

# CRUSH THE COMPETITION

THE ADAGE GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS: A LITTLE BIT OF  
COMPETITION IS HEALTHY. WE DISAGREE. IN SALES, THE ONLY  
YOUR COMPETITOR THAT'S HEALTHY IS NO COMPETITION. YOU MAY LIKE  
IF YOU'RE DEAD HONEST, YOU MAY EVEN BE FRIENDS (AFTER HOURS). BUT  
OF THE BUYER PIE? USE THESE GUIDELINES AND STEAL THE BUYERS  
FROM UNDER YOUR COMPETITOR'S NOSE...



**C**rushing your closest competitor calls for a different sales approach, new offerings and a stronger business case. It's not enough to just make more calls or have more meetings. You have to be better than you've ever been, in every aspect.

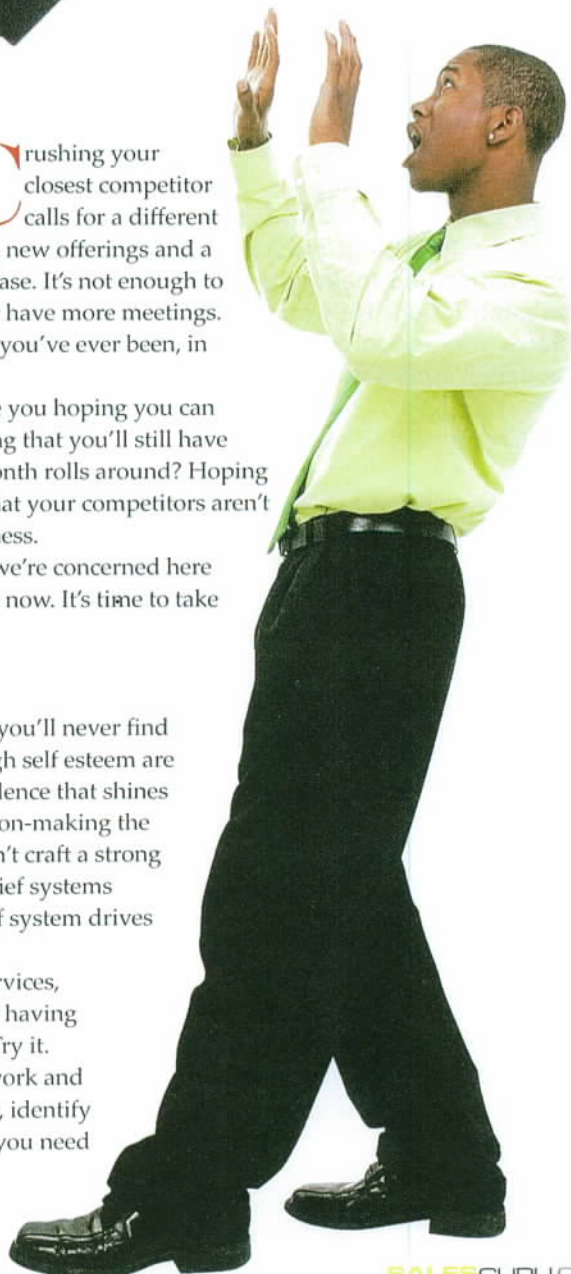
Let's talk about you right now. Are you hoping you can hang in there for a while longer? Hoping that you'll still have your existing customers by the time next month rolls around? Hoping you'll make your numbers? You need to know that your competitors aren't thinking the same way. They're out there, doing business.

As Rick Page says, "Hope is not a strategy." And as far as we're concerned here at SALES GURU, there's only ONE thing that makes sense right now. It's time to take charge of your own career and your customers.

#### **I. Ask yourself this: Am I sold?**

You must love what you do. If you're in sales only for the money, you'll never find it. Similarly, you must love who you are. Self-confidence and a high self esteem are the first building blocks of good salespeople. It's the type of confidence that shines through during the sales process, because when it comes to decision-making the buyer believes that you are the best person for the job. But you can't craft a strong self-esteem or build your confidence without reassessing your belief systems about sales. We've said it before and we'll say it again: Your belief system drives your results.

If you can establish belief in your company, your products and services, yourself, and most important, belief that the customer is better off having purchased from you, you'll see the results mimic your thoughts. Try it. How? By changing your attitude. Bring enthusiasm with you to work and leave the blues at home. Don't let your temper control your career, identify your tolerance for Nos, and know just how far you can go before you need a break to recharge and refuel.





## 2. THEN, SELL YOURSELF

No matter the situation, understand that you are not only selling a product or service, but you are in effect selling yourself. To outsell the competition, you need to be:

- Interesting. If potential customers are bored by you, they have less of a chance of being enthralled by any product or service you are representing.
- Intelligent. Can you discuss a range of subjects with thoughtfulness and hold your clients' interest?
- Humble. Never be arrogant. Never talk up or down to your potential clients. It's rude and will serve only to alienate them.
- Empathetic. If you can relate to your customers' situations authentically, it helps to build rapport.
- Professional. At all times. Being professional is not one thing, it is three: It is what you do, what you say, and how you present yourself.

# 9 WAYS TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

According to Dr. Tom Sant, most proposals use vague generalities and make grandiose promises without substantiation. He was named one of the Top Ten Sales Trainers in the World by Selling Power magazine. How's that for standing out from the crowd?

1. Category authority such as "exclusive distributors for Acme"
2. Simplicity in the same sense as "Simpler Better Faster"
3. A real guarantee and there's none like "you get your money back"
4. Give something away, or "buy one get one free"
5. Honesty such as "we're not cheap but we're fast"
6. Highly recognized 3rd-party testimonials like "according to a Gartner survey"
7. Be first at something like "first to deliver a pizza in less than an hour"
8. Innovate with proof along these lines: "winner of innovation awards"
9. Defy conventional wisdom such as "our pizzas have no cheese or tomato"

## 3. KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

While you're thinking about that one deal that may swing your target, that one deal a week, or one deal a month, your competitor is thinking about the entire process. They're thinking BIG. They're thinking concurrent deals, multiple solutions. Why? Because they know that one more sales is NEVER the answer.

So how do you stay focused on the real job at hand? You put

your guidelines up right in front of your face, and you keep them there.

**Make sure these are visible and accessible (and that you make use of them):**

- Value messages that illustrate your worth to the customer. Worth is more powerful than price.
- Your elevator speech. Three minutes of pure value for your customer.
- An event calendar (see **SALESGURU** events at the back of the magazine). Get out there and meet people.
- Little known facts about the industry you operate in. Not sales, but the market you sell to. Update these facts \ regularly as you use them in client interactions
- Your personal mission and vision statement – who you see yourself as. Eg "Samantha Newton, Subscription sales superstar and solutions provider"

## 4. BECOME A PEOPLE PERSON

All people are different. You can't sell the same way to everyone. Second, no two sales are the same, even if they are made to the same company under similar circumstances. Both are about screening people and knowing how to sell to whom. To improve your people skills, it's pretty simple: Hang out with more people.

Go to lunches, go to networking events, never pass up an opportunity to meet more people. And the sneakiest piece of advice you'll read in these pages? Hang out with the competition. Find out what makes them such great people to do business with. Then master that!

## 5. GROW YOUR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Being an average salesperson is no longer an acceptable contribution. You will lose your footing and the client will look elsewhere. Take it from us, we've seen it happen. If you're mediocre, you're disposable to your customers. Being knowledgeable about your product or service is no longer enough. All that information is online, so you don't bring value.

Customers want to work with experts who understand their business and can help them achieve their objectives. To do that well, you need to be a problem solving, critical thinking person who can synthesise lots of information and turn it into invaluable, actionable ideas.

## 6. DO MORE

No secrets here: More work equals more sales. But there is a secret that we can share with you. It's called leverage. Leverage technology in your favour and win more time.

- Finding contacts: LinkedIn, FaceBook, the Internet
- Triggering event updates: Google Alerts
- Account research: Business news websites - [www.businessday.co.za](http://www.businessday.co.za), also [www.gbn.co.za](http://www.gbn.co.za) and [cbn.co.za](http://cbn.co.za)



- Sales productivity: GoldMine, Tracer, or an equivalent
  - Online Meetings: Skype, try VOIP solutions too.
- All these resources are affordable. If your company doesn't pay for them, use your own money.

### 7. BE SMART IN YOUR QUESTIONING

Develop your questioning techniques, always remembering

the traditional rules of What? Where? When? Which? Why? Who? And how? Continually test your understanding of the situation by asking questions and verifying that everybody's on the right track.

Time yourself – you should be listening for 80% of a client meeting and talking for 20%. Be an active listener, so that when you present your case, you're linking the features of what you sell to the benefits they will hold for the buyer's business. Features are common, but benefits are personal and specific. Hint: Every business, every company, every product has something that is unique, and this is what you need to stress. Look outside the square, and identify the uniqueness of your product, your service, your company, and yourself.

### 8. SELL THE RESULTS IN PERSON

- You increase the likelihood of a sale if you meet in person, as opposed to sending an email proposal that is somewhat impersonal
- You further increase the likelihood of a sale if you present the end results of the proposed transaction and how it will

improve the client's life during your meeting. This can only be done however, if you have managed to uncover exactly what it is that is causing pain or discomfort for your prospect.

### 9. GET THE SECOND SALE TOO

Second sales are much less expensive to get than the first sale. The time and energy spent getting a first sale does not have to be made, and it is the money not spent that goes into profit (or profit that does not have to be spent). The secret to getting more second sales is when you, through your actions and efforts, ask new customers, current customers, past customers, current users of a particular product/service, researched leads and prospects: "What do you need me to be?"

- Give your customer options. "If you want to sell the chicken that's in the fridge, you had better put chicken in all its various forms on the menu."
- Get customers to talk about what they are doing, planning to do or would like to do.
- Always talk about the second sale while working on getting the first sale. Do not expect customers to know there is a second sale without being told.
- Discuss problems customers are having with vendors as they relate to the products/services your business has to offer.
- ALWAYS get a referral. □