

SNAP OUT OF IT!

Seven Sales Strategies for Success!

By Gail Lowney Alofsin

“Six times fall,
Seven stand up.”
— Chinese fortune cookie

SALES SLUMP? BURNOUT? NO WORRIES, HELP IS HERE!

Let's face it, in sales, if your phone is ringing off the hook, you are an order taker, not a sales guru. Your event, venue or service is well known, in demand and in most cases, an outstanding product or a necessity (think iPad).

With the exception of "order takers," everyone faces a sales "funk, slump, lull," call it what you will, at some point. If you are in one, ask yourself a few questions: What has changed for your event or venue in the past year? Are your clients retracting their investment with you? Is the economy to blame?

Whatever the cause of your slump, let's jump start your sales efforts with the following seven strategies for sales success!

1 Mindset YOU are not your last sale

Try not to take your "sales slump" personally. You are much bigger than your last sale. Reflect on the past sales success - how did you make those sales? Was it through building a relationship, meticulous research, and hard work?

There is the old adage; we become what we think about. Think differently and visualize sales success inclusive of the clients you want to attract. The goals for your event should be both financial and philosophical. If you are going to increase sponsorship, admissions, beverage sales, or vendors by a certain percentage, post that number on a spread sheet and brainstorm with your team to build the strategy for accomplishing that goal. Reach out to other people you work with and ask for their advice. Everyone has something to contribute - stop, listen, learn and write it down!

Create new goals that stretch your ability! What are you and your colleagues truly capable of? As you create your budgets and strategic plans, what are a few things you will continue doing, and what are some new things you will add to the mix to ensure your growth and success?

2 The "Blame Game"

We all have times when we are "off our game." We tend to blame the competition or the economy, anything but ourselves when it comes to sales attrition.

If you are blaming the workplace, customers, weather, marketing, or the economy, excuses be gone! It is time to take full accountability for changes and address them head on! Your life will always be full of change. There will be changes with colleagues, job responsibilities, and external factors each of which will present their own unique challenges in concert with the economy.

It is up to you to face the changes that you are confronted with and start taking responsibility for success by working around the challenges. Take a minute to write down the changes that are inhibiting you or intimidating you and address each obstacle individually. Put your goals on paper and as you attempt to renew clients or attract new ones, do your very best to showcase the value. When you meet with them, via phone or in person, listen to their needs and assess whether or not you have a solution that will increase their sales, introduce their product, expand their social media reach. Think WIIFT – “what’s in it for them”?

Companies will buy from you if they believe your product is a solid investment that will enable them to grow their business.

3 Change your Environment

Take a walk, get exercise, sleep, and eat the right food. Wake up an hour earlier for a month and spend time researching other companies inclusive of your competition. What can you learn from this research that will assist you in your sales growth?

Be honest with yourself - are you trying as hard as you can? Keep a log of calls you are making inclusive of current, past and potential clients. When your phone is not ringing, pick it up and start dialing! Stay focused and work smarter.

4 Gone Surfing? Work Smarter!

With the proliferation of technology, we become more accessible through our e-mail, smart phones and social media. Messages coming in via text or e-mail are like a “siren” in Greek mythology, beckoning you away from tasks at hand to the message “popping in” on your day.

You will work smarter when you manage your time. Avoid getting lost in your e-mail. Answering e-mails all day is like

continually answering the phone and addressing inquiries unrelated to sales. Shut off your email pop-ups to avoid distractions and address your e-mail at key points throughout the day, whether it is every hour or every three hours.

The same applies to social media. Do you really need to check your Facebook all day or “check in” with Four Square everywhere you go?

Electronic media is effective when it is used efficiently. It can also be an attractive yet invasive “time sponge,” which will lead you to procrastinate your sales calls and follow-ups.

5 10 x 10

Marketing Expert, Seth Godin’s newest tome, *Poke the Box*, focuses on INITIATIVE.

Initiative is, indeed, the magic ingredient in the sales mix. Are you waiting for the phone to ring? Pick up the phone and make 10 calls by 10:00 a.m. Peruse through trade magazines or spend time doing targeted Internet research on companies you believe align with your product. Use your detective skills to sleuth the correct contact or start with a local representative and ask for assistance in finding the correct contact or one of multiple contacts.

Visit and research other events or venues and observe who are they working with. What kind of sponsors and vendors are they attracting? What media do they appear to be using to build attendance? Are there any ideas on their social network sites that you could emulate? Surfing the web to view what similar events are doing is not a waste of Internet time, it will revive you and showcase new ideas that could translate to your event or venue.

6 Cup of Coffee

Your current customers are not only your greatest asset; they are integral to your business growth. Are there ways to expand their current programs with you? Do you have new assets that they would find attractive? Do they have new products that need additional promotion? Additionally, do they know other companies who will benefit from working with you and your programs? Invite a former or current client for a cup of coffee or lunch. Make sure you pay for it!

“KEEP YOUR MIND OPEN TO SOLUTIONS AND SPRING INTO ACTION!”

7 Games On!

Observe the professional sports teams – they do not stop training once they win a championship. They celebrate and start again! The game is still on and you cannot “coast” due to past success.

Become an expert in your field and share the passion you have for your business. People will purchase from people with passion. When you believe in your product, share the benefits and determine what your product can do for your prospective customer, you will hit the ball out of the park!

Once you have your client, appreciate them! Customers who are treated well will like you. When the product you have sold them serves them well, they will come back. The profit is in the renewal! It costs 6 times more to find a new client than to keep an existing client “coming back for more.”

In closing, remember, sales slumps are temporary. Practice positive self talk! Believe in yourself and your product. You are excellent at what you do so put your shoulders back, stand tall and GO GET “EM!

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Drawing on over two decades in the event marketing industry and an expert in the realm of corporate sponsorship, Gail Lowney Alofsin shares her passion and best practices for sales, marketing and leadership through her educational and inspirational seminars. Visit www.gailspeaks.com, email gailalofsin@yahoo.com or call 401-640-4418 for more information

“IF YOU CAN FIND A PATH WITH NO OBSTACLES, IT PROBABLY DOESN'T LEAD ANYWHERE.”