

Going for Gold

How the formula for beating the 1980 Soviet hockey team can help you beat your biggest competitor

Editor's Note: In this column space of *Vet-Advantage*, we will give you insight into both basic and advanced tactical selling techniques that will help you serve customers better than ever before. But let us preface this with a warning. The material in these articles is not for salespeople who are not ready to push themselves harder than ever before. It is for the professional who seeks constant improvement, fresh ways to serve customers, and constant learners who are never satisfied with being average. If this is you, it's great to have you on board. Now let's get to work!

“Do you believe in miracles? Yes!” were the words play-by-play man Al Michaels shouted as the U.S. Olympic Hockey team defeated the “unbeatable” Soviets at the 1980 Winter Olympics. If you are old enough to remember that game, you are old enough to remember the exhilaration and pride that all Americans felt as a band of college and amateur players took on an opponent that was bigger, more talented, more skilled and a whole lot faster.

The lesson learned was that talent alone does not create winners. Recently, I had the opportunity to interview Rob McClanahan on my weekly radio show. McClanahan was one of the key players on that Gold Medal team, and everything he said applied to business. The following were his lessons from that victory over the Soviets on the way to the gold:

You control your ability

Ability comes in two ways. You are either born with it, or you acquire it. The great thing is, you can be born with less ability than somebody else, but *choose* to work harder to acquire more. The starting point may not be your choice, but the ending point is. So what are the ways you can increase your ability? The best way is to dedicate time each week to work on it.



Playing the game is a lot more fun than practicing, isn't it? But enjoying prep and practice time is a choice, and one that has a direct impact on business "game day."

Enjoy every moment of preparation as much as you enjoy the victory

This one isn't easy. Playing the game is a lot more fun than practicing, isn't it? But enjoying prep and practice time is a choice, and one that has a direct impact on business "game day." For instance, are you somebody who dreads attending the sales meeting because you won't get anything out of it? Or are you the type who looks forward to getting new ideas from peers, leaders and partners? Are you the type that would rather jump off a bridge than "role play" a sales or leadership coaching scenario? Or are you the type that, despite the pain, knows the only way you can become great at selling is by *practicing* selling. It's a choice. By choosing to *enjoy* learning and practice time, rather than loath it, you will be more apt to do it. And by out-practicing your sometimes-stronger competition, you will outperform them on game day.

What you should practice

Salespeople should craft, then practice, delivering the following:

- The introduction you use on a cold call that will create respect and trust, then curiosity.
- The specific questions you ask to find out what the prospect likes and doesn't like about their current supplier.

- The under 25 second “elevator pitch” you use when a prospect asks, “Who are you and what makes you so much better than the competition?”
- Common responses to common objections like, “Your competition is cheaper. I want to think about it. I never did business with your company.”
- The exact wording to use when trying to up sell or cross sell a prospect. For example, “Before I go, would you be interested in hearing about a product that is helping other clients ... (add benefit).”

Managers and leaders should prepare and practice the following:

- Questions that will be used to create trust in a coaching session.

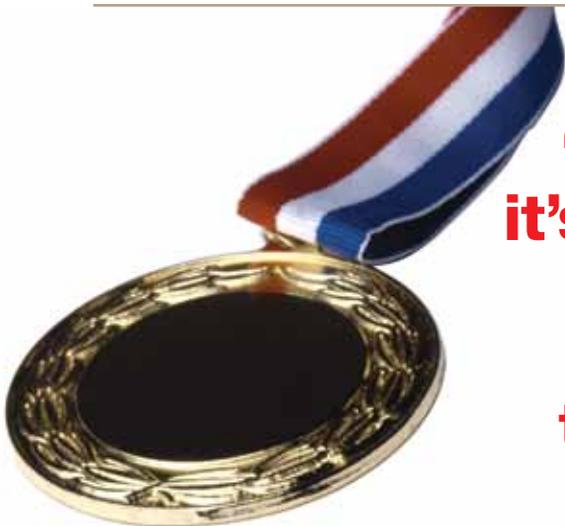
or external). That confidence will turn into more orders and commitments.

Second half dreams

Dream Big Things: Herb Brooks, coach of the 1980 Gold Medal team, said it well when he said:

“We should be dreaming. We grew up as kids having dreams, but now we’re too sophisticated as adults, as a nation. We stopped dreaming. We should always have dreams.”

So what do you dream for yourself in the second half of 2009? What does your business “miracle” look like? Perhaps



What does your business “miracle” look like? Maybe it’s imagining the elation you will feel when you, despite the odds, do something that even your peers never thought possible.

- Questions that will get the employee to open up and be honest.
- Responses to be used *if* an employee brings up a question or concern.
- Exactly what to say to close a coaching session or meeting that will create action.

Prepare the above and practice the delivery of each ... and enjoy doing it! Watch how that enjoyment turns to confidence in front of your customers (either internal

it’s a dream about winning that impossible account? Maybe it’s standing at the awards podium at your next sales meeting as your company’s top performer? Maybe it’s imagining the elation you will feel when you, despite the odds, do something that even your peers never thought possible.

So this week, when somebody asks you if you believe in “miracles,” think of that day when a coach and a group of young Americans taught us that whether it’s sports, business or life, the answer to that question should be a resounding, “Yes!” ■

To listen to Brian’s radio interview with 1980 Hockey Gold Medalist Rob McClanahan, go to www.preciseselling.com/Radioaccess.htm. Brian is author of the book, “20 Days to the Top - How the PRECISE Selling Formula Will Make You Your Company’s Top Sales Performer in 20 Days or Less.” To learn more, go to www.preciseselling.com.