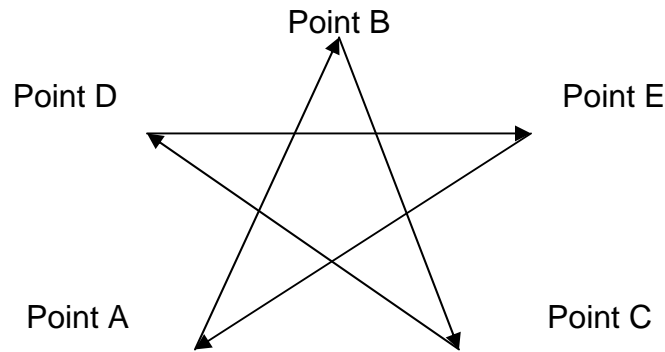


Don't Be a "Star" Salesperson



Excuse the lousy artwork but I am trying to make some visual “points” here. One of the most disruptive habits a salesperson gets into is the lack of a good schedule. Too often our work looks a lot like the diagram above where we go from activity to activity in an inefficient (and very ineffective) way.

Most people take this to mean you are not supposed to drive all over your territory in this way and that is certainly true. But the concept applies to your activities in the same way.

For example, the most effective people at setting appointments set aside a specific time to prospect rather than try to prospect randomly throughout the day. This is especially true on the phone. When you are trying to get an intro started, you will find that a rhythm really helps here. You get in a groove and find that you learn from one call to the next. The same is true for other types of sales activities like setting appointments or doing demos. (It’s not always possible to do like appointments in sequence but the more of this you can schedule, the better off you are—both in the management of your time and the effectiveness of your efforts.)

This, of course, brings me to the real root of being a more effective salesperson. Planning—having a plan and working a plan (even a bad one) is better than no plan at all. A carefully thought out plan allows you to begin to link what you do with what you want and this is the most essential connection in any kind of success.

Think about it this way, if you want to lose weight, you need to do certain exercises on a regular basis or you probably have no hope of that weight loss. The same thinking holds true with just about everything you do. If you need to get new customers, what do you need to do?

- Put together a list of potential new customers
- Learn as much about them as you can before you make official contact
- Assemble a value proposition that will resonate with them
- Find out who the key people are
- Call them to set appointments

If you do not think of this (or any) sales activity as a set of sequential steps and then set aside specific time to do them, you will not be as effective as you could be.

And, if you do these activities in a random way throughout your sales day, you will be less effective than if you block out time to focus on groups of like activities.

This brings me to another key aspect of not being a “star.” The better job that you do of setting appointments, the more control of your time you will have. When you get firm commitments from people on things you are doing together, you not only build the strength of the opportunity but you also take control of your schedule. For instance, if you have an appointment in Cincinnati on Tuesday and a customer wants to see you in Louisville on Tuesday, you are more likely to try and schedule that call on Monday or Wednesday because you already have a planned activity on Tuesday, right? (This is not always true but it often is. I can think of some occasions where I might reschedule the Tuesday appointment but if you are making appointments that you feel like you can reschedule, what does that tell you about the value of those appointments?)

The other thing that a good plan does for you is that it allows you to hold yourself accountable. If you have a plan, at least you know when you are not following it. If you do not have a plan, you can be very busy every week doing the wrong things and never really notice.

Think about it.

JCE

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