

## ***The one skill that EVERY successful sales person has mastered***

The most successful sales people I know all have one thing in common. They know that to get things done they have to work with a plan that has enough flexibility to handle the unexpected situations that come up every day. This lesson will once again stress a very important skill.

An airplane flying from Chicago to NY is off course as much as 97% of the time, however the pilot keeps adjusting and making corrections.

The first step for a sales person to stay on course is to make a list of the things you have to do tomorrow and number them in the order of importance. You have to continually monitor your progress to make sure you are heading in the right direction, or in case you have to change and adjust your plan. Selling is unlike many other professions in that you have to keep yourself motivated and organized on a daily basis. Many other types of work are built on the routine of doing something over and over again, however, selling requires a review of your battle plan every day or, at times, every hour. You have your over all objectives as well as the accounts you must see on any given week, but as you begin each day you have new situations and opportunities that did not exist yesterday.

The most important thing you can do at the end of each day is make a list of the things you have to do tomorrow and number them in the order of importance. It is important to do it at the end of each day. If you wait until morning you may forget an important item. Also by doing it at the end of the day your subconscious mind will have a chance to work on your list during the night and help you solve your problems while you sleep.

Things will come up to change our program, however, a numbered list will give you a track to run on and will keep you working on the most important things first. To stay on course spend one hour each day or four hours each week carefully planning each sales call you are going to make. Planning is one of the most important activities of a sales person. The shorter the time we have to spend with each customer, the more important it is that we carefully go over each step of our sales plan.

Winston Churchill was once asked how long it would take him to prepare for a 10 minute speech. He said he would like at least a month's notice. When asked how far in advance for a one hour speech he said at least a week, and when asked how long he needed to prepare for a four hour talk he said he could start now. He made an excellent point for planning sales presentations. To make an effective 10 minute presentation takes careful planning and organizing. If you were going to spend four hours with a customer it would not be necessary to spend a lot of preparation time because everything you want to discuss will come out in the course of the four hours.

A professional sales person will spend at least one hour in planning time for each day of selling. It takes that much time to write letters, make appointments, prepare presentations and carefully think about the details of each call we are going to make. Staying on course takes practice. Just as the airline pilot has to go through months and months of training, so do sales people.