



# Master the **SALES** Mindset

**SELL**MORE,  
**BE**MORE and  
**DO**MORE with  
these **PROs'**  
**secrets.**

by Marcia Jedd

**Attitude** and actions go a long way in today's selling environment. That's what the pros will tell you. Salespeople who aren't constantly honing their knowledge and skills risk becoming relics. And developing relationships, the pros say, counts more than ever in our information-rich, Internet-based world that provides buyers the tools to be smarter than ever.



Bottom line for the seller: Nothing replaces hard work and innovative thinking. "Today's salespeople better be question-based, value-driven, customer-focused and be able to prove their product rather than try to sell it. Proof comes from testimonials, not sales presentations," says Jeffrey Gitomer, president of Buy Gitomer and author of *The Sales Bible* and *The Little Red Book of Selling*.

Top-selling self-improvement author Paul J. Meyer agrees: "You'll succeed in direct proportion to your willingness to focus and concentrate on your task—that is to make yourself a master in your craft and in your specific field of selling."

Meyer, who began selling insurance six decades ago and rose to the top of his field in a short time, founded Success Motivation International in 1960. As a trainer, speaker and author, Meyer says contemplative goal-setting is an early preparatory step that sets the stage for success throughout the entire sales process. Having tangible short-term goals that go out six months, as well as longer-range goals that can span up to a lifetime, are well and good. Just as important, he says, is setting intangible goals around your spiritual, mental and emotional aspirations.

We've all heard it before: Write down your goals. Meyer goes further to ask if you've crystallized your thinking about the goal and have a solid plan and deadline for meeting it. Iron-willed determination, a burning desire and the confidence in your ability to succeed in meeting the goal are also essential. "Ask yourself the results and benefits of your goals and you'll learn a whole lot about what motivates you," Meyer says.

### Discovering Your Motivation

"You have to be motivated by what you value," says Jim Cathcart, author of *Relationship Selling* and *The Acorn Principle*. Look behind your goals to discover what motivates you. "Motivation is motive with action. Motives are not brought to people; they are discovered within people," he says.

Cathcart says society often trivializes motivation as an outward activity. "Too many people think of motivation as a superficial energy-generation thing. That's simply being excited," he says. "For someone to be motivated by action, they must find meaning in their actions." Ask yourself if what you're doing matters and if

anyone cares, he says. Cathcart's process of intelligent motivation is defining what's important to you, what action is needed and then doing things to generate and sustain that action.

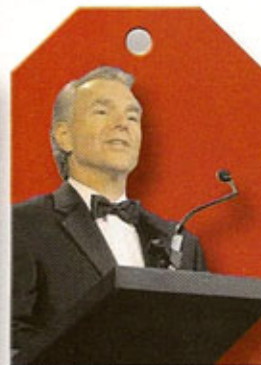
### Why People Buy

Buyers must find meaning or relevance in what you're selling. "People don't buy because they understand your product; they buy because they feel you understand their need," Cathcart says. To that end, start with understanding your prospects and customers. "Be better at listening. If you want someone to find you interesting, spend more time being interested in them," he says. "Give them their answers, but respond after with a question to them."

Gitomer says, "People don't like to be sold, but they love to buy." Touch the true emotional nerve and you'll sell. One tactic to uncover what motivates buyers is to examine customer testimonials, which reveal other people's motives to buy, he says.



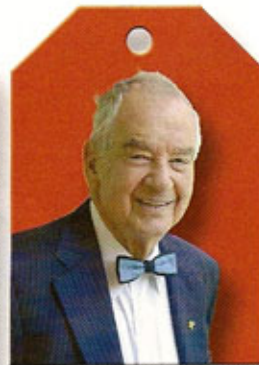
Paul J. Meyer



Jim Cathcart



Don Hutson



Zig Ziglar

"Selling is a business of emotions," says Tom Hopkins, a sales trainer and author of *How to Master the Art of Selling*. "People want to believe they make decisions rationally, logically, but in reality they make them emotionally first. Then, they defend those decisions with logic. They rationalize." This holds true for a piece of manufacturing equipment, life insurance, clothing or dessert at a restaurant, he says.

Hopkins recommends devising both emotional and logical reasons for your clients to own your product or service. In the case of a corporate executive making a decision about building new manufacturing plants, he says, "Emotionally, the executive wants to look good in the eyes of the stockholders or the board. Improving production and economizing for the company are part of their rationalization."

### The Process Rules

Focus on the sales process and not your particular personality, advises master seller and personal-development expert Zig Ziglar.



## GOLDEN RULES OF SELLING

The experts offer these insights.

Master the fundamentals of sales and execute in the best interest of the prospect.

Once you have a new introduction or referral, offer to bring that person's favorite coffee drink or beverage to the first meeting.

When presenting, be prepared, engaging and differentiate yourself.

Customize your presentation depending on the prospect's initial response. If it's emotional, start with that appeal. If it's logical, lead with facts. Pros work smart and hard every day.

Skill x effort = productivity. Skill is product knowledge and sales technique. Effort is all the activities and energy expended in the sales process, including personal motivation.

Help your customers in other ways. Send customers to them or offer your ideas and help to grow their businesses, such as by leading a brainstorming session.

Work the relationship differentiation. Be trustworthy and loyal like a friend. Remember the old adage: All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends.

"Your personality will only carry you so far. People are looking for systems or processes. Selling is a process, not an event," he says. Whether you're an analytical type like Bill Gates or a gregarious one like Bill Cosby, any personality can sell if you have a process. Ziglar says, "It takes the pressure off the person."

One simple process Ziglar's team uses in its corporate sales training programs is T-R-U-S-T, which stands for think, relate, uncover needs, sell solutions and take action. "This is a good set of customer-centered selling skills to have," says Ziglar, author of *Secrets of Closing the Sale*, among other best-sellers. When markets ebb and times are tough, it's imperative to increase training and avoid the inclination to cut back on education. "Salespeople have to be a lot sharper today," he says. "More than ever, decisions are going to be more critical, and buyers will look at the solution and make their decisions with a more analytical perspective."



Jeffrey Gitomer

### Upping Your Game and Your Solution

Especially in difficult market conditions, Cathcart agrees about the importance of training. Learn a new skill or more about the customer or your marketplace. Infuse value in your prospect or customer check-ins by finding innovative things to do that serve your customer. "You have to give meaning. Otherwise, it's a greed call," Cathcart says. Also, increase outreach. "Innovate while sticking to your disciplines, whether that's increasing the number of sales calls or keeping good records," he says. Increasing sales outreach may mean sending out 5,000 pieces of mail, not 1,000, or making 100 calls a month instead of 50.

Seek greater volume from current customers, recommends Gitomer. "It may be at the same location, a different branch or even a different division, but sales are out there and the easiest path is through people you're already doing business with," he says.

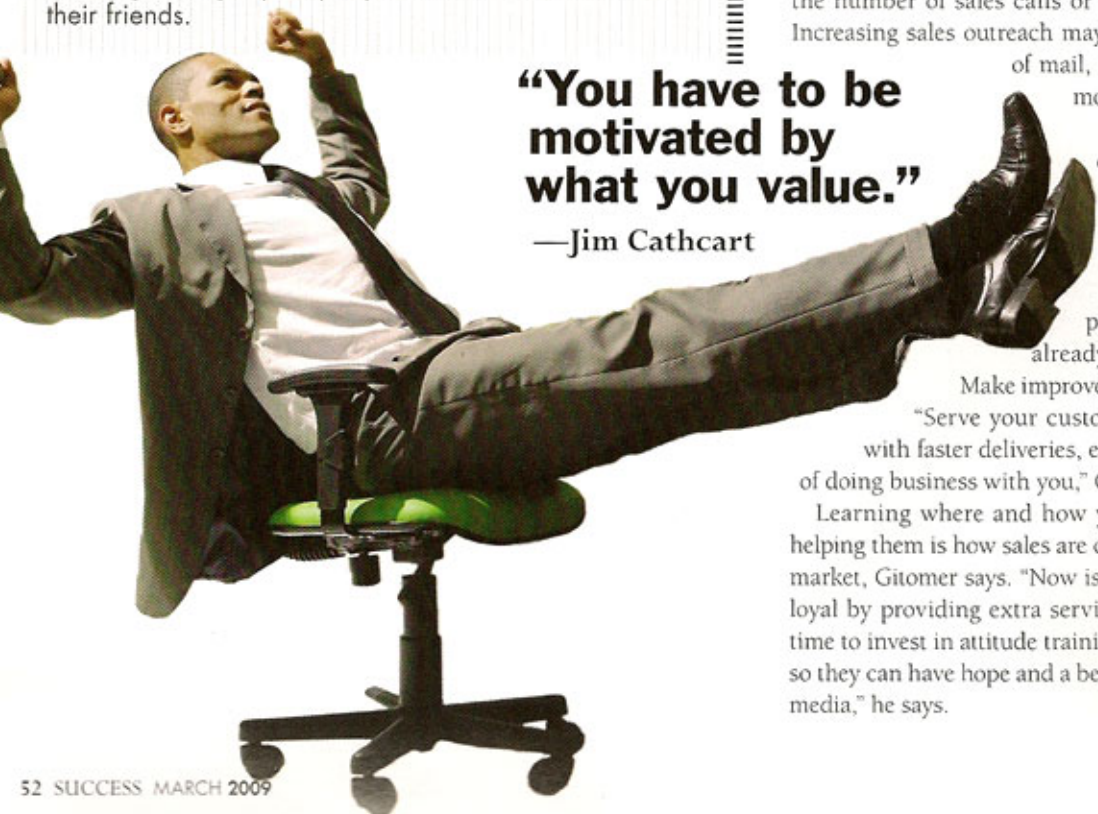
Make improvements to your product or service.

"Serve your customers beyond their expectations with faster deliveries, error-free order processing or ease of doing business with you," Gitomer says.

Learning where and how your customers are hurting and helping them is how sales are captured in a down market or any market, Gitomer says. "Now is the time to keep your customers loyal by providing extra service, not cutting back. Now is the time to invest in attitude training for everyone in your company, so they can have hope and a better outlook than portrayed in the media," he says.

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## "Selling is a business of emotions."

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In stepping up your own game, get specific about how you open each phone call, your choice of words and even how you title your e-mails, Cathcart says. "Don't waste time with the old warm-ups," he says. Ultimately, you may discover a new way to communicate your vision of how your product or service makes life better for people. "Whether you are selling health care or ice cream, the purpose of business is to make life better both for the customer and the company," Cathcart says.

Don Hutson, co-author of the *One Minute Entrepreneur* and a sales growth specialist, recommends identifying and tracking marketplace trends by closely listening to your prospects and clients. "Lead with your ears. You can project trends into the future to identify windows of opportunity, changes in consumer sentiment and ideas for fine-tuning how you go to market," Hutson says. That information is used to constantly improve solutions.

### Initiating Relationships by Word-of-Mouth

In boom markets, there's plenty of low-hanging fruit. When times are challenging, sales professionals have to strive to become better tree climbers, says Terri Sjodin, founder of Sjodin Communications and author of *New Sales Speak: The 9 Biggest Sales Presentation Mistakes and How to Avoid Them*. For starters, that may entail doing more homework before you execute your first call to a prospect.

Initiating new relationships is at the heart of what the salesperson does, Sjodin says. "It's important that we begin establishing new conversations with people who may not be interested at first," she says. "It's our responsibility to introduce them to who we are, what we do and explain to them what's in it for them if they listen to us and ultimately how they will benefit."

In addition to referrals, Sjodin says seeking introductions is another way to cultivate new relationships. She points out the difference between a referral and an introduction, noting referrals are testimonials that come from having worked with someone in a professional capacity. "Referrals come with the weight and strength of someone who has worked with you," Sjodin says. "Introductions can be from a friend, colleague or associate. The person may not have worked with you but they can testify to your capabilities, kindness or professionalism."

Use introductions and referrals gracefully, asking for them at appropriate times in a simple manner, Sjodin advises. "There's a lightness about it. You don't want to push too hard," she says. "We're not entitled to a person's

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time. We need to be invited and earn the right to be heard." The era of winning sales through hard, aggressive tactics is over. "If you are very consistent in your sales processes and request graceful introductions, you don't have to be a hard sell in order to be a consistent sales professional," Sjodin says.

### Pumping the Pipeline

Prospecting is hard work and rife with rejection, Hutson says. To increase outreach, he cites the 3-2-1 Plan used by a colleague: Every day, without fail, call three past clients to touch base, share new ideas and solutions and update your contact information on them. Next, find two new prospects in any manner that works for you. Finally, learn one new thing about selling every day.

One strategy for keeping your pipeline full is to analyze who your true gatekeepers or centers of influence are, Hutson says. "We need to stay in touch with those who can influence our business and expand our vision for more quality contacts," he says. "At any given time you have people in six categories: suspects, prospects, customers, clients, advocates and confidantes." Pick the 20 percent on your list who represent the best opportunities for business in the near term, then work to move them up to the next category. Hutson calls this the rungs of the Loyalty Ladder and says it's a useful tool for organizing your database and seeking new and additional business.

So the process goes, onward and up the sales ladder to success. Selling is indeed an invaluable skill, art, science and a fluid process. "You have no alternative except to sell because we move commerce," Sjodin says. "Nothing happens until somebody sells somebody." **S**



Tom Hopkins



Terri Sjodin