

Reader Views

Book reviews, for readers, by readers.

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Interview with Dave Kurlan

Author of *Baseline Selling – How to Become a Sales Superstar by Using What You Already Know About the Game of Baseball*

We are pleased to have Dave Kurlan with us today talking about his recently published book. Welcome to Reader Views Dave.

Irene: In your book “Baseline Selling – How to Become a sales Superstar by Using What You Already Know About the Game of Baseball” is being launched this week. People that have read your book comment that the information you pose changes the way they approach the sales process. Please give us a brief synopsis of the book.

Dave: “Baseline Selling” really simplifies the selling process, something that salespeople have wanted for years. The best part is that it doesn’t require them to change the *way* they sell as much as it significantly shortens the sell cycle, improves their closing ratio and increases the number of opportunities they will have as a result of simplifying their messages and questions.

Irene: What inspired you to write “Baseline Selling?”

Dave: My company, Objective Management Group, Inc., has assessed around 250,000 salespeople over the last 16 years and a review of that data revealed that 74% of these salespeople were ineffective. I believe it’s because the professional training that exists for salespeople today is too complicated for people to understand and remember and nearly impossible to apply to their businesses. So I decided to introduce to them a way to sell that was memorable, enjoyable and, most importantly, actionable. They will be able to do this immediately.

Irene: Baseball is used as a metaphor for the selling process. Why did you choose baseball over any other sport or metaphor?

Dave: Baseball is the only sport other than golf that has only forward progress. Basketball, football, hockey and soccer all go back and forth but baseball, when translated into sales, becomes a four-step process. And in addition to the steps being Get to first, get to second, get to third and score, the baseball diamond itself becomes a

powerful representation of the sales pipeline. Suspects on the first baseline, Prospects lined up on the way to second base, Qualified Opportunities on the base path between second and third base and Closeable Opportunities lined up on the third base line.

Irene: Not all people have the innate ability to “sell” – especially themselves. Do you believe that using your methods, everyone can become a superstar?

Dave: No. Some people just shouldn't be in sales. But assuming that the reader wants to achieve sales success and doesn't have too many of the weaknesses I describe in the book, Baseline Selling will finally show them a way to achieve consistent sales results.

Irene: What is the greatest obstacle that most people have to overcome in order to become a successful salesperson?

Dave: It's their need for approval or, in other words, their need to be liked. Sometimes, this is so pronounced that it becomes more important than getting the business sold. The weakness is so powerful that it affects a salesperson's ability to prospect, ask questions, qualify and close. And when salespeople aren't doing these things effectively, their results tend to be quite inconsistent.

Irene: One of the references in your book you have “Rule of Habits”. You suggest that by using Habit Quotient - the number of times a person needs to be asked before they are ready to buy – is an effective tool. Please tell our audience more about how this works.

Dave: Everyone has an internal decision making process and the final step in this process is the number of times they must “check with themselves” to make the final decision. In the grocery store, it might be the number of heads of lettuce one has to hold before choosing one. On a sales call, if the prospect has a Habit Quotient of three – she needs to check with herself three times before she can say ‘yes’ – and the salesperson has the right solution at the right price at the right time, the prospect will not say ‘yes’ until the salesperson has asked the third time. The book explains how to easily elicit the Habit Quotient from each prospect.

Irene: Recently Richard Fenton published a book “Go for the No!” He claims getting to the “yes” the salesperson needs to focus on getting a “no.” He says by increasing the failure rate the ultimate result is in accelerating movement toward ultimate sales. Using statistical methods he has calculated, for example, that he needs to get 5000 rejections to net 50 yeses. Is your theory similar or different than his, and why?

Dave: I won't comment on his statistics because the statistics will be different for everyone, but I would agree that a ‘no’ can get things moving in the right direction when a prospect is unable to say ‘yes’.

Irene: Closing a sale requires certain finesse. Some people are good at it, others aren't. What are your suggestions for a successful closing – one that the person asks “Where do I sign?”?

Dave: “Baseline Selling” introduces a close so simple that anyone can easily use it and have success with it. As a matter of fact, it is so easy that I call it the Inoffensive Close. “Would you like my help?”

Irene: Of course, how can one refuse if they are asked offered help. For more information about “Baseline Selling” or the services of Objective Management please go to: <http://www.objectivemanagement.com/>