

## ***Seventy eight percent of all sales people do not invest enough effort in this simple skill that can double call effectiveness***

In the old days of selling, 10 or 20 years ago, the only plan was "let's hit the street and make some calls." That concept won't get us very far today. Today we have to have the answer to a bunch of questions: Who are we going to call on? What are we going to talk about? What is the most efficient way to get there? Why should they be interested in talking to us? Without a detailed plan the prospect has all the control. How much time do you spend planning?

Seventy-eight percent of all sales people fail because they lack what skill? When asking that question to a group of sales people the answers are all over the board. Closing usually comes out as number one, objections are number two, after that it's a toss up between making presentations, getting people's attention, follow up and asking questions. The reason 78% of all sales people fail, or fail to reach their sales objective is due to a lack of planning. At first this may seem a little off balance, however when we take a look at what planning really is, it takes on a new meaning.

For example, let's take a look at closing. The best time to think about your close is when you are planning the call. Instead of taking in one product to show your customer, take in three different quality levels. Instead of asking if they want to buy your product or not, you can now ask them which product would best fit their needs. That is the choice close at its best.

Objections are another example. If we wait until we are in the buyer's office and he or she says "your price is out of line" it's a little late to start figuring out what to say. We all know the objections we run into, and again, the best time to

overcome them is when we are planning the call.

Let's take a look at making the presentation. There are very few products on the market today that cannot be duplicated, turning them into a commodity. Why should a buyer switch to your product when the features and benefits are the same? Once again the time to find the "points of difference" that will make a professional presentation is during your planning stages.

How about getting the buyer's attention? The average buyer is interrupted every eight minutes. If they have been buying for any length of time they have "heard it all." What are you going to do or say during the first 60 seconds that will make the buyer lean forward and say "tell me more." If you are trying to think of something while waiting your turn to see the buyer, well, you get the point.

The old days of "hitting the street and making some calls" are pretty much in the past. Twenty years ago there was believed to be such a thing as a "Born Sales Person". Today we have to sell with "Surgical precision."

To keep your selling skills "cutting-edge" take the advice of a master salesperson, Abraham Lincoln. He once said "If I had six hours to cut down a tree, I would spend four hours sharpening my ax."

The bottom line of planning; spend at least four hours on a Friday afternoon or Saturday morning going through each call you are going to make next week.