

Sales 201: Learning Tools of Your Trade

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Superior salespeople are always interested in maximizing their time and effectiveness in front of the customer. Superior salespersons will develop tools and systems that will aid them in their time management and sales effectiveness. Average salespersons tend to meander, wandering to the next call without any real purpose. They appear busy, but their inconsistent results leave a great deal to be desired. Which best describes you?

Content:

A carpenter has his saw and hammer. A writer has his pen and ink. A doctor has her medical instruments. An accountant has his calculator. A mechanic has his wrenches. What of the salesperson? What are the available tools for salespeople?

Salespersons exist in almost every industry, for without the sales channel, there is no reason to manufacture or produce anything. We salespeople produce the results that drive every other function in every company. Although the function of each salesperson is the same, that is to match customer needs to products and services and close each sale, the manner in which we operate varies depending upon the industry we serve. Realtors, bankers, industrial reps, retailers and others have a variety of practices that they have found to be effective. There are sales tools commonly available to all of them to utilize.

Superior salespeople are always interested in maximizing their time and effectiveness in front of the customer. Superior salespersons will develop tools and systems that will aid them in their time management and sales effectiveness. Average salespersons tend to meander, wandering to the next call without any real purpose. They appear busy, but their inconsistent results leave a great deal to be desired. They are often disorganized, keeping poor records and avoid using tools to their advantage.

What are some of the tools and systems of effective, superior salespeople? We will discuss a few tools of the trade that are used successfully by me and others with great success.

â€¢ Your Sales Plan: You cannot hit a target that you cannot see, so why would you step out of your door without a plan? Many average and less-than-average salespeople do every day, and then wonder why their sales are flat. A sales plan is a tool that is indispensable to the superior salesperson. An effective sales plan is, in reality, an extension of goal setting. You can develop your plan using a word processor, but a spreadsheet allows much greater flexibility and practicality. Take time to identify your target markets and target customers. Learn as much as possible about each. Identify your competitors. Honestly assess your company's strengths and weaknesses in light of the marketplace and competition. Develop your strategy. Take action and regularly gauge your progress and adjust your plan.

â€¢ CRM: Customer resource management has been a tool in development for a number of years. There are a number of quality products available depending upon company structure and individual needs. Among these are ACT, Goldmine, Outlook, etc. Choose one that meets your needs and start using it. Keep accurate and updated records. The best time to make new entries is every day. If you get behind, you may decide that the catch-up task is insurmountable and quit altogether. Don't do it. Superior salespeople keep their contact manager updated with several backups. Once your data is entered, you can merge data with sales letters, print labels, develop email campaigns, and so much more.

â€¢ Laptop / PDA: Your carefully manicured data and customer records are of little value to you in the field if you do not have it with you when you need it. In addition to customer records, I keep all price sheets, quote forms, catalogs, brochures and more on my laptop, available for my use at any time. My equipment features built-in wireless networking capability so that I can log onto the internet or send and receive emails from an increasing number of hot-spots in most areas. These devices are no longer simple name and address managers, but rather your mobile office and window to the world!

â€¢ Flash Drive: A flash drive is a small electronic device housing a memory chip for the purpose of storing data in a manner similar to that of a hard drive on your computer. The price of high capacity flash drives for your key chain has fallen to levels affordable by almost anyone. My 1 GB flash drive was just \$59 at Sam's wholesale club! I also use one on my desk computer in place of a floppy or backup tape drive to save backups and conveniently trade data with my laptop. It is impractical to carry into a customers' office all of the catalogs or literature that you may require for the visit, but located on my keychain flash drive is every catalog and brochure that our company uses, just waiting to be placed in my customers' USB port for easy transfer directly to his computer. Easy indeed! As common as these devices are, my customers continue to be impressed when I pull

out my flash drive.

â€¢ Mobile Phone: Almost every man, woman and child carries a phone these days. My only comment is to select a model that has the features you need to meet the demands of your job. Do you need email capability, a camera or other features?

â€¢ Web Presence: Promote your company's web site to each customer. Get them involved in what your company is all about. If your company does not yet have a web site, consider establishing your own web page to promote you. It's easy and very inexpensive to do, and will prove quite cost effective.

This is certainly not an all-inclusive list of tools available to salespersons, but these represent important and essential elements contributing to the success of superior salespeople. Do you want to be average? Do you want to continue to meander? If your desire is to continuously improve and employ every asset at your disposal to become a superior salesperson, enjoying superior sales and income, then do as the superior salesperson does. Become an expert in the use of tools of the sales trade and get busy.

Daniel Sitter is the author of the popular, award-winning e-book, [Learning For Profit](http://www.learningforprofit.com/). Designed for busy people, his new book teaches simple, step-by-step accelerated learning skills, demonstrating exactly how to learn anything faster than ever before. Learning For Profit is currently available from the author's web site <http://www.learningforprofit.com/> and from a variety of online book merchants. Mr. Sitter is a contributing writer for several internet and traditional publications. His expertise includes sales, marketing, self-improvement and general business topics.

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About the Author:

Daniel Sitter