

The Fundamental Guide to Achieve
Extraordinary Sales
and Sustain Loyal Customers

THE TRUSTED ADVOCATE

Accelerate Success
With Authenticity
And Integrity

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Preface: Transformation to Success

Like so many others, I did not know the meaning of success until I lost everything. It took years of sacrifice to buy a house, two cars, and a fenced-in yard. The house was full of furniture, but it felt empty. The cars provided a means of mundane transportation to and from the office, and the lonely place called home. The fenced-in yard was a quiet place of peaceful solitude, rarely visited, visible through the windows of the house. It appeared to be the perfect lifestyle. Beneath the surface was a lonely lack of satisfaction. The possessions were merely distractions in the pursuit of fulfillment.

So much of life and time had been invested in the collection of possessions, but it was never enough. Acquiring each new possession provided temporary satisfaction, but was eventually replaced by the quest for some other object. My career became a means to fund the perpetual chase, and to escape the loneliness of home. Work days stretched into late nights and early mornings. Saturdays were devoted to finishing Fridays. Sundays were spent preparing for Mondays. The cycle continued relentlessly, until the morning when it was all gone.

Through a series of unexpected events, everything was lost. The house was turned into an empty shell. Furniture and possessions were taken away. From the outside, the house looked as it always had, but the inside was a constant reminder of a hollow existence. My footsteps echoed in vacant rooms. The cars were gone, and it was only a matter of time before I would have to leave the house as well. I saw the world through the windows, but did not know what direction to take.

I awoke on an old mattress on the floor. Morning sun streamed in through windows that had no drapes or blinds. The sheet that covered me, and the pillow beneath my head, were given to me by a sympathetic friend. An alarm clock atop a milk crate reminded me that it was time to start the day. The rest of the room was quiet, dusty, and cold. I was alone. There was nothing remaining for anyone to take, and nothing left to lose. It was in that moment that I recognized how many opportunities were before me. When you have nothing, everything is an opportunity.

As I lay in my clothes on the mattress, I thought about my sense of emptiness and tried to remember what had given me satisfaction in the past. My reverie was interrupted by a knock at the front door. There was a long line of people who had come to bring gifts and show support. Some people brought items from storage, old clothes, and assorted household items. Other people brought food supplies. As each person walked through the front door, we hugged, we laughed, and we recognized something deep within ourselves. Some of the people were friends from work. Some people were acquaintances from town, but I was surprised by the number of people that I did not recognize at all. They asked for nothing in return. On the contrary, many of them stated that the gesture was merely returning some kindness that had been shared in the past. As I listened to them, I started to understand what had been missing, and what direction I needed to take.

Friends and strangers came to my aid during a time of need. The gifts that they gave may not have felt like a significant sacrifice to them, but it was a turning point in my life. These individuals invested in my well-being, contributed to my future, and demonstrated support during a time when it was painfully evident that I had no financial means to repay the gesture. Through this experience, I

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was reminded of how good it had made me feel to demonstrate some generosity or kindness to others. There was a sense of fulfillment that came from helping someone else progress in the pursuit of personal goals. Since that experience, I have a heightened sense of appreciation in the ability to act as an advocate for others. By investing with sincerity and commitment to the success of others, you will also receive reciprocal rewards. Reciprocal rewards are not the intent of being an advocate, but these benefits are the inevitable consequences of investing in the success of others.

The common misconception is that happiness, satisfaction, and success are achieved by what possessions we acquire. We are taught to believe the amount of wealth we amass is the yardstick for measuring personal worth. Do possessions change the person you are if you acquire them or give them up? Do they really define you?

By confronting the common misconception that your possessions define you as a person, it becomes possible to recognize how your goals may have gotten in your way. It is time to throw out the old definitions of “goals” and start fresh.

Begin by understanding yourself. What makes you special? Who do you want to be? The answers are reflected in what you do well, what you like to do, and what comes naturally to you. Your personal worth is not measured by the possessions that surround you. Instead, it is measured by how well you live up to your own capabilities. Furthermore, your personal worth is measured by how well you utilize those capabilities to constructively contribute to the development of others. Development may be achieved by assisting other individuals with the successful attainment of career related objectives. Individuals may benefit from social development, in the community or among peers. Personal development is defined differently by each individual, so it is very important for you to understand how it is defined by each person. Your personal worth is measured by how genuine you are to yourself and how authentic you are in your relationships with others.

There is a path to obtaining the things you want to have, and that path does not follow the misconception that one needs to sacrifice individuality to have them. The path you take to obtain the things you want begins with being virtuous, honest, authentic, and trustworthy. It begins with being the person you were meant to be and the person you want to be.

The next step on the path to attaining what you desire is the natural result of being the person you were meant to be. Acting in a responsible, genuine, and sincere manner will shape the actions you take and the way that you respond to others. In other words, living up to your personal commitments will have a tremendous impact on what you do.

With consistent and conscientious diligence, your actions become a natural extension of your character. By being honest and authentic, your actions will be trustworthy and reliable. Your reputation and recognition will be built upon your actions and decisions. Your character shapes your actions.

The final result of your actions and of how other people respond to your actions will determine what you achieve and ultimately what you have. It is not the relentless pursuit of personal gain that achieves this success but rather the continuous commitment to being authentic that delivers results.

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To be successful, to attain what you want, you must first put aside your material goals—those goals will only get in your way. You must be absolutely committed to who you can be. When you maintain a resilient focus on who you want to be, what you ultimately have will be a by-product of your level of commitment.

Does this still seem contrary to what we are taught to believe?

Being trustworthy is not about trying to convince customers that you can be trusted while intending to take advantage of them. Being trustworthy means absolute personal dedication to personal character. It is about who you choose to be.

The authors are committed to your success. We are devoted to helping you obtain a level of satisfaction you may not have believed existed. We are committed to your goals. This will be reflected in what you do and in the relationships you share with your customers. Certainly, the development of these relationships may result in amassing personal wealth and possessions, but this will be a pleasant by-product of the process.

1. Be: Who you are and who you aspire to be.
2. Do: The person you are dictates what you do and the actions you take.
3. Have: By acting in the manner of the person you aspire to be, you will achieve more than you thought possible.

The common misconception is that what you have is the measure of the person you can be and a by-product of what you do. Challenge this misconception. You have the power to dictate the person you want to be. Acting with authenticity as the person you choose to be will be reflected in your actions, and this will determine what you ultimately achieve.

To transform yourself and the sales profession with purpose, there are three distinct stages.

1. Plan: The first stage is to plan and prepare.
 - “The Obligation to be Trustworthy”
2. Do: The second stage is to implement actions according to your plan.
 - “The Obligation to Promise”
3. See: The third stage is to see the results and measure them in comparison with your plan and your actions. Then use this experience to plan again.
 - “The Obligation to Deliver on Promises”

Your transformation will require planning, action, and reflection.

You may be wondering why we are so confident we can help you achieve your definition of success. We are confident in the process because it has a track record of success. When the method was applied to one control group in a company, that group doubled sales revenue in a one year period. By comparison, several other groups in the same company either decreased or remained

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unchanged during the same period. When tested for the second year, the control group increased sales revenue with new business and organic growth of existing clients by 200%! After the second year, the company quickly implemented this approach to all groups and turned stagnant performance into sustainable relationships and exceptional profit. Furthermore, the management adopted this process to successfully train new sales associates who had little or no prior experience. The company measured success as profitable growth, while the individuals in the sales groups measured performance by the success of each individual client. By contributing to the success of customers, the sales associates enjoyed commissions and bonuses.

This is a powerful journey of transformation. Starting with you, the journey transforms the sales profession from the inside out. You may not be able to control your environment, but you have complete control over the person you aspire to be. Once you acknowledge your unique blend of talents, skills, knowledge, and experience, you can use these tools to create a personal promise no one else can match.

By being the person you were meant to be—by being trustworthy and real—you will gain confidence and success. You can choose your own actions and reactions. While you apply your efforts to help other people achieve their goals, you will influence your own destiny and discover a deeper level of satisfaction and accomplishment than you may have ever imagined. It is quite likely that this experience will alter your definition of success and you will want to start the journey over again. Every time you repeat the cycle, you will gain new perspective. You can use your knowledge and experience to continuously develop your focus and your skills.

This is our promise to you: by provoking you to be an authentic individual, we are committed to your success. We have outlined our process for you. We know that acting with authenticity and integrity takes courage, and people often fear the risk of exposing themselves to relationships of obligation. We have taken the responsibility of preparing this journey for you. It is a journey we have taken ourselves, and a journey we have shared with others. As you take this journey of transformation, you will discover that you are not alone and that relationships of obligation become a shared commitment.

Start now by writing down your personal definition of success. Document your goals and place them somewhere you can see them every day. Write down your answers to these simple questions:

1. What are your strengths?
2. What are you here to do for others?
3. What would it look like if you provided maximum value?
4. If you provided maximum value, what would be the reward?

Plan your process, recognize your talent, and define the person you aspire to be. Act as a trusted advocate for your clients. Place your plan into practice and be patient with yourself. During this process, continually reflect on your goals and your definition of success to determine your progress. Your aspirations and your definition of success may change over time.

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Reflections Before You Begin Your Journey:

- ✓ Sales executives do not have time to train teams, but they are continually required to achieve greater results.
- ✓ Sales professionals do not have time to train because they are too busy trying to meet quotas.
- ✓ The first priority of sales professionals is to respond to customer demands. Who has time to read a book?
- ✓ Self improvement would be nice if it could be achieved in short, focused, and entertaining stories with real-life, tangible tools to immediately help increase performance.
- ✓ Great sales professionals are not born. They learn from one customer experience at a time. How can I expedite the process by learning from the experiences of others, putting it all together, and then applying it to my own job?
- ✓ Great sales professionals are the results of hard work, planning, dedication, and a little focused direction.

It is impossible to be all things to all people. This book is about one thing: you. You will become a warrior in fulfilling your dreams. Everyone is engaged in the art of sales in some manner or another. We all represent a product, a service, a company, an idea, an institution, a purpose, or, at the very least, ourselves. How you represent yourself, the focus of your intent, and your deliberate commitment is what separates you from the rest of the pack. You have the ability to become a trusted advocate. Do you have the commitment and the courage?

We are advocates for you and your success. This book can be used by trainers, coaches, mentors, managers, or individuals who have a thirst for the success of their clients. You can conduct the activities in this book as an individual or in a group. If you are part of a sales team, you may find it useful to discuss some of these concepts or activities with your colleagues. This may help establish some new insight on techniques or another perspective on your own talent and behavior. Share your reflections on this material with individuals who are interested in supporting your growth and success. You should always support them in return. By sharing creative ideas and honest reflections with mutually respectful colleagues, you will establish your own network of trusted advocates.

Each chapter contains a relevant quote by one of the authors. You might find that a quote has particular meaning to you and commit it to memory. You may find opportunities to reference a quote in conversations. When you reference a quote that has particular meaning to you, it becomes a touchstone of your character to the people you share it with, and thereby a reflection of you.

Each chapter contains a story or stories based on a central theme. The intent is to provide perspective, real examples, inspiration, and a little amusement.

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While this book follows a progressive approach to developing the skills and strategies of a trusted advocate, it is possible to read a specific chapter independent from the others. If there is a topic you want to specifically reference, share with a colleague, or use in a training session, you can use any one chapter out of context. Feel free to skip to a chapter if it has significant relevance to you, or read the book from beginning to end. You are our customer, so we designed this book to go at your pace.

At the end of each chapter is a list of activities. The activities give you opportunities to apply the themes to your own circumstances. It is impossible to provide a complete list activities and variations that would accommodate the multitude of sales environments. Various categories of sales professionals referenced in the stories or reflections illustrate specific points. We would have liked to write a book customized just for you. The activities at the end of each chapter provide an opportunity for you to make the theme your own.

We value your ideas and input in helping us improve our approach to becoming a trusted advocate. We are on this journey together. Some of the chapters come from themes suggested by respected colleagues or were inspired by their activities. If you would like to share your ideas or a personal story, we welcome the feedback and inspiration. It is an opportunity to learn from one another, and that is a wonderful experience.

If you find something useful in the materials in this book, we would like your testimonial. Share your reflections with other respected colleagues and share a copy of this book. Write a note inside the cover and share a copy of the book with your colleagues or customers as a wonderful way to expand your network. It is a subtle way to underscore your commitment to being a trusted advocate, and we are certainly not too proud to ask for your referral.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trusted advocate.

About the Authors:

John Mehrmann: CEO, Executive Blueprints, Inc

John Mehrmann is an international speaker, popular trainer, and prolific author with more than twenty years of management experience in global organizations spanning the fields of operations, e-commerce, sales, accounting, customer service, marketing, and logistics. As a speaker, John uses his experience to deliver insightful presentations, educational workshops, and motivational direction.

John has received numerous honors, including Man of the Year 2007 from the American Biographical Institute®, Certificate of Recognition, Industry Achievement Award, and the USA Certificate of Appreciation all from the Institute of Service Management. John served on the Advisory Council of the Bureau of Electronics and Appliance Repair (BEAR) for the California Department of Consumer Affairs and on the Advisory Committee for Motivation Education. John Mehrmann has been recognized for his achievements in the *Who's Who Global Edition*, *Sterling Who's Who*, and the *Continental Who's Who*.

John Mehrmann is president of Executive Blueprints, Inc., an organization dedicated to the advancement of leadership and the development of human capital. The foundation of every organization is the talent of the people within it.

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Mitchell Simon: CEO, Simon Leadership Alliance

Mitchell Simon brings fifteen years of entrepreneurial and Fortune 500—executive experience to the field of leadership and team development. Mitchell founded The Simon Alliance with a commitment to supporting high-performing leaders and teams to accelerate their potential and help them achieve unimagined personal and professional results. Mitchell is passionate about providing executive coaching and facilitation that provokes leaders, teams, and organizations to build thriving companies that exude confidence and achieve extraordinary results. Mitchell Simon specializes in developing excellence in executive coaching, leadership development, team development, strategy, and corporate culture. Mitchell Simon received his certification as an Integral Coach from New Ventures West, and his JD and .MBA from UCLA.

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