



SUNDAY

Plan your formula for success

Do you remember the last time you changed jobs? Did it require a mental adjustment of your self-image? Chances are that you needed time to grow into the new shoes.

I remember sitting on a plane from London, bound for Chicago, to meet my first prospective client after I started my company. I still felt allegiance to my old company, my old job and my old colleagues because I had no experiences to draw upon for my new role. If you are just starting out in sales, or changing companies, you may experience this too.

However, psychologists say that we can do a lot for ourselves to speed up the acclimatisation process. If we visualise ourselves working in the new role, feeling comfortable in the new role and succeeding in the new role, we will acclimatise faster.





SUNDAY

Whether we are new to sales or want to improve our returns, we'll be adopting new methods of operation. We'll be forcing ourselves in new directions, putting ourselves under new pressures, disciplining ourselves, setting new goals – all of these will require that we see ourselves differently. The sooner we do this, the sooner we'll succeed.

Let's look at the specific areas in which you'll want to see yourself operating successfully as preparation for selling:

Success preparation

- Set overall goal
- Break the goal into daily work segments
- Carry out these daily segments
- Gain prospective customers
- Spend time on critical activities
- Create self-management system charts
- Organise work systems

Set overall goal

Start at the top of the list and set your goals. What do you want to achieve? Calculate it in some specific terms. Will it be a monetary figure, a percentage or multiple of a target set by your company, a possession to be acquired, or even a promotion?

Now think about how to convert that goal to the actual number of sales you need in order to achieve your target. Good. Now the next step is critical and this is the step most



S U N D A Y

unsuccessful salespeople avoid. Divide your total sales into weekly and daily sales and then calculate the work necessary to achieve that.

Calculate workload

- How many sales do I want?
- How many prospects will I need to see in order to make one sale?
- How many prospects do I need in order to reach my total sales target?
- How many activities do I need to do to generate one prospect?
 - Telephone calls
 - Direct mail letters
 - Exhibitions or seminars
 - Advertisements
 - Cold calling
 - Other
- What daily activity schedule and results do I have to maintain in order to achieve my goal? (Include visits, telephone calls and all of the above.)

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SUNDAY

Self-deception

Bob Broadley, one of the world's top insurance salesmen, puts it in strong terms. He says that the single biggest failure salespeople make is *self-deception*. He said he wasn't 'born with success'. He had to study the most successful sales people he could find.

His advice? 'Don't fool yourself into thinking you're selling when you're not in front of the right number of people every day. Working eight hours per day is not the point. It's what you do in those eight hours that counts.'



If you're not in front of enough prospects, you won't sell enough to make your target. And how do you get in front of enough prospects? By making enough appointments. It's that straightforward. 'Yet many people fool themselves thinking they are selling when in fact they are doing busy work,' says Bob.



S U N D A Y

Remember, the difference between success and failure often is neglecting to break down the overall target into daily targets and tasks.

Let's look at advice from people who succeed year after year. How do they put this principle into practice?

One salesman with a world wide reputation for success is Ove Sjögren from Electrolux in Sweden. He has calculated his yearly target and broken it down in to a daily figure. He knows exactly how many sales he must make per day. He knows how many prospects he must see each day.

He stresses that staying at the top is easy if you know how much you must do every day and you do it.

Not me!

'Oh, daily targets don't relate to me,' many people argue. That's the biggest misconception I hear from seminar delegates. They really believe they can't break *their* activity into daily targets.

This is the first mental change we must *all* make if we are to succeed in selling. Sales come about from methodically carrying out the right practices, day in and day out.

Whether we sell large systems to governments which require three years to close, or retail products to customers which take three minutes to close, we still have to calculate *which* daily component parts will lead us to success. Even if we only want three customers per year, we'll have to be negotiating with six, nine or twelve prospects constantly. We need to know *how many* and keep this running *constantly*.



S U N D A Y

In the research undertaken for my book, *Secrets of the World's Top Sales Performers*, I found that every single top sales performer in every industry knows their daily sales target and daily activity schedule. Did their companies tell them? No. They've calculated it themselves. It's exactly what we all must do if we want true and lasting success.

You must know your daily targets for finding prospects and do that first. That means making appointments and seeing prospects. All else is secondary.

Create daily segments

Why do we put so much stress on daily sales targets and daily activity targets? It's because we've seen so many failures by talented, hard-working, well-meaning people who deserved to succeed. No one ever sat them down and said, 'Look, success comes by doing the right number of activities day in and day out'.

Make reminders

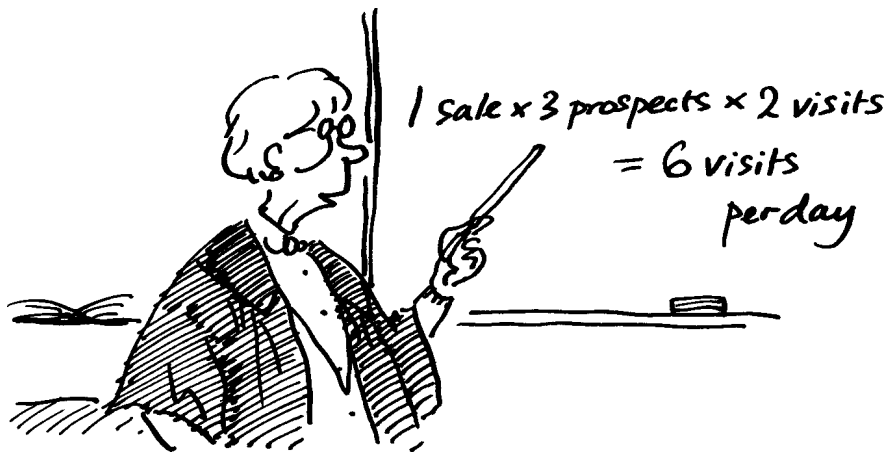
We know that you are reading this book in order to succeed. You want to use a strategic approach. You want to avoid the pitfalls of others. Therefore, take today to plan your targets. Plan your systems for reaching your targets. Draw up wall charts, pocket memos – anything and everything you need to remind yourself that hard work alone will not bring you success. It's a matter of scheduling and seeing the right number of people today as well as carrying out specific activities which will allow you to see the right number of people tomorrow.



S U N D A Y

Calculate

What is the right number? If we need one sale per day and we have to see three prospects in order to convert one to a sale, then we need three sales visits per day. That's if we can do one-call closings; in other words, we only need to see each prospect once. But what if we need to see each prospect twice on average and we need to make one sale per day? How many sales visits will we need to do every day? Six.



We'll need time for making appointments, and following up on promises we make during the appointments. Therefore, the need for planning our targets and breaking them into daily workloads is essential.

Is 'our best' a measure?

What if you didn't do the calculation? What if you just worked as hard as you could? What do you think the result would be?



S U N D A Y

Perhaps this example will help. On one of my speaking engagements in Singapore, a journalist approached me and asked, 'Why do you so often stress the importance of daily targets? Isn't it enough for people to just do their best?'

'Look at it this way,' I suggested. 'What if you were training to be an Olympic champion runner? Would you go out every day and practise running any distance at any speed, just doing your best? Or would you know exactly how far you had to run and at what speed you had to run in order to meet your defined goal?'

'Oh yes, I see,' she responded. That made sense to her. It's painful for people to work hard and do their best, to have high expectations and then be let down. However, with daily targets set, you are able to work sharp and with purpose. You won't fail by thinking sales will come to you magically, suddenly or later.

Pitfalls for business owners too

New business owners have exactly the same problem, and we can learn from them. Here's an example. Two very talented young dress designers with their own shop asked advice for succeeding in their business. They had a lot of loyal customers, but they were afraid they wouldn't make enough money to stay in business.



S U N D A Y

Here are the questions that need answers:

- How much money do we need to make?
- What are our expenses?
- How many do we need to sell per year to cover all our expenses and leave us with a profit?
- How many is that per week?
- What do we need to do in order to sell that many each week?

They hadn't thought about it that way. They were just going to do the best they could. Were they unusual? No. That's the naïve approach you want to avoid regardless of your industry.

Are 'good products' enough?

I was very fortunate to work with a British enterprise agency launched by Prince Charles which helps people start up new businesses. Through that experience of working on the Board, I saw hundreds of people who thought it was enough to have a 'good product' and 'do their best.' Yet as time went on, those who succeeded learned that they had to know *exactly* what their sales targets were every week and every day. Then they had to focus all their energy on making sure those targets were met, to ensure that they didn't go out of business.

Selling helps you succeed

You don't want to be out of business; that is, out of the sales business. There are tremendous opportunities in sales: opportunities for self-development, opportunities for promotion, opportunities for helping people, job



S U N D A Y

satisfaction, financial wealth and even progression towards running your own business if that's what you want. Yet, few business owners today succeed without strong emphasis and skills on the sales side. And likewise, few people today in the corporate world progress without being able to sell their ideas.

Millions of people are involved in the production of products or services. All of their jobs rely on people being able to sell those products or services. Corporations need you. The economies of the world rely on continued sales. Your skills and your success are more important than you realise.

Measure your results

Whatever your goal, start now by measuring your targets and breaking them into daily targets and tasks. Remember that today is your day of preparation and your success later will mainly depend on your plan and your dedication to your plan .

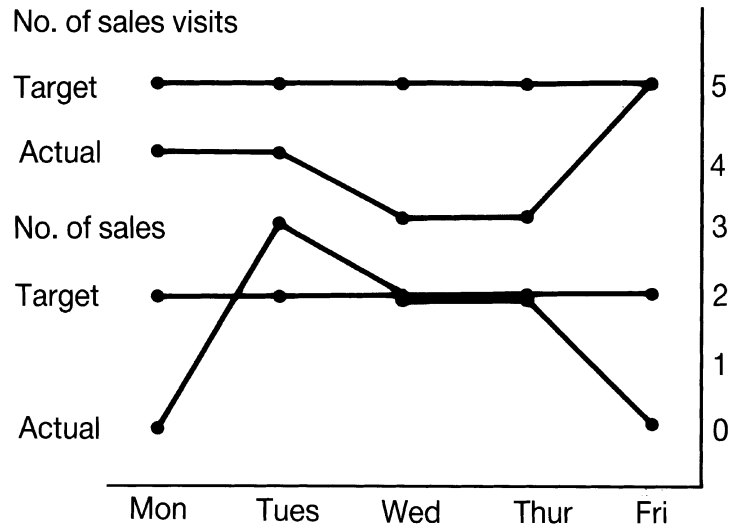
Two aspects on this chart are the most critical to measure. These are:

- Number of sales visits (target and actual)
- Number of sales (target and actual)



SUNDAY

Self-management wall chart and computer graph



If you are really determined to succeed, you'll also to chart the following:

Self-management systems

- The number of telephone calls you make for appointments (target and actual)
- The number of direct mail or email letters you send (target and actual)
- The number of referral leads you get from customers before and after the sale (target and actual)
- The number of web-site hits or other methods you use for finding prospective customers



SUNDAY

These will become your self-management systems.

Predicting shortfalls

If your wall chart shows and computer graph shows you that your actual sales *visits* are 25% below your target for one week, you can expect to be 25% down on sales unless you make up that number of visits next week.

Sales do not come about magically, and that's what your management control wall charts and computer graphs remind you of instantly.

Selling is not a mystical process

Will you reach the success level you hope for?

Much of your success will depend on coming to terms with the actual component parts of salesmanship.

Selling is not a mystical process. It's a predictable, logical, step-by-step process like a production line. When we put in the right component parts, we get the correct end-product. When we put in fewer component parts than necessary, we get an inferior end-product. There is no mystery about salesmanship.

Planning our success by setting our daily workload is the first component part. The next six chapters give the other component parts. When we carry out each component part in the right quantity, with the right quality and frequency, we have success.



S U N D A Y

Our results come from our actions, not from our understanding. It's said that, 'Knowledge without action serves no one'. This is never more true than in sales. Pick up your pen and start now to create your targets *and* your self-management system charts. Success is in your hands.

Remember, knowledge without action serves no one.

