

Vet-Advantage PRIDE

Five steps that will make you famous in a slow economy.

»»» Over the next several issues of *Vet-Advantage*, we will give you insight into both basic and advanced tactical selling techniques 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 every before. It **IS** for the professional who seeks constant improvement, fresh ways to serve their customers, and constant learners who are never satisfied being average. If this is **YOU**, it's great to have you. Now let's get to work!

Do you know what's great about a recession? It gives top performing salespeople an opportunity to conquer their competition. Average and below average performers in virtually every facet of business (including sales) use a slowing economy as an excuse to slow down themselves. Companies stop hiring, advertisers stop advertising, and salespeople stop prospecting. However, the best time to stand out is when everybody is afraid to stand up.

As a salesperson, what can you do each day that puts you into "attack" mode? Well, you have about 960 opportunities (16 waking hours x 60 minutes) to make it happen. The trick is to make sure the percentage of successful moments far outweighs the percentage of stale or unproductive moments. A successful moment at work is one that makes you more valuable to your customers, work associates, company or industry. The following moments in your day, while necessary, are not necessarily increasing your value. Yet many average reps burn up countless minutes in these areas.

- Drive time
- Doing quotes
- Putting in orders
- Tracking down product information
- Checking e-mail and voicemail



By Brian Sullivan

On the other hand, the following activities contain "Vet-Advantage PRIDE." This PRIDE can raise your value ... and your commission check.

- **P**rospecting for new customers
- **R**elationship making
- **I**nfluence activity
- **D**eviation
- **E**ducating yourself

Prospecting for new customers

Get out of the office and into the **offense**. Let me explain. Just last week a tenured salesperson told me that business wasn't great. I then asked him if he was out looking for new accounts, and he told me he was not. He said that with the bad economy, nobody was buying anything so he found no reason to cold call.

He's making excuses.

That is what below average reps do in a bad economy. But guess what? When people feel pain they look for change, and run from the status quo. Are you going to be that change that people seek? Now is the time to be aggressive.

There is another benefit to going on **offense**. In business, the best way to defend your own accounts is to make people defend theirs (this doesn't mean by low balling on price). If you are somebody who is spending more time in the office and not enough time on **offense**, your value is decreasing while your competitor is increasing. There is no plateauing in this business. Your value is either going up or down.

Relationships

Create a list of 10 people both inside and outside of your business that can make you smarter. Call them to set up a breakfast, lunch or other meeting (happy hour or golf is often a nice way to spend a moment of PRIDE). Each moment you spend with a networking partner increases your value. The relationships that are made, along with the information you will receive, will make you more valuable to your company and your customers. Reach out to at least one person in your network each week and be prepared with one or two specific questions. Don't reach out just for the sake of "reaching out!" Set a clear objective. An example might be, "My objective in meeting with Joe is to get him to tell me at least three things that he

“Life is a succession of moments. To live each one is to succeed.”

— Corita Kent (1918-1986),
American artist and teacher

does to separate him from the competition.” By setting a specific objective for your networking meeting, you will get more out of it. In that meeting, find a way to help Joe in three ways as well. That will keep him an active member of your PRIDE relationship file.

Influence your activity

If you are interested in saying goodbye to the Poconos, and saying hello to the Bahamas, you need to be very specific about what you want to sell and how much of it you want to sell each day. Pick one or two products today that you think you could sell a ton of and plan to prospect on *every* call you make for 20 days. Before you do, though, think

about how many of those products you would like to sell. For instance, if you want to sell seven widgets by the end of the month, think about how many prospecting calls you need to make and how many formal presentations you need to deliver to get to those seven sales. For example:

- “To get seven sales, I believe I will need to set up 10 live presentations (70 percent close ratio ... not bad!). But to get to 10 presentations, I believe I need to prospect with 50 customers.”

Now that you know how many prospects you need to talk to about the widgets (That’s 50, by the way), it’s time to get to work. Take comfort in knowing that your “recession-

morrow or the next day? That note says you care, you pay attention to detail, you have five-star follow up skills and you have time to do the little things for that customer. That note can say those things even better than your lips can; because it is done in the spirit of service. If you prefer to write the notes in your office at night, no problem, just get it done. Also, for you deviants who do everything online, check out this online card creation service at www.sendoutcards.com/precise. It allows you to pick a card, personalize it and mail it with your handwriting all from one site.

Educate yourself

The most successful people in any business are the ones who schedule time each week to learn something new. Grab

Read a trade journal, visit a competitive Web site, call a current customer to ask for feedback, read a sales book ... or whatever! The PRIDE Rep doesn't get smarter by accident.

excuse using” competition, because they didn’t go through the above exercise, will stop prospecting at about 12, long before you have arrived at your number of 50.

Deviate

Vet-Advantage PRIDE Reps don’t look, act, think or smell like the average salesperson in a slow economy. They aren’t afraid to take valuable minutes each day to do something a little “deviant.” One simple way to deviate from your competition is to take 15 minutes to hand write Thank You notes to customers and prospects that you met with that day. Keep the notes, some envelopes and a book of stamps in your briefcase, car, or by your phone. Then after every high value call you make, take one minute to write it, seal it and stamp it. Then find the first blue mailbox and send it. Think about it. When will that prospect or customer get your note? To-

your PDA or open up your Outlook calendar right now and set a recurring appointment with yourself. Make that appointment between 30 and 60 minutes for the same time each week. Read a trade journal, visit a competitive Web site, call a current customer to ask for feedback, read a sales book ... or whatever! The PRIDE Rep doesn’t get smarter by accident.

Lastly, remember the only difference between top performers and the average is how they look at each moment, each hour and each day ... especially when everybody is saying business is slow. There is a sense of urgency in high achievers that has them keeping score between productivity and wasted time. Top performers simply come closer to 960 Moments of PRIDE than others. When they roll over to set the alarm clock before bed, it is at that moment they can tell themselves, “I made my objectives, I served others, I made a difference, and I did my best. Today was a great day!” ■

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