

The Most Important Thing You Have

Of course, I am referring to time...If you listen carefully, you can hear the sands of time rushing through the hourglass of your life. It passes quickly. What are you doing with your most precious asset?

Time management is one of my favorite topics. You can read about it, study it—in fact you can spend your time studying about how to spend your time.

In sales, there is **nothing** more important than time. You start with a very finite amount of usable sales time. Generally, this would be from around 8:00 - 5:00 Monday through Friday on non-holidays. 45 hours x 48 weeks a year = 2,160 hours. (I am being generous here because I am only subtracting out two weeks of vacation and ten other major holidays. You know that we really don't start with that many days...)

Then you begin subtracting. Many salespeople tend to not schedule sales calls on Monday mornings...at least until 10:00am (-90 hours). A lot of salespeople do not schedule lunch appointments (-360 hours). A lot of salespeople do not schedule calls on Friday afternoons...or any calls after 3:00pm (-90 hours). A lot of salespeople do not schedule their first call of the day until 9:00 and almost never schedule calls at 4:00 (-384 hours). By the time you have made those subtractions, you are down to a sales year of only 1,236 hours or 154.5 sales days or 12.87 full days per month.

Some things you do not have much control over...drive time...waiting time...on-hold time...internal meetings time...training time. How many additional days do these things subtract from your available sales time?

Other things you have some control over...travel time (when, not necessarily, how much)...planning time...reporting time...doing anything other than what you know you need to be doing ...time. How many days a month do you lose here?

We all know that the most valuable time a sales professional has is when they are speaking with a customer—and trying to facilitate a buying decision. Anything we do during those hours, other than that, has less value—especially if we get paid on commission.

Take stock of how you use your time. Make a chart—for one week—of the time you actually spend talking to customers (on the phone or in-person). How much of that time is actually spent trying to sell something? Not 100%, I bet you.

If you want to sell more, spend more time trying to sell. Get rid of some activities that do not contribute to your success—like reading the paper instead of being

out there at 8:00am for your first call. And make a conscious decision to do some of the other less valuable things (reporting, driving) in non-sales time.

We don't know how much time we have. We want to convert our time into as much success as we can—during work time. When you spend sales time actually trying to sell, it's almost like creating time...because you make it where it did not exist. What would happen to your sales if you moved from 12 days a month to 14 days a month actually trying to sell. That's an extra 16% in sales time which just might translate into an extra 16% in sales commission. Think about it.

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