

21 Timeless Insights for Sales Success

An essential handbook that could
propel your selling career

Kurt Newman

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What Others Have Said About This Book

The early to mid 20th century saw a boom in the creativity and spread of the sales professional remains a much maligned figure in casual conversation. However, the skills and motivation required to be successful in the field of sales has never been more important than in today's world. The rapid advances and changes in technology have had a large impact on the way buyers and sellers do business around the world, but the demand for and importance of sales skills has also never been greater.

In this book, Kurt distils the core attributes of what is required to be a top performing sales professional in today's market – and staying there. Whether the reader has been a sales person for 30 years or is just starting out, this book is an easy to read guide with practical advice based on experience and broad research over many years.

*Terry Oomens
Director of Venues
Staging Connections*

I have had the good fortune of working closely with Kurt Newman to reform large field sales forces across multiple industries, and it is no mistake that my success and the success of the sales teams was achieved following the teaching and coaching principles developed by Kurt. I believe sales is the greatest job in the world, a profession which touches almost everyone from a selling or buying perspective, and has opportunities and challenges which are utterly unique, and not addressed readily by tertiary education choices.

Over several years Kurt has developed and refined what I believe is the most effective and relevant relationship selling, coaching and performance improvement program available in any market, and I am proud to continue my

learning and development with Kurt to the present day. The collection of articles which you are about to read are all designed to impart slices of the manifest knowledge that Kurt has developed on this subject, and will no doubt provide a number of aha moments for you, especially if you are currently in a sales role or managing sales people. I encourage you to allow these slices to challenge your thinking, and put them to the test knowing there have been many hundreds of successful sales people who have already done just that, and who will credit Kurt with being instrumental in helping them get to where they are today in the same way that I do.

*Phil Saddleton
National Accounts Manager
Metcash Food & Grocery*

In this book, Kurt demonstrates his incredible level of knowledge and experience in sales management, sales coaching and business development. His energy to be at the forefront of strategies to build sales capability is clearly evident. He personally continues to be an avid learner, always pushing the boundaries with his exploration of modern sales techniques and tools. He expertly combines this with traditional methods to create winning sales strategies that are aligned to the demand on a sales person in today's market place. With that in mind, Kurt demonstrates a true sense of empathy and practicality in this book — from his own experience he knows that it's not always plain sailing. In fact, selling is never “easy” and for many, today is particularly tough.

The content in this book addresses this and provides advice and techniques for those who are finding their selling life very challenging. Kurt provides insight through his in-depth knowledge of working through the sales cycle and his ability to organise and add structure to selling processes.

As a fellow consultant, striving to reach the status that Kurt has reached, a trusted adviser and value creation partner to his clients, I trust and value his professional insight and advice. I believe that this book and any form of engagement with Kurt Newman will truly add value to a salesperson at any level and enable better selling results.

*Edward Turvil
Director – Business Transformation
Mercuri Urval*

I have followed and practised Kurt Newman's sales strategies for over 20 years. His comments, beliefs and approach to mastering sales and creating long-term client relationships really do work; to the effect it has helped me greatly in establishing client relationships that have lasted well over 20 years. You too

can master the art of sales and client relationships by following Kurt's proven practices.

*Lyall Foy
Executive Manager – National Accounts
SKILLED Workforce Services*

I would like to congratulate Kurt for what is an amazing read and one I have thoroughly enjoyed. We live in an ever-changing and evolving world, so I would highly recommend any sales professional read this e-book if they want to take the next step in enhancing their career.

Personal development in my mind is imperative in the success of any individual, and I feel this e-book goes a long way in creating those foundations...A must read!!!

*Jim Haritonas
Regional Sales Manager
For Arts Sake*

The book is clear and straightforward. It addresses sales as something everyone can practice, learn and enjoy – there really is a science to it. That said, it is clear that under new pressures many salespeople are guilty of overlooking the basics.

Sales today are more difficult in every way. Whether new to the industry or a 20-year veteran, there is something for all here. It's a simple read and I believe all sales people should refer back to it on a regular basis.

*Mark Griffiths
Commercial Director
ACCO Australia Pty Ltd*

I was first introduced to Kurt Newman from Sales Consultants four years ago while I was in the position of state sales manager. I had the privilege to be a part of the management training that was conducted by Kurt, which was tailored for our business and was a perfect fit. This book has grabbed my attention again as it felt like a positive review from a year ago. I regularly revisit articles to further my knowledge on sales. You will be quite surprised what this book can offer. It will open your eyes to sales styles, selling in tough times and the answer to gain more sales. I would be happy to speak to anyone who would like to find out more.

*Brad Suffolk
Sales Manager, New South Wales
Inghams Enterprises Pty Limited*

A comprehensive survival kit for both salespeople and leaders. Kurt addresses key sales obstacles that we face every day. The scene is set for 2013 and he quickly dispels the myth that selling is just a numbers game. The topics discussed are presented in a logical order, and as I read my way through them what sprung to mind was how a manager could expand on and workshop so much of this material with his or her people.

A recurring theme is the importance of attitude. If salespeople, and managers for that matter, are resilient, have strong desire, commitment and take ownership of their activity and results, then learning new stuff and using it are very achievable. If, on the other hand, their minds are in the wrong space, their beliefs don't support them when selling and they are prone to excuse making, then it will be an uphill battle.

As Kurt points out, more people try sales and fail than any other profession, yet the top salespeople will over-achieve whatever the market conditions.

Julian Griffith
Managing Director
The Good Peanut

It's great to find a concise book of common sense collected into such a readable form as this. Kurt Newman has produced a must-have read for anyone who is looking to understand the issues that lead to success and failure in selling. In a collection of short articles, Kurt deconstructs common fallacies and puts his finger on the essence of successful sales.

Thoroughly recommended.

Paul Beaumont
Managing Director
Full Throttle Consulting

A must read for anyone in a sales role! This book addresses all the elements involved in successful selling. It discusses techniques for sales personnel to develop awareness of personal impact and self-awareness, and provides a range of proven tools for increasing productivity and effectiveness in sales planning. If you want to develop a successful sales career, this book is essential reading.

Phil Meyer
Life Fellow
NZ Institute of Management

Acknowledgements

It's been a real pleasure getting to know so many salespeople and being part of their lives. They have shared their true inner selves during training and coaching sessions and expressed deep seated fears - but their desire and commitment to sales has propelled them on to great personal and professional victories. Many have achieved sales awards for outstanding performance. Many have now moved into sales coaching and/or sales management roles. Their experiences are what made this book possible and I got to know and understand more about myself as I got to know more about them.

There were many shared experiences including witnessing their very first sales confirmation, or breaking into an account they thought they would never have a hope of getting, or achieving a sales target that was thought out of reach. Some have attained great career milestones and in doing so they have set a standard of sales integrity that has lifted expectations of what is possible. Through their behaviour they have influenced and motivated others to become salespeople, who have in-turn, become better and more effective in their roles.

I appreciate the openness of the sales managers I have coached and mentored. Though they had completed a range of sales training and development programs with their employers, they wanted to continue to improve their sales competence. Their motivation was to become better sales coaches, and to do so they wanted to be able to demonstrate a higher standard of sales competence when working with their salespeople.

I want to thank the CEOs, business owners and general managers who allowed me into their companies and believed and trusted that we could achieve what needed to be achieved. Their honesty in expressing their goals, difficulties and frustrations was the foundation and the starting point of our relationship. The collaborative manner in which we worked together was a pleasure, though it wasn't always smooth sailing. At times difficult tasks and decisions had to be made from both perspectives, some of which caused me sleepless nights - but thank you for the experience and education.

Clients who pushed the bar higher and stretched everyone to a new reality of performance let me thank you. We all didn't necessarily enjoy the ride but are glad we did it.

To the difficult prospects who tried to give me a hard time, your behaviour helped me to remain grounded and use your rebuttal statements as examples for other salespeople to learn. To the prospects who expected the impossible

turnaround let me wish you well.

To those of you who have written endorsements I thank you for taking the time to read the book and for your feedback. I appreciate the phone calls and emails and for letting me know it was like doing a mini refresher course.

And finally, and most importantly, thank you for selecting this book. I hope you gain the value that others have. If you have any questions or want to speak to me, please feel free to get in touch.

Kurt Newman, April 2013

*Thank you to my wife and business partner
June for your loving support and insight.*

*To Rebecca and Dominic Moore
my daughter and son-in-law
thank you for your commitment
and attention to detail in
editing this book.*

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About the Author



Kurt is the co-founder of Sales Consultants Pty Ltd. His expertise is in improving the sales effectiveness of his clients' businesses by generating more sales and in a more profitable manner. His clients range from small to multinational companies and he has successfully delivered projects in Australia, the Middle East and Asia.

As a salesperson, Kurt successfully sold products and services in the four major market/product segments; new product sales, consultative sales, relationship sales and retail.

During his selling career he created record sales for three companies in two industries and won many sales awards for outstanding performance. This background gives him the advantage of being able to demonstrate selling competence, a powerful learning tool when coaching salespeople. He has guided many individual salespeople to greater success and many companies to vastly improved profits.

Kurt has studied business and human behaviour. His expertise and opinion is sought after on a range of sales related subjects in both print media (*Management Today, Training and Development and The Australian Financial Review*) and web-based business sites (*The BNET Report and Dynamic Business*). Furthermore, he has been featured in the Qantas In-Flight Radio Program 'Talking Business' and writes monthly articles for a global audience of subscribers.

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Foreword

Salespeople are paid to get things done.

Of all the roles in today's organisations, none have the sustained pressure that salespeople work under – every day, every week, every quarter and every year.

The pressure to achieve, keep achieving and achieve more is relentless. Despite this pressure, many, many salespeople do achieve their targets; they get things done for their organisations – and satisfy customer demands in the process.

But – do they achieve as much as they could?

Most salespeople forget to do the one thing that will allow them to be successful in the daily pressured situations that are, for them, simply business as usual. In the words of the late Steven Covey, they forget – or often simply feel they don't have time – to “sharpen the saw”. Covey was a master of human performance, who helped hundreds of thousands of people achieve more in their lives. His seventh habit of effectiveness was a reminder that we all – whether we're rocket scientists, brain surgeons, plumbers, accountants – or salespeople – need to take time to reflect on how we do what we do so we can do it better.

This short book will help every salesperson sharpen their saw.

If, as a professional salesperson you want to keep achieving – and achieve more – read this book. Along the way, you'll often nod your head in recognition of the simple truths that Kurt's pages contain.

Like any professional reviewing their practice, if this is the only benefit that you receive – then it's worth way more than the hour or two it will take to read. As a sales manager, editor and publisher, I've read hundreds of books on sales, marketing and human behaviour, and I guarantee that you'll get more from this book than just reminders. Every reader who looks closely into each short chapter will take away small gems which – over time – will convert into the thing we all need to deliver as salespeople – a healthy pipeline of sustainable sales.

Enjoy the read and look forward to achieving more.

Paul Sparks, Editor, Trend Business Publishing, Sydney, April, 20

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The five common myths in sales and what really works

*Sales myths are harmless in themselves.
After all they are only myths right?*

_____ Thinking _____

No, wrong. Salespeople and sales managers who believe these myths and act on them unwittingly create client relationship problems and lose sales.

Myth 1 – It’s a numbers game

Having a list of names and repeatedly “cold calling” until the prospective client finally speaks to you is impersonal and is both tedious for the salesperson and can project a product peddling image. The prospective client in many cases will reject you by becoming defensive or aggressive and may even hang up the phone. So how do you develop a trusting relationship when the prospective

client is just another number? The answer is you can't.

What works?

Focus on the quality of each interaction and not purely on a number. Base your sales calls on prospective clients who have genuine potential to buy your product or service. By researching and finding common industry or business problems relating to the prospective client that your product or service can solve will make the phone call so much easier. This is because you will be able to gain involvement around an issue they are interested in discussing. For example *"...Do you mind if I ask what do you do when your current supplier is out of stock?... We have worked with numerous companies that have experienced the same difficulty and through our extensive network can guarantee with a 98.5% accuracy that your order will be delivered in full within 24 hours...Is this something you would like to discuss in more detail over a meeting?..."*

When calling, establish an open and friendly manner aimed at creating mutual respect. Use open-ended questions, survival phrases and good language. Begin by getting yourself in the right mental frame of mind by deleting language that will disengage them. For example, do not use or even think in terms such as *"cold calling."* Replace this with *"new calls"* because that describes what it is – a new call. There is nothing *"cold"* about calling someone for the first time.

Myth 2 – For every “no” you are closer to a “yes”

Using the same approach for every call and expecting a different outcome just doesn't make sense. The chance of a *"no"* becoming a *"yes"* is highly unlikely. If it did, it would be more through pure luck than anything else. A high volume of calls in itself won't produce sales success.

What works?

Learn what has been going wrong with your sales calls and change what needs to be changed in any area of your approach. This could, for example, be how you project yourself over the phone and affect things like your vocal tone. Do you sound confident or is there a slight quiver in your voice? What about the pace you are speaking? Is it too fast and the prospective client needs to ask you to repeat what you have said? Is your pace too slow? In this case they may hang up or tell you to hurry it along? Also be aware of the phrases you use. Too often unconsciously negative phrases are used that automatically create rebuttals. Read the following out aloud and hear the difference between *"What you will*

have to do is...” and *“What we will need to do is...”* Which statement would you respond to more positively?

If you are getting too many no’s perhaps you may need to also review your selling skills?

Myth 3 – You don’t need a script

Yes you do. Not using a script creates its own set of problems. For example, if you were to mentally freeze half way through a sentence and with no notes to refer to, you could find yourself verbally fumbling using non-words such as “Umm”, “Err”, or “Okay” and therefore sound unprofessional. If the experience is traumatic enough this could directly lead to sales call reluctance.

What works?

Depending on whether you are trying to get an appointment or selling over the phone, your approach and the amount of time you spend on the phone will vary. Develop your script and list core questions you will ask. Then practice, practice, and practice until it feels comfortable and comes naturally to you. Your script is there only as a back-up should you get stuck and is not to be read verbatim as listening to someone reading from a script is impersonal and disengages the prospective client. Knowing your script to the point of sounding natural and this will also build your self-confidence, which will also in turn be reflected in your vocal tone.

Myth 4 – You need to welcome rejection because it is part of sales

By expecting rejection there is a good chance it will happen. No one likes to be rejected. But you can attract rejection if you sound nervous and anxious when you approach a prospective client. Rejection can also happen when a prospective client is simply having a bad day and you happen to call.

What works?

Prepare for the possibility of being rejected by developing skills to turn around any rebuttal or sales objection (See Chapter 17). What is really important to understand is that any rejection is a business refusal and therefore not to be taken as personal rejection. You might be proposing, for example, an appointment that has been refused. This doesn’t mean you are rejected; it could simply be a

timing issue. What is worth remembering is a prospective client may reject an appointment this time but may agree the next time you call.

Myth 5 – Close often and close hard

This is high pressure selling and it's from the old school of sales. It is a single-minded focus to try to sell a product or service with minimal regard for the client's real needs or how they may feel. The response is often a sales objection. If pushed too hard they will hang up the phone, or if it's a walk-in sales call they will ask you to leave. This does not build long term trusting business relationships.

What works?

Don't assume the prospective client will buy what you think they should buy. It will only attract sales objections. Relax and live in the moment with the prospective client by asking a range of questions - preferably open and qualifying questions to uncover what they really need. For example, "*What will the restructure mean to you in terms of your career*"... "*Under the new structure who will be making the purchasing decisions?*" Then actively listen to their response. Your aim in the first instance is to create trust and not to get the sale. Yes you read correctly – not to get the sale. When you create trust and build a solid relationship, the prospective client will be in an open frame of mind to listen to what product or service you are recommending and why. Closing will feel a natural conclusion to the sales interview for both yourself and the prospective client. When closing in this manner it is not uncommon for the prospective client to initiate the close and therefore they will feel they have bought from you rather than having been sold to.

There are many other sales myths, some of which have been around for decades, but the ones listed are the most common. Myths need to be acknowledged for what they are. A myth that was perpetuated by someone a long time ago, and for reasons unknown, perhaps remain to this day due to simple ignorance. Never act on a myth but always implement what really does work.

What Does This Chapter Mean in Your World?

1. What myths other than those listed have you heard?

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2. Have you acted on a myth? If so, what was the outcome?

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3. What did you learn from the experience?

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4. What have you learnt about sales myths?

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What makes an 'A' player in sales?

*I asked friends who are not in sales
what they think of salespeople*

_____ Thinking _____

Typical responses included “*They talk too much*”, “*They are pushy*” and “*They can't be trusted.*” They rate salespeople in the same or similar way as they would politicians in terms of lacking in trust and credibility. If you were to ask people at random, you would more than likely get similar answers. So why does the sales profession get such a bad rap?

The truth is stranger than fiction because those who are successful in sales actually don't fit this negative sales stereotype. In fact, these salespeople often have behaviours opposite of what many people would think or expect.

What is interesting about sales is that more people try sales and fail than any other profession. This is because the entry level is usually low and most people assume it requires little in the way of intelligence or ability. Those who have tried sales and failed discovered it's a tough career and one not for those who are timid. Most lack the desire and commitment needed to succeed in sales. This is particularly true for those who work in the corporate sector and 'do sales' for a year or two because it will help them progress their careers. They soon learn that sales is different and many happily go back to their previous roles.

What makes sales different from other careers is:

- Every day you need to handle rejection and even hostility at times
- You have little or no control of the behaviour of prospects or clients
- You are measured in every way — from the number of sales calls you do through to conversion rates and profit margins
- You need to adapt quickly to many different personality types
- A positive outlook is needed, particularly when faced with client related problems
- You need self-control. This is the ability to balance the pressure of needing to achieve sales targets and grow client relationships.

So what are the common traits of the most successful salespeople? What makes them stand out? Based on our research and experience, gained in 25 years of developing sales competence in salespeople, the following attributes appear in the make-up of the most successful:

1. Desire

Desire is the passion, the drive to succeed, and the inner fire that fuels and propels them into action. Desire comes from being dissatisfied with the current situation. The greater the dissatisfaction the greater the desire being ignited from within.

2. Commitment

Commitment is being welded to an idea, outcome, or an action. It's the "stick-ability" to overcome obstacles whilst moving forward toward their goal. These obstacles can be work related, such as competitor challenges or personal self-doubt.

3. Independence

These salespeople are attracted to the freedom that sales offers — the sense of feeling self-employed. They like to be self-sufficient and maintain full control over their activities, such as who to contact and when. Along with independence comes a dislike of rules and regulations which they tend to “*bend*” when given a chance. They tend to upset individuals in the support team because of their unrealistic expectations at times. They expect loyalty and full support from their company so they can do what they do best – sell.

They avoid paperwork, report writing and what they consider red tape. Reports, when written, are brief and to the point. These successful salespeople like people. They enjoy being with them and delight in influencing but seldom care deeply whether others like them. This enables them not to fall prey for the need for approval or to be timid.

4. Trustworthy

Trust is central to building client relationships. Trust is developed when integrity and competence are demonstrated with every interaction. The client has a firm belief in the salesperson’s reliability, their predictable behaviour and honesty. It is not uncommon for the client to proceed with a decision even though they may not fully understand how the solution will work because of the level of trust that has been established. They don’t need proof to make their decision and competitors are automatically locked out.

5. Productivity

These top sales performers have a need to generate more sales. They are energetic, enthusiastic and want to see tangible results for their effort. This energy may not always be shown openly. Trade shows and conferences are seen as a working holiday. They socialise with a purpose by connecting with individuals with whom they have something in common, whether it’s business or some other personal pursuit that may result in a sale.

6. Traditional

Contrary to what the average person may think about salespeople being impulsive and somewhat undisciplined, in reality these salespeople like routine and hate having it interrupted, for example if they have to attend a meeting that wasn’t planned. They embrace structure and order. They don’t try unproven

ideas simply because they are new and different. Radical ideas are rejected outright. They stick with what they know has been tried and works even if it is dated. However, once convinced about a fresh approach or idea, they will do whatever it takes to develop the new skill or behaviour.

7. Non Academic

This doesn't mean salespeople are not intelligent. Their practical nature leans toward doing rather than studying something they may never use. Theory without a practical application is rejected outright. They would prefer to spend time developing skills that will result in more sales and earn them income. These salespeople are natural doers rather than reflective thinkers. This doesn't mean they don't evaluate what may have gone wrong during the sales call. They quickly evaluate what went wrong and why, and then focus on what they will do during the next sales call to correct or fine tune their skills. They don't waste time agonising about things.

8. Opportunistic

Salespeople of this calibre are calm and relaxed, yet have a high level of energy and thrive on challenges. They have more physical energy than most and they look for a way to get a positive outcome in every sales activity. Satisfaction is derived from overcoming difficulties. They capitalise on opportunities by beating the system to win sales which can sometimes upset management and the internal support team.

9. Able to Handle Fear

Successful salespeople are known for their ability to cope with pressure, handle criticism, rejection or anger. They know a sale requires a level of assertiveness that must occur naturally without fear or timidity, all whilst being able to empathise with the client's situation. They have learnt not to take rejection or conflict as a personal affront. Salespeople who take rejection personally or have difficulty with conflict will become overly cautious, timid and avoid prospecting, and therefore lose sales opportunities.

10. Don't Need Approval

These salespeople are naturally social individuals, and whilst appearing friendly they are focused on achieving their sales objectives. They don't need to be liked or seek approval from others. They are not concerned with what a

prospective client may think of them personally. Instead, they earn professional respect which empowers them to ask the tough questions in order to uncover problems that other salespeople miss and this ultimately leads to them winning the business.

11. Status Seeking

The best salespeople seek recognition as proof of their ability and importance. They want to be seen as experts on what is right and in the best interest for their clients. They regard themselves as well intentioned people who are willing to help others. This may explain why many are involved in community based organisations in their spare time. They enjoy the power, authority and status that is achieved through their hard work, and are strongly aware of image and reputation. They are comfortable in rewarding themselves for their successes, which explains why many drive prestige cars and wear quality clothing.

What Does This Chapter Mean in Your World?

1. In your opinion why do you think more people try sales and fail?

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2. Why is sales different from other careers?

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3. What is the difference between desire and commitment?

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4. What is meant by the term non-academic?

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5. What have you done to handle criticism and rejection in sales?

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6. What attributes are you going to develop to become the salesperson you want to be?

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