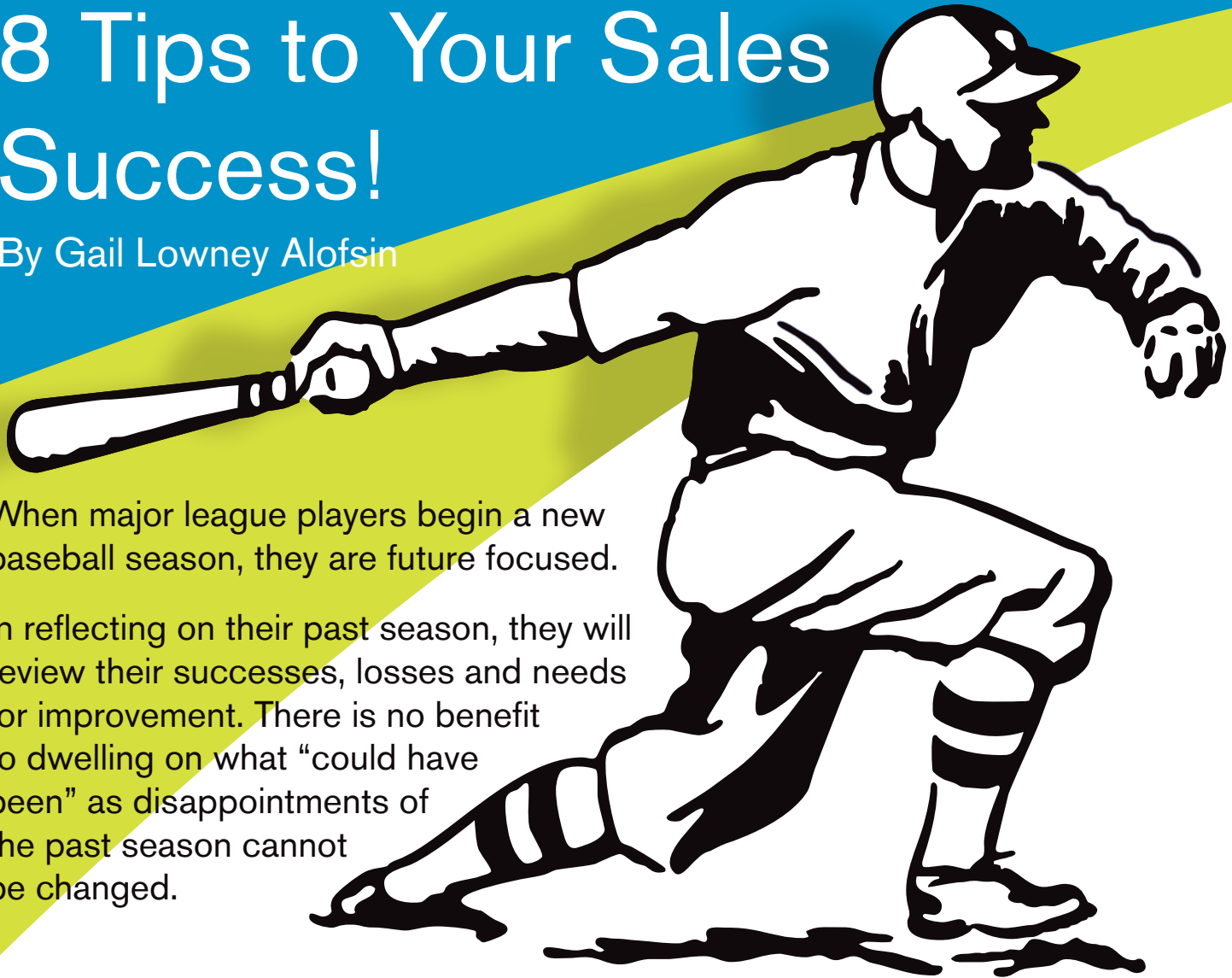


# Hit the Ball Out of the Park! 8 Tips to Your Sales Success!

By Gail Lowney Alofsin



When major league players begin a new baseball season, they are future focused.

In reflecting on their past season, they will review their successes, losses and needs for improvement. There is no benefit to dwelling on what “could have been” as disappointments of the past season cannot be changed.

In life and in sales, we are only as good as our last “homerun.” Last year’s successes will not sustain us financially and last year’s sales success will not automatically propel us into a profitable new year.

As you achieve sales success, whether you are focused on sponsorship, attendance, food and beverage or other sales, below are 8 tips to assist you in hitting the ball out of the park!

## 1. Who’s On First?

Sales 101 is focused on finding the right contact, which is easier said than done. There will be several people who position themselves as the decision maker. These

people are usually very knowledgeable and excited about their company. Ask them for their insight and assistance as you navigate towards the right player.

For instance, if you have reached the assistant of a company that you would like to partner with, ask questions about the company. Perhaps they can connect you to the sales and marketing department which is where you really want to make contact. If you sell hospitality packages as part of your sponsorship proposals, ask the assistant if the sales department takes clients to sporting events, theatre, or dinner functions. Invite the assistant (in addition to managers he or she has referred

you to) to your venue to experience what you have to offer.

Additionally, you will have clients who depart from their company. Stay in touch by adding them to your complimentary ticket list and welcome them to your hospitality tent. Ask them to bring someone who could be a potential client. Stay in touch with people when you no longer “need” them.

## 2. Choose Your Pitches

You are not going to hit all the balls pitched to you.

Do your best to identify the right client for your product or service. What other



events or venues are they working with? Is this company located in your geographic area? Are they sponsoring “like” events in your area.

Another item to consider is whether the product you have identified is one that will enhance your event. If they do not have a cash budget, are there things that they can provide that are “in kind” and budget relieving? A few examples would include catering, hotel rooms, restaurant gift certificates, outerwear, and transportation?

In kind, budget relieving sponsors and products should be welcome assets in your sales plan.

### 3. Strike!

No is not next! A prospective client’s “no” may be a “not now, please call me again.” Do your best to turn a potential client into a viable client.

Now that you have taken the time to identify a prospect, invite them to your event and introduce them to the product or service that you sell. Add them to your prospect list. Invite them to experience your product. Welcome them when they arrive at the main gate and offer excellent hospitality.

### 4. First Base – The Proposal is Sent!

Your proposal has been sent and you have had an excellent meeting with your prospect, how are you going to stay top of mind?

Pay attention on first base while you look ahead to home plate and create your action plan to get there. Set goals. There is interesting research from the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) as follows:

- 25% of people who decide to set a goal, achieve their goal.
- 40% of people achieve their goal when they create a deadline.
- 50% of people achieve their goal when they have an action plan.
- 65% of people achieve their goal when they commit to someone else.

Your goal should include a follow-up plan for the potential client. Set a deadline with the client and create an authentic sense of urgency. While you are waiting to hear from that client, keep cultivating the “pipeline of possibility” of new clients.

Be committed to the team and to “the game.” Often it may mean enlisting the assistance of colleagues or external professionals. Make sure that all of the stakeholders have their eye on the ball.

### 5. Second Base

The sale is just the beginning. Once the agreement is signed, the real work begins. We have all witnessed sales people who receive the contract and disappear. This is not a time to be Houdini! As a sales professional, make sure your agreement outlines all expectations. If the client is new to sponsorships or experiential marketing platforms such as yours, create an action plan for their success. This can be from the simplest of items (correct logo in high resolution) to nearby and reasonably priced accommodations, assistance with staffing and your awareness of additional sales opportunities for your client.

### 6. Third Base – Activation!

Advance promotion and event activation is where the client will achieve the benefit from your event. If the activation is successful and your client achieves their objectives in partnering with you, there is a good chance of the sale being renewed. With activation, you are staring at home plate and running as fast as you can to score that run! Make sure that the other teammates involved know their roles and assist you with that final sprint.

A few suggestions for successful activation include keeping your operations and other team members updated on items they need to know to ensure your clients success. Coordinate the “simple” details – where to park, where their clients will park, entrance tickets sent in time, hospitality tent invites, and other things to do in your city.

### 7. The 7th Inning Stretch

Sometimes we get stuck. When this happens, take a break. Live in your song, put your iPod on and sing out loud to “Sweet Caroline” or “Take me out to the Ballgame.”

We all have different energy levels, talents and skills. Ask for help, don’t take on every single task by yourself. Ask for assistance from co-workers, your team, and interns. Delegate what can be delegated, whenever possible so you can stay focused on home plate and more runs.

Share ideas and best practices with events colleagues that you have met at the IFEA (International Festival and Events Association) or regional IFEA affiliate

conferences. Listen to webinars and visit the websites of other festival and events. Call your counterparts and suggest an idea exchange. The events business is very friendly and as long as you share valuable and interesting information, people will want to assist you. Learn from listening to others.

Stand up, stretch, smile and get your MOJO back! You can do it!

### 8. It’s a Home Run!

Whether you arrive at home plate through a series of hits or a grand slam home run, you and your partner will both feel good about the event when it is a win – win- win. This means a win for your client, a win for you and a win for the attendee, who is a customer for both of you.

You cannot thank your sponsors enough, thank you notes are crucial and event gifts (t-shirts, hats, bags) are always appreciated. When you mail the items to your clients with your event recap reports, I suggest mailing enough for everyone on their team. Never underestimate the value of a free t-shirt! In regard to your recap reports, you can never include enough photos, especially photos of your clients enjoying their time at your event. One of our clients from a national wine company informed us that the photo album we sent with her fulfillment report was the best event recap she had ever received.

So get your glove out and get up to bat! Create your own blueprint for success and hit the ball out of the park!

As the Director of Corporate Partnerships for Newport Harbor Corporation in Newport, RI, Gail steps up to bat with the intent of hitting the ball out of the park with every corporate client she works with. She inherited a department well into the red and has increased corporate sponsorship over 5700% in addition to using her entrepreneurial skills to create signature events on the Newport waterfront. Gail will be the first to tell you it’s a team effort, a lesson that she is reminded of frequently by her son, Sam, a left handed pitcher. For more information, email [gailalofsin@yahoo.com](mailto:gailalofsin@yahoo.com) or call 401-640-4418.