

Who wants to be in sales? Raise your hand!

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Can you imagine waking up every Monday morning, feeling excited and happy, and telling yourself: "Boy, is this another wonderful day because I am going back to the office and work"?

Or, to make it even more exciting, you are telling yourself: "Boy, is this another wonderful day because I am going back to the office and do some selling - a lot of selling"?

Remember when you were still in kindergarten, and your teacher asked you: "What do you like to be when you grow up?" Did you reply with a very affirmative voice with your eyes wide open, "I WANT TO BE IN SALES"?

Very likely, you did not.

You would hear answers like "I want to be a doctor", "I want to be a pilot", or "I want to be a top model".

For those of you who have seen Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* (1949), you wonder whether you would be following the path of Willy Loman (the name of the character, the salesman) one day, if you are still working as a salesperson. For those who didn't see the play, he committed suicide.

So, what is wrong with being a salesperson? Shouldn't salespeople be treated as professionals and be respected?

Almost universally, most people have negative stereotypes about salespeople – the used-car salesperson is the second most distrusted profession, according to a survey, only topped by politicians. These stereotypes include thoughts of selfish deception, fast talkers, little integrity and as a result, people actually cringe at being sold something.

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It is too bad and we have nobody to blame but ourselves, as a salesperson. If we keep CARING about ourselves only instead of our customers, then at the end, nobody will care about us, as a salesperson.

You wonder why customers keep buying from the companies, products and people that they actually TRUST. Somewhere along the line, customers treat those people as their friends. When you are calling on friends, it does not even feel like selling.

As salespeople, we often find ourselves in a comfort zone. We may become a little complacent and develop a route mentality gravitating to the status of order takers without even knowing it.

Well, today's leading school of thought in sales is "STOP SELLING", instead learn how to "help them purchase" something that truly adds value by becoming a total solution provider, and by assisting them in finding their buying roadmap. Becoming a right solution provider means helping your customers solve their problems (with your or others' solution if yours is not a very good fit), and matching their buying process.

If you concentrate on fulfilling the customers' needs rather than your own, you will ultimately satisfy both your personal needs and the needs of your company. In fact, the better you become at doing it, the more success is multiplied because people will not only more likely buy from you but also refer you to others.

A key ingredient to developing the appropriate attitude is to put your customers' needs as the first priority, and really care about them. That includes learning to really listen to the customers and by asking sincere open ended questions that

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are aimed at identifying clearly their problems and their pain and to identify an appropriate solution - specifically for the buyer!

This is not accomplished by resorting to the complex and manipulative closing techniques you may have learned in the old days in sales school. "Stop Selling" is about honest sincere empathy for customers' problems and searching for the right solutions.

Once you find the pain and assist the buyer in identifying their conscious and sub-conscious buying criteria, the right solution can be developed. A sale is made when these criteria are sufficiently met. There are no objections for you to overcome. Price is rarely an issue and the request for a proposal is generally a formality to confirm the conversation and as a basis for placing the order. Your competitor is unable to find the right solution for your customer because they are not listening as hard as you are. Your competitor has not built up the TRUST that is necessary, and your competitor does not really CARE about your customer.

When was the last time you went to a clinic and you challenged your doctors' remedy? When was the last time you went on an airplane and you questioned the pilot's flying routines?

Okay, you might wonder why they choose a top model that looks so thin, but you usually do respect the professionalism the models are showing, and how they present what you like to see when they are on the catwalk.

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The point is, doctors and pilots (and models, for that matter) are not any different from salespeople. They are providing services and solutions that you believe in because you TRUST them – because they do CARE about you. They always will do their best to understand what you need, and they fulfill it.

“If they fulfill it, you will come again and again”, remember? You feel good when they can keep doing what they do best. You do not see them as sales people. You see them as, well, friends – someone that you can rely on; someone you can TRUST, and someone who CARES about you.

Imagine you wake up every morning, feeling really excited and happy, and telling yourself: “Boy, is this another wonderful day because I am going to meet my friends, understand their needs, and provide value and help them to solve their problems and reduce their stress?”

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With this mindset, you can love your job.

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William is a senior veteran in the business world, also helped to attract and confirm investors to set up overseas companies; and was involved in a few merger and acquisitions throughout his career. He earned his stripes through his practical experience in the actual market.

He is keen to help and coach companies to explore their own potential, understand their core competence, and ride through the adversity of the economy. He is especially interested in situation where companies have to deal with constant changes, new market developments, multicultural environments, fierce competitions, and leadership development, particularly in sales. His expertise lies in building and managing sales and marketing teams, key account management, tactical negotiation and closing deals, forming alliances and partnerships through training and coaching within the organization to develop a sales- and subsequently results-oriented culture.

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