

4 SIMPLE RULES FOR ACHIEVING SALES GOALS

By Dave Mattson
President & CEO of Sandler Training



As the New Year begins, it's natural for sales teams to start thinking about ways to fine-tune their sales development activities. Below are some simple rules that will help you and your team improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which you accomplish forecasted goals.

The first two rules apply to the common situation where a sales manager must create a *plan of action* to meet sales targets that have been handed down from on high.

RULE 1.

Regardless of how sophisticated the method, the plan will only be as effective as the data with which you create it. (Tweet this!) It doesn't matter how fancy your software or

your formula is, if you feed it irrelevant, inaccurate, or outdated information, it won't yield the results you're after! Metrics you should record and monitor consistently for each individual salesperson include: *total daily conversations with new unique prospects; scheduled meetings set with a clear agenda in place; meetings completed (physically or virtually) that resulted in a "yes" or "no" decision; closed sales that created new sales revenue.*

RULE 2.

Action plans must have STAR (Simple, Timely, Accurate, Reviewed) quality to be useful. (Tweet this!) Track and update the hard numbers that connect to each of the SIMPLE metrics you just read. Update them each week to keep them

TIMELY. Analyze them so you have ongoing ratios that **ACCURATELY** establish the current patterns that will help you predict future outcomes. **REVIEW** the numbers weekly in voice-to-voice discussions, either one-on-one with individual salespeople or during group meetings.

The next two rules will ensure that your compensation scheme actually supports the planned sales goals.

RULE 3.

Compensation plans that are too complex are never as motivating as simple and direct methods. Make sure each individual action plan connects to a simple, comprehensible, *personal* goal for that particular

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6 SELLING CERTAINTIES

By Howard Goldstein, *Sandler Training*

1] If your 30-Second Commercial doesn't answer a prospect's "What's in it for me?" question, there will be nothing in it for you!

The objective of a 30-second commercial is to capture a prospect's attention for the purpose of engaging him or her in a relevant and meaningful conversation. The conversation should include discussion of the prospect's needs, wants, challenges, problems, goals, objectives, and desired outcomes.

Therefore, your commercial must focus first and foremost on the prospect's circumstances, and then on the process by which your product or service brings about desired outcomes.

Except to the extent that they help describe the outcome-achievement process, specific features, functions, benefits, and advantages of your product or service should not be part of the commercial.

The bottom line: your commercial should focus on them—your prospects—not on you or your products and services.

2] If prospects understood the true nature of their problems, they wouldn't need you. (Tweet this!)

If prospects fully understood the underlying reasons for and contributing factors to the situations for which they seek a solution (a product or service), they wouldn't need you to help them find the most appropriate one. A catalog of products or list of services would suffice.

But, when prospects find themselves in challenging situations, they tend to focus

on what is in front of them, not the chain of events that led up to the situations. And, they tend to describe their situations in relation to what they believe the solutions to be—solutions that will address the immediate problem. For example: "We need to step up production"; "We need new software"; and "We need to expand our market reach."

While the descriptions of the desired outcomes may be appropriate, they tell you little or nothing about the circumstances—the sequence and mix of events—that created the needs. Until you have uncovered those elements, you can't prescribe a solution that will ensure that the circumstances and associated problems won't reoccur. And more importantly, you have brought no more value to the interaction than any other salesperson who has a product or service to offer that meets the prospect's "We need..." description.

It's bringing to light and enabling prospects to understand the underlying reasons for the situations they need to address that sets you apart from other salespeople. Helping your prospects discover something they didn't know before meeting you is often the slight edge advantage you need to obtain the business.

3] When analyzing a prospect's situation, if you don't know what you're looking for, you're not likely to find it.

Since prospects typically don't fully understand the genesis of their problems, it's up to you to bring that knowledge to the encounter. If you are not thoroughly knowledgeable about the developmental structure of the problems your product or service is designed to address, you are no better off than your prospects.

Without that knowledge, you will neither be able to recommend with certainty the most appropriate solutions nor will you be able to logically and persuasively justify your recommendations.

It's important to learn about the features and functions of your product or service, but it's more important to understand the reasons for those elements—how they address the structural aspects of the problems. Then, you're in a position to help your prospects better understand their situations "from the ground up" and recognize your recommendations as best-fit solutions.

4] Prospects who say, "If I like what I see, I'll buy it," never see anything they like. (Tweet this!)

Prospects who don't have (and can't articulate, except in broad general terms) a specific outcome they desire are usually not good prospects. More often than not, one of two things occurs. They never see anything they "like," and of course, never buy anything. Or, they make a purchase, but they're never satisfied. They become the client you never wanted.

Part of your responsibility when developing an opportunity is to help prospects identify and shape the specific outcomes they seek. If you find that to be an impossible task, it's time to find another prospect.

“*The bottom line: your commercial should focus on them—your prospects—not on you or your products and services.*”

5] When a prospect says, “Money’s no problem,” it will always end up being one.

A critical element in qualifying a selling opportunity is discovering the prospect’s investment expectations or limitations. Prospects will sometimes attempt to avoid discussing the topic by saying, “Money’s no problem.”

While “money” may not be a problem (i.e., the prospect has a sufficient budget to cover the required investment for whatever

you may recommend), the prospect’s reluctance to reveal that amount is a problem. When a prospect is reluctant (or refuses) to provide relevant information that would enable you to develop a best-fit solution, it’s an indication of a lack of trust, or perhaps an ulterior motive, on the part of the prospect. And that’s an issue that should be addressed before you go any farther.

There’s another more direct explanation for a prospect’s “money’s no problem” answer. It’s “no problem” because the prospect has already made up his mind that you’re not getting any of it.

6] If you allow a prospect to “think it over” after a presentation, you’ll be the only one doing any thinking.

In most cases, a presentation should represent the culmination of the development process—followed by a decision from the prospect to either buy or not buy your product or service. In a complex selling situation, a decision from an intermediate decision maker, for example, may be to recommend or not recommend...your product or service to the final buying committee. In either case, you need to obtain a decision.

In order to obtain that decision, you’ll need to do two things. First, do a superlative job of qualifying the opportunities so you’ll know exactly what must be included in your presentations in order for the prospects to say “yes,” and perhaps more importantly, what would cause them to say “no.” Second, you must know your prospects’ decision timeframes so you are presenting at a time when they are in a position to make a decision. If, for example, a prospect is looking at three companies, you want to be the last person to make a presentation, not the first.

What do you do if you can’t be the last? Ask your prospect to view your presentation as if you were the only one seeking their business, and give you a “yes” or “no” decision at its conclusion, with the understanding that a “yes” doesn’t guarantee that you’ll ultimately get the business. Walking away with a decision, even if it’s “no,” at least lets you know how you did. It’s certainly better than leaving with no feedback—which is exactly what a “think it over” is—and wondering how your presentation was received.



Hmmm...very interesting. This is telling me that your sales success is up to you, not what some crystal ball says.



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Four Simple Rules for Achieving Sales Goals continued

salesperson. For example: Getting X dollars in sales revenue from brand new clients this month, in return for a payoff of Y dollars of commission, also this month. When the goals are this simple and direct, salespeople will be more likely to identify and commit to actions that convert the goal into reality. They will also be more open to coaching that helps them figure out where there is room for improvement.

RULE 4.

Salespeople should not only be compensated for desired outcomes, but also acknowledged for appropriate behavior. Using the example above, the outcome the company wants is X dollars in new sales income this month from

“*Action plans must have STAR (Simple, Timely, Accurate, Reviewed) quality to be useful.*”

brand new clients. If the salesperson achieves the goal, he is rightfully rewarded with Y dollars of commission. But very few salespeople have a 100% closing rate. It's important to acknowledge salespeople for their effort when they perform all of the action plan behaviors even if they don't close a potential opportunity. Why? Because it's the positive feedback and encouragement that will motivate them to keep going...and close the next opportunity.

HOW ARE YOU DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE?

Sandler Training

Wednesday mornings are tough enough without our most annoying client calling in with the usual simple problem to which he is over-reacting. We sigh and answer the phone — all while making the facial gestures of a person eating oysters for the first time in their life.

WHY does that client seem determined to drive you insane?

It's your fault...

Every morning the manager from the operations department stops in to tell you how your team messed up his operations this weekend. She is soooo abrasive. You answer in abrupt sentences and quite rudely push her out the door.

WHY does that coworker seem determined to drive you insane?

It's your fault...

Every Tuesday morning the boss has a “mandatory” meeting to review your prior week. You hate the meeting, and your boss is an idiot (and you know the feeling is mutual).

WHY does the boss seem determined to drive you insane? YES!

It's your fault...

People deal well with people they like, are like them and like them back. That means that unless you work at it, 75% of people don't like YOU!

Are you “reading” them and listening? Probably not. The four personalities, DISC, are always at work and you ignore them at your peril. The Dominants don't like chit-chat and they can only win if someone loses. The Influencers need affirmation that you really like them and they require a “win-win” to get along. The Steady Relators reject you if you are not on the team; they are linked to the details and they will throw themselves under the bus for you and you don't appreciate them! The Compliers believe in the numbers and don't like to lose. They need to win, and they don't care if you win or lose (that's your job) and they don't like you trying to find out personal stuff. Sometimes any personality can be distressed.

Want to convert these difficult people to your side? Read them, listen to them, and rescue them. Check your ego — be emotionally detached. Match & mirror their body language and tonality. It is very hard — but worthwhile and very productive!

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TRANSFORMING HR TO DRIVE STRATEGIC GROWTH

By David Devine, *The Devine Group*, Chairman & CEO

Today's HR function is presented with a unique opportunity. HR Leaders have a chance to transform their roles into the heart of organization growth; to become strategy-centric people specialists who can take their seat at the Executive Committee Level. **(Tweet this!)** Two dominant trends have emerged that have re-shaped the role of HR in the corporate environment:

- The rapid emergence of the "knowledge economy"
- The outsourcing of traditional HR responsibilities (i.e., payroll, benefits and pensions)

Many recent studies show CEOs are most acutely concerned with issues associated with talent: acquisition, development, retention and succession planning. When polled, more than 80% of CEOs report they find value in their existing HR Leaders relative to HR compliance matters. However, when queried in matters associated with strategic issues, the same CEOs have less than a 50% level of belief their HR Leader is helping to drive and to solve key business issues.

Where is the breakdown?

Many CEOs and C-suite executives report that while HR has a superior understanding of its functional compliance responsibilities, most HR leaders are lacking in a broad-based commercial understanding of the business itself. Hence, the days of HR-related support and compliance are viewed as being grossly insufficient to drive value at the C-Suite level in progressive organizations.

Here are **3 key milestones** HR Leaders can achieve to become true strategic players:

- 1. Develop a consultative, coaching relationship with the CEO**—HR Leaders should offer their feedback on the CEO's performance as well as that of the Executive Team. Becoming a de-facto executive coach is a pathway to gain the trust and support of the CEO. **(Tweet this!)** Remember, CEOs want and need constructive, objective feedback and coaching. The vantage point of a well-positioned, seasoned HR Leader to provide organizational insights to the CEO is truly unique. If the HR Leader has done his/her homework and understands the business both vertically and horizontally, the gained insights provided to the company's leader will be considered invaluable. Leveraging this expertise to its value point will help the HR Leader rise to a level of organization prominence.
- 2. Ensure the Executive Leadership Team is functioning well**—CEOs want an HR Leader who understands that the performance of the Executive Leadership Team is fundamental to the organization's success. To ensure the ELT is performing optimally, it is incumbent on the HR Leader to become fluent in all aspects of the business (Sales, Operations, Marketing, Finance, R&D, et al.). So, the development of deep relationships with each ELT member will allow for access and indispensable insights into each functional area. This broad-based knowledge of the organization will also provide the visionary HR Leader with value-added insights to the organization and its executive leaders.
- 3. Ask to be included on the company's Executive Leadership Team and/or Board of Directors/Advisors**—Access and relevancy are the keys: HR Leaders must have a seat at the ELT level in order to maximize their value to the organization. Once the HR Leader has gained the trust of the CEO and the ELT by demonstrating a broad based understanding of the organization, inclusion in the company's ELT is all but a foregone conclusion.

The expectation of today's CEO is vividly clear: an HR Leader who will fully promote the true value and meaning of Human Resources. In fact, an organizational leader bold enough to help drive strategy and growth. The visionary, strategic HR player described herein is the HR Leader of the now and the future.

“CEOs want and need constructive, objective feedback and coaching.”



David Devine, Chairman & CEO

David has spent more than 23 years working in the Human Capital Management industry. During that time, David has consulted with organizations like Marriott International, PNC, Sara Lee Foods, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Kraft, Porsche, Fidelity Investments and hundreds of other clients. David earned his Bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University and his Graduate degree from The University of Chicago with a concentration in Organizational & Leadership Development. David has had speaking engagements for the American Management Association as well as the United States Chamber of Commerce both in the U.S and internationally. He is a member of American Mensa, Ltd.

Client Spotlight:

ROHRER'S ONE HOUR HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

HOW THREE GENERATIONS OVERCOME SALES CHALLENGES

Back in 1990, Rohrer's One Hour Heating and Air Conditioning owner Larry Rohrer's goal was both simple and far-reaching. He wanted what most business owners want and that was to give his people an enduring competitive advantage that few if any competitors would be likely to offer. At that time, he sought out Sandler Training to develop and reinforce a comprehensive suite of tools that would allow his people to:

- Increase sales performance
- Deliver superior customer service
- Function effectively as a cohesive team

Larry Rohrer was committed, not only to expanding sales revenue, but also to creating an overall customer experience that made it easy for salespeople to sell on something other than price. He didn't just want himself and his one salesperson (at the time) to follow the Sandler principles...he wanted everyone in the organization to learn them, to operate in accordance with them both internally and externally. He wanted the principles to be taught and reinforced constantly, up and down the organization.

Larry's son Scott Rohrer is now co-owner of the firm, with Matt Buckwalter. Both are Sandler alumni, as are all of the organization's employees: Every customer care associate, every technician, and, of course, every salesperson.

Buckwalter, who came on board as a salesperson with the company in 2000, had no sales experience or training whatsoever before being trained in the Sandler Selling System.

"I can remember the moment when I felt I had passed the Sandler test. Our office forwarded a call to me from a particularly aggressive-sounding client who wanted air conditioning installed in a mansion he had purchased. This was a very successful professional who told me that he had gotten bids from multiple vendors, and had decided that the job in question should cost him about eight thousand dollars. I think he was used to intimidating salespeople. He kept saying, 'That's what it should take. Eight grand.'"

"But what I said to him was, 'Well, I can't give you a quote until I see the property in person, but based on what you're telling me, this job is going to be well north of \$25,000. If you think you can get it done for \$8,000, it doesn't sound like we have anything to talk about. Is there any reason we should continue the conversation?'"

"And then I shut up, which is something else I wouldn't have done without the Sandler training. I didn't rescue him. Instead I was nurturally assertive. And the next words out of his mouth were, 'When can you come down?'"

That customer ended up giving One Hour the job.

Today, both Buckwalter and Scott Rohrer emphasize that their loyalty to Sandler principles is based not just on sales performance, but on the power of holistic implementation of the Sandler principles throughout the enterprise.

"What a lot of people don't realize," Scott told us, "is that this is not just a sales department solution. Sandler is really about life skills, not just sales tactics. How do you tap into the power of the individual and unleash it? How do you support good peer-to-peer discussions? How do you master the art of getting to well-qualified decisions that make sense to both sides? None of that is limited to the world of sales."

Scott's son Dustin Rohrer works as an electrician for the company, and he continues to go through the Sandler reinforcement training. And, with him, this makes three generations of Sandler alumni at Rohrer.

Results

- 300%+ increase in annual gross revenue
- 100% workforce growth
- Two new businesses acquired
- Consistently high customer (4.5/5 – 5/5) average rankings on Yelp.com and Businessfinder.Pennlive.com
- Zero turnover among customer service professionals over the past twelve months
- 1700+ extended service contracts sold in a recent three-month period, most by technicians and customer service professionals



About the Company:

Rohrer's One Hour Heating & Air Conditioning is the leading HVAC service provider in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area.

Company Website:

www.onehourairlanaster.com

Have a success story to share in the next issue of the Sandler Advisor? Submit your organization's story at CaseStudy@sandler.com.

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THE TWO-MINUTE COACH

Howard Goldstein, *Sandler Training*

Today's question comes from Ben who recently obtained a sales position with a company that sells exercise and fitness equipment to hotels, apartment complexes, community centers, resorts, country clubs, and the like that have fitness centers. Their selling strategy is to help the people in charge of those centers discover how to enhance them and monetize the enhancements.

Sounds like a reasonable strategy. So, what's the problem?

The problem for Ben is that the company wants the salespeople to get their feet in the door by offering to conduct a free survey and provide a free analysis regarding the facility's compliance with new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

Don't see the problem?

I didn't either, but here are some facts that will help: The "new" ADA regulations were established in 2010, and the deadline for implementation was March of 2012.

So, the strategy, which may have been appropriate at one point in time, now seems outdated.

The bigger problem for Ben, however, is the backdoor approach the company wants him to take. He asks, "If the 'monetize the enhancement' strategy is a valid one, why shouldn't I use it to obtain the appointment in the first place?" (Good question.) He says that he is uncomfortable starting a relationship with a "bait and switch tactic," but the sales manager, who frequently monitors his calls, requires him to do so.

Finally, Ben asks, "Should I just suck it up and use the company's approach, or should I be looking for a new job?"

To answer your first question, Ben, "I agree." If the strategy for engaging a prospect in the intended conversation is sound, you don't need an unrelated pretense to get your foot in the door. ([Tweet this!](#))

As to whether or not to look for a new job, I can't tell you what to do. But, let me ask you a couple of questions that will help you with your decision.

1. "Are *honesty, integrity, and authenticity* core values of yours?"
2. "If they are, do they represent lines you won't cross?"

Answer those questions and you'll know what to do.



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