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By: Adele Swanson

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About the Author

Adele Swanson was a teacher who left teaching because she needed a better income to help support her family.

She became a sales person for a small [company](#), selling to other businesses. She moved to other jobs in later years, but always focused on sales.

After several years where she set records for the companies she worked for, Adele stopped working in a regular job to help her husband with a small farm. That had been a life-long dream for both of them which her successful [career](#) had helped them achieve.

This is Adele’s first book. She based it on her sales experience and the lessons she learned from the people, both salesmen and managers, who helped her to achieve her sales goals.

Adele said that she noticed many people’s biggest problem with selling was making the right sort of contacts and establishing a good [relationship](#) with potential customers.

“It’s a critical area for people involved in any type of sales and I hope that anyone that reads my book will be able to apply what I share to improve the results they get very quickly.”

“It is all easy to adapt to any sort of selling situation. There’s no fluff or theory.”

“I’ve used these methods myself and I’ve seen great results for those I’ve shared them with. ”

Adele also believes that her methods can help many experienced salespeople to improve the results they are currently getting.

Introduction

Almost every new sales person has the need to contact people they don't know and have never met and sell them something.

Many experienced salespeople will, I hope, find a few ideas which are new to them that they can use to improve the results they are getting now.

I have sold a range of different products to different types of customers, both commercial and retail.

Some of the suggestions I give you in this [book](#) will be most useful for people that are selling to businesses. But anyone that is selling directly to consumers will also find methods of direct value to them.

In the current [business](#) environment, many people are having to change from other types of employment to sales and so I've included some suggestions and basic information which will be well-known to some who have been in this field for a while. I hope that you will understand that I've tried to have material which is useful to people with all levels of experience.

I hope that you will use those suggestions as a review and find some suggestions which will help you to get even better results than before.

One thing to keep in mind is that, however competitive and fast-moving business becomes, there will always be a need for people that know and can use the methods and tips which I've written here.

There are few limits to what you can achieve and fewer barriers for good sales people even if you don't have formal qualifications or experience.

A good salesperson always has opportunities for greater [success](#)!

The Biggest Mistakes

I believe that the differences between getting average sales with no more than an average [income](#), and achieving great results with appropriately greater rewards are easy to define.

Stop learning: Great salespeople are always open to new ideas.

They always:

- f* Listen to their customers
- f* Study their competitors
- f* Watch for developments that will affect the industry and them personally

Fail to plan: This is the biggest mistake which anyone can make. It is a truism that, "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail!"

The most successful people in any area of activity are those that have planned their progress and followed the plan.

Fail to act: You can have the greatest [product](#) in the world but you won't make any money until you get in front of the people with a great need for it and the money to pay for it.

Follow-up: Unless you are in a simple retail situation, like a market or a store where you have no means of following up with your customers, you should plan how you will follow up after the [sale](#).

You need to check that they are happy with their purchase and are reassured that you are ready to support them if

there are problems. I've always found that happy customers are my best source of referrals and many of my customers mentioned that they contacted me on the recommendation of a previous client.



Get a System

Whatever sort of sales you are involved in, your level of success will always depend on how well you are prepared for both the expected and unexpected events in each day.

Try to look at each part of the work you do as a series of steps - a system. Then, look for ways that you can eliminate any unnecessary steps that you are currently doing and improve the way you do the rest.

If you have a hard time getting through your workload each day, that's the place to start.

The simplest way is to make a [record](#) of how you spend your time during a normal working week.

Block out a couple of pages in a notebook or a cheap diary you get just for this task. This is just for your own eyes, so you can use as many abbreviations as you want.

It also means that you can note down everything. No-one else will see it.

The more accurate your record, the more helpful it will be for you.

Are you spending too much time at the water cooler, the coffee shop or checking your emails?

Are you getting to work an hour before you start contacting your first client?

Is your work being interrupted eight times a day? [Research](#) shows that you probably need about ten minutes to get back to where you are properly handling the work which was interrupted. Eight interruptions can rob you of more than an hour a day apart from the time each one actually takes!

When you have done the [exercise](#) for a week, you will probably be quite enthusiastic to re-organize your work day and improve your productivity.

The benefits are obvious. You will:

- f* Get more done each day

- f* Have less work to carry over each day or take home so you can start on tomorrow’s work in a timely manner and worry about from one day to the next
- f* Have more energy for and a better focus on the really important tasks

But, I suggest that you take it a bit at a time. Pick one or two things where the changes you make will show a definite improvement fairly quickly. Picking off some of the easy changes will give your confidence a [boost](#).

When they are in place, pick a couple more. Your early successes will give you more enthusiasm when you tackle the items on your list which will take more time and effort.

Before you start to change some process, think whether there will be any impact on other people. Always consider the feelings and needs of other people. For instance, if you are going to make an effort to shorten or eliminate interruptions by a particular person which are nice but unproductive, try to find a pleasant [way](#) to do it.

When you start changing your daily routine, you will see some benefits and that will encourage you to become more systematic about other parts of your day.

Just don’t become obsessed about your systems. Be satisfied with achieving more with less effort. Don’t try to set records. The process is important but your focus should remain on doing good work as part of a balanced, highly enjoyable [life](#).

I found that setting up systems was one of the most valuable steps I took to improve my results. I have to admit that it was not always easy and I sometimes slipped back into my previous routines.

One of my major goals was to give myself more time to share and enjoy with my family and friends.

I not only got more done, it actually took less time!

Preparation



This step is vital for you to have any success in sales or any other area.

I’m sure that you prepare yourself properly for each day. If you didn’t it’s unlikely you would be interested in learning how to prepare yourself for more success in your sales career.

You need to set aside some time to:

- f* Improve your knowledge of your products. You probably get some [training](#) from the company and that may seem all you might need.

But, the better you understand how each product or [service](#) helps your

customers, the more valuable you will be to your employer and the better reception you will get from your clients.

- f* Learn all you can about the people that use your products or services. Remember that they are people, not just clients. Be respectful of their time and their views.

Listen to them carefully. Your customers are also a great source of feedback and, sometimes, testimonials.

I have even got some great ideas for improving the uses of some products I’ve sold from my customers. Some of these were great but not even known to the producers. Others were known but the company may not have been aware of the value of that capability to some potential users.

- f* Watch your competitors and study their products. Find out why some people prefer their products to the ones which you [offer](#). Find out what their sales people may do better than you. Are there any

areas where you might be able to encourage any of their customers to try your products or services?

Prepare Yourself

The most important part of your preparation is how you prepare yourself.

I am not talking about grooming and the other essentials. If you didn't have those covered, you would not be [reading](#) this book to learn how to improve your selling skills.

These are some simple tips which most of the experts don't bother to tell you, sometimes for [fear](#) of offending you.

I'll take that risk in the hope that the information will help some of my readers and they will appreciate my plain speaking.



Check Your Smile: I've mentioned a couple of times in this book that I put a lot of importance of smiling. That's commonly accepted but few people realize that many people don't know how to smile!

Through their lives, they have developed a grimace or artificial smile which they think looks appealing. And, being kind hearted, their friends won't tell them it doesn't.

Take a few minutes in the privacy of your bathroom tomorrow morning, to [check](#) your smile credentials. Does your

usual smile really have appeal or is it a bit too forced?

Pay Attention: One of the most off-putting habits which many people exhibit when they are talking to someone is to either focus on other parts of their body instead of their face or let their gaze slide completely away

from that person to check whether there is anyone more interesting in the area.

Remember Their Names: This is probably one of the most effective ways to create a good impression.

You will be sure to please everyone you meet and talk with by remembering their names. It’s a very good way to get noticed and appreciated and it’s not difficult.

People that say they have poor memories are usually not making a genuine effort to remember the other people’s names in the first place. They are letting themselves be distracted and this gives the impression that they just don’t care.

If you pay attention and try to repeat each person’s name a couple of times during your conversation, you will soon be regarded as a [memory](#) wizard.

If you did not hear the name properly, ask them to spell it. No-one minds helping someone to remember their name!

This applies equally when you talk with someone on the phone. Ask the other person to spell their name if you are at all unsure about it.

Your Business Card

Everyone who is in business has a business [card](#).

Some have cards which are provided by their employer which must conform to the company’s rules.

If you have control of what you put on your card, here are some suggestions:

You put the basic information; name, position, business, contact (phone, postal and street address, [business](#) email,

List any qualifications you have which are relevant to helping your customer. Some professional groups have rules about what and how you may show qualifications they confer or manage.

Make your business card attractive but don’t fill it up with too much text or extra fancy design elements. Only include things which help your connection with your customer.

When you get the opportunity to give someone your card, offer them a couple and ask if they could pass the extra card to a friend or colleague that might need your product or service.

But, don’t give even one of your cards to anyone that you haven’t established a genuine connection with. If they don’t ask for your card, they probably aren’t interested. If you push your card at them, you might ruin the relationship before you even have one.

Although there are probably many reliable businesses offering cards through the Internet at lower than what my local printer charges, I have stuck with them because I get great service, reasonable prices and (most important) 100% reliability. Before you grab that bargain price from a more distant supplier, check them out thoroughly. That’s especially important when you need cards for an imminent business [conference](#) or promotion.

Your business card is you on paper. Make sure that it represents you and the business you represent faithfully and well. Some of the cards which colleagues got from Internet sources did not give a great impression to their clients.

Use the back of your business card productively. Get some reference information which your client needs to refer to as part of their business printed there.

Don't print your own cards. Designing a card is a job for a professional and so is printing it.

Stick to standard sizes or you may find that prospects leave your [card](#) in a drawer because they don't fit their wallet or business card holder.

Make your card stand out if possible. Make it appropriate. Don't add a scent or aroma to your cards. Some people are very sensitive to scents and most people don't want to have a strange aroma in their clothes or wallet.

Use a [picture](#) to catch the eye and engage the emotions if you can afford the extra expense.

If you use a cartoon, make sure it's exclusive to you. Using a stock picture which is available to anyone from almost any printer makes you seem just another business.

A good caricature is a great [investment](#) if appropriate to your business.

Carry some blank cards with you, especially at business events, to get details from people that forgot their cards or ran out. Always give them a few spares too. That simple, thoughtful tip will make a very favorable impression of you.

Have the blank cards cut from the same stock used for your regular printed cards. You should offer the other person the same quality of card for their use as they know you use.

Connecting at Business Conferences

I will include in this section suggestions which I found worked in conferences, seminars and other business events such as exhibitions.

Making contacts is a very valuable benefit of attending business functions but it's got to be done in a way that does not give a bad impression of your business or yourself.

The biggest mistake which I've seen people make is to treat their spare time at an event as if they were on a family [holiday](#). If you are at an event on behalf of your company, whether you own it or are an employee, you are considered its representative at all times by the other people there.

You can promote or damage the company's reputation by what you do in the breaks from the formal program.

If you have the choice, always stay at the venue where the event is held. You might save money by staying at a cheaper hotel nearby but you will miss out on some of the networking opportunities and waste a lot of valuable time traveling back and forward. The one person you miss the opportunity to spend some time with may be come your competitor's best customer!

Always contact the organizers with a personal letter, thanking them after the event.

Take your [camera](#) and spare batteries and [memory](#) cards or film. Get some practise before the event so that you ensure, as far as possible, that you get good pictures.

When you have your picture taken with other attendees, get their names and contact details. Then, make sure to send them copies of the pictures.

If you use rechargeable batteries for anything, make sure you have your [charger](#) and that it will work with the local electrical supply.

Don't make waves, make friends. Be respectful of any restrictions about recording any event, area or session and any other requirements imposed by the organizers or the venue.

Following on from the [tip](#) about blank business cards in the previous section, I know someone that had some pocket notebooks printed with his business name and contact details.

He didn't push these at people but he used one himself through each event which he attended and always had a couple of spares if he found someone that wanted to make notes and didn't have anything with them.

Arrive well before the start of any [session](#). Sit near the front out of respect for the organizers and presenters.

Get involved. If you are asked, or if no-one responds when a presenter asks the crowd for someone to volunteer, do it.

You will have the gratitude of the presenter and a chance to be remembered favorably by the audience. The best way to do that is remember that you are there to help the presenter, not try to be a “co-presenter”.

When You Exhibit

Here are some tips which may help if you are exhibiting at an event, whether it is business to [business](#) or open to the public.

Set up early: Allow yourself as much time as possible to set up. There can be last minute hitches with the best organized events so you need to give yourself as much leeway as you can.

My earlier suggestion applies, “**Make friends, not waves.**” Don’t be a problem to the organizers or other exhibitors.

Keep busy: If you have no prospects on your space and you sit idle, your boss won’t like it and visitors will [walk](#) past to other exhibits where there is more activity.

Don’t Sit Down Except with a Prospect: You will probably have chairs for your staff on the site, but you may find they’re needed more by some of the older visitors. If you offer someone a [chair](#) because they need a rest let them rest.

Outside Your Exhibit Space: Don’t try to sell anything. When you are away from your exhibit, you are an ambassador for the business but not a salesperson.

Success can be Measured in Inches

I watched an interview with a successful [athlete](#) a couple of years ago. The occasion was his retirement from athletics at a fairly young age. He had achieved Olympic selection and a couple of Gold medals which had always been a dream and part of his motivation.

The point that stayed with me was his observation that the difference between [winning](#) and coming second was often just a few seconds.

He wrote that many winners weren't born different, they were often just a bit more focused on the prize and were prepared to work a little harder to get it.

He and a couple of other of friends used to always be the last to finish their training sessions. They pushed themselves a little further. The demands of their training took precedence over their social activities and they also had to maintain high marks in their studies because they had scholarships.

His point was that all the other top athletes trained very hard but the best went a little harder or for a few extra hours each week.

That prepared them to be able to compete with and often beat their rivals who might have been more talented.

Even if their dedication only gave them a few seconds advantage, that was often enough.

The extra effort paid off, sometimes spectacularly. Each of them learned habits which continue to help them beat their competition in business after they left the sporting area.

Visualize

Another useful tip I got from that [interview](#) was about mental preparation for an event.

Many athletes use visualization as part of their preparation.

As well as getting the best coaching and other professional support, and putting in their best efforts in the gym and during their training, they create mental videos of them racing and winning.



These are not daydreams about sporting success like we all had as kids and many continue to fill their minds with in later life.

Those exciting dreams are too vague and probably change each time we roll them through our [brain](#). So, they cannot erase

the negative messages which so many people fill their subconscious with after each stressful incident or disappointment.

The athletes create clear mental images of themselves performing the actions which they have been taught perfectly. They focus on each minute step so that they fill their subconscious with clear instructions which will [help](#) the focus and perform at the highest level they are capable of.

That boosts their own confidence that they can do the same when they compete.

Banish Fear or Doubt

Your mindset is a very important part of your sales armory.

The two things which affect this in a negative way are fear and doubt.

Doubt

When you have just started selling, you may have doubts about your ability to deal with customers or promote your product or service successfully.

This can also affect experienced sales people that have had a series of rejections and seen their figures drop.

It can be very hard to avoid doubt clouding your [mind](#) and sabotaging your efforts.



You probably won't always have the best possible product for every customer and every situation.

Even if you did, you could still expect some rejection because the decision depends on the prospect's

view. [Product](#) may be the best performer but too expensive for some clients. Any number of other factors could cause them to buy elsewhere.

No-one makes every [sale](#) they try for. The answer is to do your best and review both your wins and your knockbacks to see if there are any parts of your method which you can improve.

The real problem happens when you take each negative decision personally and start thinking that the other person either doesn't like you or does not think you (or your product) are as good as others.

You need to accept that will happen. But, every time that someone says, "No, thanks", there could be a dozen reasons external to you and your product which are the cause of that decision.

Some people will ask the prospect was interested in renegotiating on any part of their [offer](#)? What was the point which was not appealing to the prospect?

That can be effective and is not likely to cause offence if you work out an appropriate form of words.

But, inevitably, you will lose some just as you win some.



Then, the focus must be to keep their door open so that you can approach them about their future needs.

Thank them for their time and ask them to contact you

when they have any problem which your product might help them with.

A lost sale does not always mean a prospective customer that is lost for ever. They may find that their needs change or the follow-up service or results they get from the other [supplier](#) is not satisfactory.

You can also follow up with them at a later time or if your company produces a new version of your [product](#). They'll still be interested in finding a better product and getting better results. Wouldn't you?

Meanwhile, use the experience as a lesson. When you have a few minutes in a quiet, private area, review how you approached the client and try to see where there might be anything which you could have handled better?

Fear

Fear is a part of our basic make-up. It helps us to avoid danger and prepare the most suitable response to serious situations (fight or flight).

But, we can get things a bit mixed up in our mostly peaceful day-to-day lives. We fear things which are not likely to cause us any damage (fear of

the unknown) or we don't have a suitable programmed [response](#) to a situation.

People still have fears. Because fight or flight are often not practical responses, they have no idea how to handle them.

Because of that, they try to avoid the situation.

Often, that avoidance takes the form of never leaving the preparation stage and facing the customers.

Many people have a fear of rejection and fear of failure without having any particular experience to give any weight to those fears.

We need to understand that both are inevitable parts of our lives. Nobody wins every encounter.



Just because somebody rejects you or your product doesn't mean that you are less worthy. Failure is part of [life](#). Many people said that Thomas Edison had many failures in his quest to develop a working light [bulb](#).

Mr. Edison response was that, "I have not failed. I've just found 10000 ways that won't work!"

Then, he found the one which did and there weren't many comments about his "failures" after that!

We don't make every sale every time, we don't get every date we ask for. Well, I didn't. But, we can learn from each attempt.

That's something you can't do if you don't give it an honest try each time.

Fear of failure has two main aspects. Many people don't [start](#) a project of contacting a client because they don't have everything “perfect”. Often, that is just their excuse for wanting to avoid rejection.

While they delay, their competition gets the sales. Are their products or services better? Not always, but they put them out in front of prospects.

They were good enough.

Those people were able to get sales and make profits which could feed their families while they continued to improve their products.

They also got recognition in the [market](#) place and invaluable feedback.

That feedback gave them knowledge about what the market really wanted which was not obvious until they had their product being used by customers,

Some things, probably both good and bad, will not show until you have put yourself and your offers in front of potential customers.

That's the final and most important testing you can do.

Fear of Losing Control

Another common fear which affects many in sales is the fear of trying something new; promoting a new product or approaching a new customer.

I went from having a deep fear of approaching strangers by phone or in person.

One thing that was great [benefit](#) to me was to focus on my successes, however small.

I discovered that part of the problem was that I was telling myself to expect failure. I might forget that I had that conversation in my head but my subconscious



stored the (false) information away and fed it back to my conscious mind whenever I had some new opportunity to explore.

With some [effort](#), I started to recall my successes and the good feelings which those memories caused me were dutifully stored in my subconscious.

They were clearer and more interesting so they came up when I started on a new project instead of the grey and destructive thoughts which had filled my [mind](#) before.

Over time, I was able to add more small and big successes to my mental storage.

Just keep in mind the quote from F. Scott Fitzgerald. “Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat.”

Know Your Prospect

Your [prospect](#) is the most important person to you when you are with them or talking to them on the phone.



Don't waste their time with small-talk unless you know that it's on a subject which they have a special interest.

They are not interested in you except as it can help them and their [business](#). But, you can make a deep impression if you can connect with them through their interests.

Make sure that you have something new and useful to them each time you contact them. If you interrupt their day for no other reason than to check if they want to order something, you are showing that your focus is just on what they can do for you.

Don't make claims which you can't prove about the results which your customers can expect from your products or the level of support which you will provide. Then, you will have a reputation for reliability and that will encourage your customers to recommend you to their friends and colleagues.

A happy customer might give you a referral or tell a friend but an unhappy one will broadcast their dissatisfaction much wider and more loudly.

If your product will need supplies or maintenance, [make](#) contact with the clients well in advance of that time. It's up to you to ensure that they are happy with it and arrange for them to place orders for the updates in plenty of time so that the supplies will be available when they need them.

Getting Call-backs

Most people handle answering services really poorly. They haven't worked out what exactly they want to say to the prospect and they don't include anything which will really encourage them to make the call back.

If you want to improve the number of call-backs you get, this section will help.

It is very important that you make a good impression when you have to leave a message for a potential [client](#).

Always write a draft. Start with a list of the points you must include in your message. That helps you to see what you can cut out; anything which you can keep back until you are talking to them on the phone or in person. That means the [message](#) you leave will be optimized with just the information they need.

Then, cut and polish it a little more.

Keep your message under a minute. If your message is any longer, unless the information is very urgent, your prospect will start to lose interest.

This is not easy unless you put some time into thinking about the essential message that you want to give the client and the action which you want them to do.

That will make it easier for them to understand your message and more likely to take the action you want them to do.

Listen to the messages which you get on your answering service. Many people don't prepare themselves like this and the result is that they can create a bad impression in the mind of the person they call.

The time you put into [writing](#) your message will not be wasted. Use that as a [template](#) for other calls. Be prepared to change your message if the one you regularly use does not get the results you need.

But, also change around the message you leave for the same client. I suggest that you write, say, three messages which you use on different occasions.

Identify yourself, your [business](#) and why the prospect needs the information you have. If possible, include a reference from someone they know and respect.

Make sure that you ask them take action in a specific way. That might be to call you back or follow up on a previous agreement with you. You’d probably be surprised how many times a sales person forgets to ask for them to take action.

Don’t try to give them your full story in your [voice](#) message. Suggest the sort of result you can deliver but don’t give them a brief version of your sales pitch. You will not do justice to yourself or your product. You won’t have time for enough detail and they could decide that they’ve heard it before or just don’t want to hear any more about it.

Don’t include anything which is not there to directly support your main reason for calling.

Show them that, “I know your time is valuable and I will respect that!”

Tell them what you have for them and set a limit on the time you expect to take when they call you back. “I can give you three ways to save on your current cost for that service and it won’t take more than three minutes”.

A customer that calls you is probably twenty times as receptive to what you say as a prospect you contact for the first time. But, you still need to focus on the outcome which your caller wants and how you can assist them get it.

Make it easy to call you back. Give them your home, or at least your mobile number, as well as your regular business phone.

Always give your email [address](#) to clients that are outside your local area.

Think about using a service like Skype where you can make and receive calls over the Internet. This can reduce the cost of the calls and you can make calls from wherever you are.

Gatekeepers

Salespeople that view receptionists and assistants as roadblocks are not giving them due respect. They are there to ensure that their boss is not distracted from his work and can make the most valuable use of his time. They are highly skilled and knowledgeable about their boss’s priorities. They have to be so that they can filter out what their boss doesn’t need to see.

Remember that they have your prospect’s confidence so treat them well!

They will give you a fair hearing. If you seem to be one of the gems in the flood of dross which they have to [deal](#) with each day, you can rely on them to push your message and support information through promptly.



I’ve read in some books and heard at seminars where experts suggest ways to give the impression that the [person](#) you want to speak to is expecting and even anxious to get your call.

If that’s true, just say it and give the secretary or receptionist information about why you think so.

But, any trick you use is likely to only work once. Then, if your prospect does not feel your information is as valuable to them as you said, you could find it impossible to connect with them in the future.

If you start to feel stressed over not getting your message through, think for a moment how you would act if you were in their position? Then, you will realize the importance of the [job](#) they do.

It could give you a better idea about how you could approach them and have more chance of getting the call-back or interview you want.

Selling Face to Face

Listening vs. Telling

Say enough but not too much.



I’ve heard of many sales lost because the [seller](#) kept talking after the client decided to buy and then changed their [mind](#) as

the verbal torrent continued.

I’ve never heard of anyone losing a [sale](#) because they listened too much.

Of course, you listen intelligently, don’t you?

When you reply to something your client said cover the points which your client said in your own words so that they know you are paying attention and understand the points which they made.

Take time to ask your client if there is any point which they have any questions about?

Don’t exceed your authority or make any commitments which you cannot keep.

Don’t commit other people to any action or a meeting without checking with them first.

If You Don’t Know, Say So

If your prospect asks a question you cannot answer with full confidence, do try to bluff.

Apologize and get them the information which they need.

If that means giving them some of your most productive [time](#) about something which won't generate any business directly, so be it.

Don't direct them to someone else and leave them to find their way.

When you ask for the order, give the other person time to answer. Many people will not answer straight away because they are thinking about their options. It's not just courteous to give them a little time; it's much more likely to produce a positive response.

Don't Tell all You Know

Just give the customer what they need to make a decision. Too much information can make it hard for them to remember the points which are most important about why your product will fit their need.

A great example is the way some [computer](#) program manuals are set up. They may be 200 pages of fairly important information, but the smartest companies always include a quick reference sheet with just the bits the customer needs to set up and get started right.



A good salesperson is like the full manual and they provide the customer with only the information they need for now (the verbal version of a quick reference sheet).

That's a good rule for your own business [education](#). Focus your business reading on what you need to know now. Then, find out how to get more information if and when you need it. Add to your own knowledge when you have time and focus on current information, but keep aware of trends in your area of activity.

Don't Rush to Judgment

Give each person that contacts you your attention.

Looks can be very deceptive. Some sales people try to focus on people they think will be good customers and often can be abrupt or dismissive with other people if they don't fit the image they have of a likely prospect.

That can be a huge mistake because people [dress](#) to suit themselves and no-one dresses to attract sales people.

Listen to each person. Let them tell you what they need and then you can decide on a factual basis which people need your product.

The main thing is to treat everyone as you would want them to treat you.

Do you Speak Clearly?

Although we have been speaking for most of our lives, many of us have developed bad habits with interfere with the messages we want other people to hear and act on.

Few schools give their students any training in how to present themselves. Most of us are left to learn through interacting with our equally inexperienced classmates and friends.

So, we all are likely to make the same mistakes and misunderstandings that our parents and their friends did.

Over time, we will probably develop some bad habits in our speech, [posture](#) and outlook.

If we want to improve, it is usually up to us.

We also tend to ignore any mistakes we make. But, other people won't always be so understanding.

Those mistakes could be blocking our sales message and costing us a lot of money!

It is very important that sales people do everything they can to present themselves and their products or service in the best possible way.

You don't need to spend a lot of money or time on lessons.

I got great value from Toastmasters International, even though I had no desire to do any public speaking. The carefully prepared step-by-step [program](#) and supportive atmosphere was very valuable and I soon noticed

that I was having much greater rapport with my prospects and my colleagues.

You just need to carefully review the image you project and how you might improve it.

I found the sound of my own [voice](#) very off-putting when I first recorded myself. It was a shock because we hear our own voice differently to everyone else.

I suggest that you also record the way you speak to your prospects, friends or colleagues.

Do they get the right message, clearly presented in words they understand?

Is there a lot of static (ums and ahs, pauses while you think about what to say next).

When you talk with your prospects, any problems will be magnified, especially in our early sales presentations.

Most people probably won't buy from you unless they connect with you. You need to project a positive [image](#) whether you are talking on the phone or face to face.

If you have access to video [equipment](#), get a recording of yourself making a presentation just like you probably do every day as part of your job.

If you find there are things which need improvement, don't worry too much, that's to be expected.

Don't rush into making a number of changes quickly. You won't be able to adapt a number of significant changes smoothly. You will be starting to correct habits or [speech](#) patterns which you developed over years.

Give yourself time and focus on one change which is important to you.

When you are happy with that, start to work on something else.

Don't try to change your accent or adopt another style of speaking which is significantly different from the way you and your friends have spoken for years.

Be Formal Enough to Suit Your Client

Although most people are relaxed about using first names in casual and even most business conversations, I’ve dealt with a lot of people that seem to put up with it but are more responsive to being addressed with Mr., Miss or Mrs., whichever is appropriate, if you do not already have a business or personal relationship with them.

These people are mostly old enough to have been around when that was the common usage.

But, I haven’t heard anyone that minds being given that [courtesy](#). So, there’s probably no harm in using those terms when it seems appropriate. The other person can always say that they want you to use their first name if they would really prefer that.

Humor

Everybody likes to hear a great joke well told but most people find that jokes get in the way of a sale.

Different people can have widely varied views of what is [funny](#) that it’s probably better to leave the jokes until after the check clears.

You Can’t Sell Well if

Except in high-volume, low-margin retailing where the customers are attracted just by the bargain prices, your aim should always be to make a connection with each customer so that they want to return whenever they need something you [offer](#).

The truth is that it is more profitable and less work to sell to people you’ve dealt with before than to have to keep finding new customers for one-off profits.

Your competitors and their products

What do you say when someone asks you about one of your competitors or their products?

Keep it respectful, upbeat and honest.

After all, that’s only the way that you would hope they speak about you.

I had good connections with some of the people that were my competitors.

Some salespeople will make negative comments about competitors at every opportunity but it’s likely to rebound on them.

Saying anything unfavorable will create a bad impression of you and the whole [business](#) you are both part of.

Phone Tips

Don't Let Your Phone Interrupt Your Client: If you are discussing something with a client face to face when your phone rings, let the call switch through to your answering machine. I've never met a client that really likes being placed on hold while I answer my phone! Put the human first.

Smile! Before you start any phone conversation, take a deep breath and smile. I mean a genuine, friendly smile which invites confidence and good humor, not a jaw-stretching phony one.

Almost magically, the prospect will sense your smile through the connection.

It also seems to make a difference when you smile while you record the message for your answering machine. I started to get more messages left after I started to try this tactic.

Please try it for a week. After that, you won't be able to stop yourself.

Power up Your Posture! Many people don't think about their [posture](#) and the effect on their own [health](#). Even fewer consider the effect which slumping in their chair while they make a phone call may have on the impression which the person at the other end gets.

If you recorded a call you made while slumped in your chair and then made another call while you stood, you might be amazed by the difference in your voice.

Remember, you need to record your voice to get a good idea of how it sounds to other people.

If you try this, there's no need to stand at attention like a [soldier](#). Just stand straight as you normally would with your legs slightly apart but not rigid.

Take a deep breath and remember to smile as you pick up the phone.

Don't Answer The Phone On The First Ring! I used to think it was polite and professional to answer each call as quickly as possible.

But, I found that people often just start to think about what they will say when the phone of the other person starts to ring. Give them a couple of rings to gather their thoughts, won't you?

Please, don't make any call without having prepared yourself and checked through what you need to tell or ask the person you are calling. That's the professional approach and all your prospects and friends deserve that.

On this same point, don't be too quick to start your reply to your prospect. Some people think more about what they say, so be sure that you are giving them enough time.

Let the Client hang up first: There seems to be a psychological [advantage](#) to letting the client disconnect from the call first. They have a feeling of control, don't feel that you hung up on them and will be sure that you gave them time to state their requirements and ask their questions.

Referrals

The last thing that you do before you leave a new client is to ask them, "Thank you for your order, Mr. Brown. Do you know anybody that could benefit as you are doing by using our [product](#)?"

More often than not, your customer will probably suggest one or two people that he knows who have similar business needs to himself.

If he doesn't, there is nothing lost. But, if you are willingly given the contact details of one person on average by each of your customers, you have the possibility of doubling your customer [list](#) in a short time for free!

That's a great return for just asking the question!

Whenever a customer suggests someone for you to contact, always ask if you can use their name when you contact their colleague.

This is the really important question. Asking their permission will help cement a good impression of your methods in your client's mind and their agreement means that your approach the new prospect will be boosted from a cold call to a recommendation from some they already know and [trust](#).

I know that some people will take the suggestion of a name as implied permission to use that client as a reference but, if you use their name without asking for their permission first, you may find that is the last name that the client ever suggests to you.

Follow-up

This is, as far as I'm concerned, one of the most important parts of my sales [process](#).

But, it's amazing how many people don't do it.

It's one of the things which I learnt to do by watching the other salespeople in the company where I began my sales career.

I noticed that the most successful sellers always contacted their new clients shortly after making the [sale](#). They wanted to:

Check that the product arrived on time and was in good condition.

Ask if the client had any questions about the product or its use.

Offer a small but useful free item which would enhance the client's use of the product.

Sometime this was a promotional premium. Others were more substantial. It was always something [useful](#) and it usually had the contact details for the seller and the [company](#) displayed prominently somewhere on it.

It became a silent reminder always in sight of the customer.

The salesperson would often deliver it in person. But that would be a low key visit where they would not make any attempt to sell any more products at that time.

Reassure the client that they've made a good decision with that purchase. Ask them if they have any questions about using the [product](#).

That will re-enforce in their mind that you and the company you represent will support them if there are any questions or problems.

Experienced sales people know that there is a condition called "buyer's remorse". It affects the majority of people when they make a major purchase for either their business or their home.

Their customers probably got other offers which were similar in value in their opinion, and they inevitably start to wonder about the decision almost straight away. Taking that extra step to follow-up is good insurance.

“Be a Team Player”

You have probably heard that suggestion many times before. But, most people only use it in the sense of formal teams.

The truth is that every bit of success came in part with the support and efforts of other people in your company.

It's the salesperson, or maybe the manager, who gets the [credit](#) and probably most of the cash, but we know that we did not and probably could not have done it alone.

Maintain a good relationship with the people in other areas of the company, and try to make their [job](#) as easy as possible.

W.W. "Foots" Clements, who started selling Dr Pepper when he left [college](#) and stayed with the same company (makers of Dr Pepper[®]) to become its Chief Executive Officer, had a sign on his desk which sums this up:

No ONE of us is as smart as ALL of us

Person to Person Power

If you want to contact a lot of people, that’s very easy to do through the Internet or with [advertising](#).

If you want to make a sale, the best way is face to face.

But, it is important that you make the best impression that you can with every chance you have.

Even the most talented [sportsman](#) or singer has to and review their performance and practice regularly to ensure that they are always at their best. CHANGE from HERE!

Listening is something we’ve all been doing from when we first opened our eyes but most people get so involved with an internal dialog and getting their own point across that we fail to understand what the other person really wants from us.

The experts estimate that we understand and can recall less than 35% of what people tell us.

It really doesn’t take much more effort to make sure that you get the whole message.

Just [focus](#) your attention on what the person is telling you.

Every person I know that has a reputation for being a good conversationalist is really a good listener who gives everyone plenty of time and attention.

Who Is Your Customer?

The important skill which every effective sale person must develop is the ability to know their customer.

The more knowledge you have about your prospect and their needs and aspirations, the more help you can give them and the more impressed they will be.

It will also reduce the time you need to spend with people that don't have enough interest in buying your product or don't have the means to pay for them.

The more you know about your ideal customer, the more likely you are to properly [plan](#) your sales process.

You might answer the question, “Who Is Your Customer?” with, “Everybody needs my widget!”

But you will waste a lot of resources if you try to attract everybody to your offer.

When you advertise in your phone book or a magazine, you pay to reach the number of people who are estimated to read it.

But, a lot of those people probably don't have any interest in your offer. Even those people who are interested in your product may not have the [finance](#) available to get it.

They may not have a need of it when they see your [advertisement](#).

They may have more pressing needs in their business or personally which prevent them from having much interest in your offers at the present time.

My Best Tactic

My best tactic for selling anything to people is to ask them questions.

I have found that most people will give you the information you need to focus your offers more tightly to their needs if you just show some genuine interest.

I have been approached by sales [people](#) who start telling me why I need their new Whizbang MKII even though they don't really know anything about me.

The days when a canned pitch can sell enough to make it worthwhile to [learn](#) it has long gone.

Don't tell them if you want to sell something to them. Ask them and let them help you sell them!

Open Questions

Be careful to ask open-ended questions. They're questions which give the prospect plenty of options with their answer.

If you're selling pet birds and you ask, "What sort of bird do you like?" the customer can answer in a variety of ways. Almost any answer will give you an opening to continue the conversation.

Even if they say something non-committal like, "I don't know", you could say, "Let me show you some different varieties which are really popular."

If you had first asked, "Do you like birds?" the only answers are, "Yes" or "No!". There's likely to be about fifty percent negative responses and that reply leaves you no chance of a follow-up.

Your Real Prospects

The prospects with the most potential to become customers are the people who see your advertisement and also closely fit these criteria:

They have a strong need for your widget: Almost everyone would like a new car but the only ones who are real prospects are the relatively small number which needs to replace their current vehicle or have convinced themselves that it is time that they do it.

The most valuable prospects are the first group who has no choice about whether to make a purchase. They will suffer some consequence if they delay getting their new vehicle.

They have the ability to pay for it: This should be number one. If they can't pay you for it or arrange finance, then you will not get a return from the time and effort you invest.

You can create a good impression that may result in some good word of mouth and possible future business by the way you treat everyone that approaches you but you need to focus most of your time and effort on the people who are ready to buy now from someone.

They are reachable at a reasonable cost: You may get enquiries sometimes from people that fit the above criteria but are located too far from your business for you to supply them at a cost that is fair to them and which will return a profit to you.

Another possible drawback might be that giving them any necessary after-sales support might not be economic.

You need to be aware of these factors when you are negotiating with each customer so that you don't make any commitments which put pressure on you because of time constraints or the costs involved or end in a situation where you cannot meet the customer's reasonable expectations.

Features and Benefits

This is a very important topic which causes great confusion for many people that are new to selling.

We need to know how what are the features and the benefits of the products or services which we offer and why we should know about the features but emphasize the benefits when we talk to potential customers.

For me, the features are the specifications of the product which are most important to the customer or unique to your product.

Features are important and the [information](#) which the customer needs to know about them should be readily available to them.

But, despite their importance, explaining them won't grab the client's imagination or cause them to sign the order like talking about the benefits will.

The benefits are the particular effects or outcomes which the customer will get from selecting and using your product.

For instance, our hammer has a natural [wood](#) handle and a soft but resilient cover (features) which cushions your hand (benefit) while the specially designed head delivers maximum power to the nail you are driving into the timber with just one stroke (benefits).

It is the benefits which give the customer a mental image and a desire to own the item.

Always emphasize the benefits to drive [home](#) the sale.

Networking

Business-related Groups.

I’m not suggesting that you try to promote your business or sell anything during any organization’s activities. That would result in you having neither customers nor a [club](#).

But, I have found that business clubs and organizations which you belong to can be a valuable source of new customers, suppliers and support.

If your focus is selling to retail customers, the other members all are retail customers of businesses like yours. They can also help you to spread the word about your products and services where there is an opportunity for mutual benefit.

Your active participation in helping to keep the Club running smoothly and enthusiastic participation in its activities brings you into contact with other members. When you have a need, who are you going to call? Someone in the phonebook or the person who sat next to you at last week’s function?

When someone asks you about something which you do not sell, you refer them to someone in the group that can help them.

You can expect that other members of the [group](#) will return the favor over time.

Another way that members can help each other is by cooperative promotions. An example would be a dog groomer offering a pet store owner a couple of free grooming sessions.

The owner could have their own [dog](#) treated so they knew the service was of a quality which they would be happy to use themselves and comfortable recommending to their customers.

Then, the groomer might give them a couple of vouchers each month which the pet store could use as prizes in a draw which anyone that bought something in their store could enter for free.

Another example would be for the pet store owner to provide discount coupons which their customers could use to get their dogs groomed at a lower cost.

Some businesses which had products in the same niche as each other but were not in direct competition, could give their customers discount coupons from one or more of the other related businesses.

Sometimes, they might get a [commission](#) from each other for the new business they referred but I believe this works best when the recommendations are on the basis of having used the service and found it good quality.

Writing Your Own Advertisement

Not all of us have the budget to have our advertisements prepared by professionals. So, I’m including some tips which I’ve learned from [writing](#) ads.

I’ve also learned a lot by studying adverts which have caught my attention and got me to act on the information.

I don’t [claim](#) to be a top copywriter, but I hope these tips will be as useful for you as they have been for me.

Write it like a letter to a friend, telling them how they will benefit by using the product or service.

Write at least twenty headlines for each advertisement. A professional copywriter might write hundreds!

The headline is one of the two most important parts of your advertisement.

The other is the call to action.

The headline has to catch the eye of your prospect quickly and compel them to keep reading.

The headline has to be about them and their needs.

Don’t make it about you; they are not interested in you! If you put your logo or even your own smiling face in the prime position at the top of your advertisement, how interested do you think people who don’t know you will be?

Don’t be afraid of emotion when you’re [writing](#) your ad.

Telling a story will engage more readers than a bland statement of facts.

Keep the story short and related to the benefits that your readers will get from buying and using your product.

Talk to your customer, don’t talk at them.

Think of them as a friend with a problem which you have the best answer for.

When you have a great headline, concentrate on your offer (your call to action).

Don't worry about [grammar](#) unless you're selling educational materials.

Include some bullet points when you have the space because they draw the reader's eye.

They're called "bullet points" because they are short and have great impact. Make sure that they are relevant.

Ease your prospect's mind with a guarantee that leaves no down-side for them.

Include your full contact details in the ad.

P.S. Always use a P.S.

People that have any interest at all in your offer will usually read the headline and maybe the bullet points.

Then they will look for your offer to find out how much it would cost them.

The P.S. will catch their eye and give you one last chance to convince them you have the answer they need.

But, studies show that many people who just skim your [advertisement](#) will read the P.S. carefully.

A common question is whether you should use short or long text? If you follow the suggestions above and keep everything relevant to your prospect's most pressing need, the people that are seriously interested will read long [text](#).

From headline to P.S., the readers will be focused on W.I.I.F.M. – What's in it for me?!

When you have an advertisement that works, keep using it until the response starts to drop.

Don't change because you get tired of it. Let the returns govern how long you keep using it.

Go Out and Sell!

I hope that the tips and other suggestions which I’ve put in my [book](#) will help you to achieve all that you desire for yourself and more.

The opportunities for a competent salesperson are almost unlimited, whatever the economy may be doing.

If nothing is sold, the world would stop!

I wish you great [success](#) with your new customers!

Adele Swanson

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)