of Falvey's column think of him as a journalist, or a business writer, that image is incomplete. He has written six books on sales and has produced audio tapes.

He has spoken to sales forces, and has consulted with their managers, from an impressive list of industry leaders, including IBM, AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, Ingersoll Rand, and American Cyanamid. They and more than 100 others have paid Falvey \$7,800 plus first-class air and hotel accommodations to hear him speak.

He has written 33 Wall Street Journal editorial page Manager Journals and has appeared on network television for ABC's "Good Morning, America," NBC's "Today Show" and Fox TV's "Evening Business News."

A Boston College grad, the 56-year-old Falvey admits not everything he has accomplished came by design.

First, he was a good salesman, starting out for a small hospital supply business that eventually was purchased by C.R. Bard. As a result, he worked closely with one of the company's owners a total of 10 years.

"Everything I know, he taught me. He taught me that the best way to teach is to encourage. You praise people," says Falvey. And when a mistake is made, you go easy.

"A sales manager wears pom-poms and has teeth marks on his tongue," says Falvey, adding, "It's one of the hardest things in the world to do."

At C.R. Bard, he wrote a newsletter for the company. "I was writing to deadline for five years without knowing that was what I was doing," he recalls.

One day, he called up the Wall Street Journal with an idea for a Managers Column. The editor liked his idea and told him to send it in, which Falvey did.

"It took me six months to get this one little, 1,000-word piece written well enough for publication in the Wall Street Journal." The editor would read Falvey's submission, make suggestions, and send it back. Back and forth for six months.

Falvey went on to write 32 more articles for the Journal, and he wrote regular columns for the magazine Inc. and for Sales and Marketing Management, a trade publication. He also sold articles to other publications, including Readers Digest.

"All of a sudden, it seemed, I could do this thing," he said about his writing career.

And now Falvey, who jokingly calls his wallet-sized appointment book "my manual palm pilot," is ready to take his message to the Internet. The medium is different, but Falvey's beliefs and messages about sales are still the same ones he was taught by that owner more than 20 years ago.

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

To: "Jack Falvey" <Jack@Faivey.org>
Sent: Friday, May 16, 2003 10:40 AM
Subject: Re: MakingTheNumbers.com Sales Tip

Hi Jack

I'm amazed. Every day I read your 'right on' information, I think, 'he's talking to me!' I've been selling life insurance for 37 years, have been through the chairs of MDRT, had all the perks and blessings anyone on God's green earth deserves to have, and yet there are some days that mirror your message today.

I just want to tell you again how much I appreciate all you do for us. You're a blessing in my life!

----- Original Message -----

From: Jack Falvey

Sent: Friday, May 16, 2003 5:35 AM

Subject: MakingTheNumbers.com Sales Tip

Even on a down day, go through the motions. Something good may fall on you. Even the best in the business have down days.

Life's ride can be like a roller coaster. If so, the life of a sales professional is an inverted steel twister with multi-gravity force levels equal to astronaut training. And that is on good days! Are we having fun yet? is a question often asked, and the answer is—yes! As soon as we come to grips with the sales reality that for every down there is an equal and opposite up, we can then go about our daily business with some sense of perspective in what often becomes an up-and-down world by noon!

The strategy is to look normal. These things happen all the time. If you are really good, you let go and scream. If you are just getting used to all this, you hang on for dear life. All this is supposed to be fun, and it is—in its own strange sort of way. We wouldn't be in this business if both we and it weren't special.

So when the curve drops out from under you, be cool. You can't steer a roller coaster. It may feel as if death is staring you in the face. Smile. There are twists and turns in the future, and most of 'em will be great ones. Think about the good times. They will return.

Each Sales Tip of the Day has a corresponding daily Sales Management Strategy. These describe how the best sales managers support their selling teams. Sales managers can subscribe to this companion professional development offering by registering for the Sales Management Strategy at MakingTheNumbers.com, or by calling Jack Falvey at 603-432-5715. Its modest cost is \$50 per manager per month.

"How the Best Get Better in Sales" is a dynamic keynote sales meeting presentation which presents in person what the top producers do that makes them so good. Contact Jack Falvey at 603-432-5715 or at Jack@Falvey.org to schedule a field sales day with one of your people prior to Jack speaking at your meeting. For additional background, go to http://www.falvey.org/ and select the "Speaker" page.

These e-mails may be discontinued by request at Jack@Falvey.org.