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The SalesPulse™

The Monthly Sales Briefing for Directors Issue 45, November 2008

In the next issue of the SalesPulse™ we will be providing details of our Account Planning methodology and supporting software that provide the most effective way to develop account plans.

Quote of the month:

In order to be irreplaceable one must always be different.

Coco Chanel

Dear John

SELLING IN TOUGH TIMES

The latest description of the current economic environment is the R word. I am not an economist but like many other business people I could see that a recession had been coming for at least a year. Back in January our newsletter covered the topic through an article on why 2008 was the year to invest in sales. In the summer we ran a seminar on the same subject covering sales productivity and tactics to employ when selling in a recession. For those of you who weren't there I am going to cover the top activity points to help manage sales in a recession - I hope you find it useful.

Focus on your **existing customers**. Understand their business better than they do and pro-actively create solutions to their needs

Do you have **Account Plans** for your best customers? If not this is a good time to do them as they will facilitate the understanding process, help you identify opportunities and provide a structured approach to winning them

Use your sales time well. Building on the last point, have a sales plan for every opportunity. Not only will it help you understand what you need to do, it will help you qualify. Be rigorous with qualification and don't hang on to no hopers because they are the only show in town

If it's tough for you, it's tough for your competitors too. If your customers aren't buying someone else's might be. Focus on your **weakest competitors** and call their customers

Your best sales people are vulnerable. Love your **best performers** and manage the not so good. Don't cut back on expenditure for lead generation or personal development as doing so is counterproductive. There's little point

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Steve Rowe
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*Sell More, Sell Better
and Sell Faster*



the sales improvement people

having a low cost base if you've no one to sell your goods and services

Selling is a company responsibility, not just the sales team's. **Everyone sells!** When did your Finance Director last give you a sales lead? Challenge managers to spend time with customers and reward individuals for exceptional customer service. We seem to have forgotten how to celebrate success. Rediscover it, say thank you, it's cheap and hugely motivational

Are your sales targets achievable? If business is in general decline your targets may be inappropriate. Adjusting them to reflect today rather than yesterday is motivational. Unachievable targets is the most common reason for good sales people leaving

When times get tough reviewing increases. This is counterproductive - **stop reviewing and start helping** your people win sales

Finally, and returning to the first point, **stop your customer facing people doing anything that does not benefit the customer.** On average sales people spend less than 20% of their sales time on customer facing activities. Doubling it has enormous benefits

Not everyone is struggling; irrespective of the circumstances there are always winners and losers. Most of the points above are equally valid if you are doing well. We have a handout from our sales conference which is available should you like to see the material presented. Just click [here](#) to find it.
Regards

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