

Sales Health Check

Presented by J.W. Owens



A Perspective 101 Series



Sales Health Check



How fit are you to meet those challenges and beat your targets?

This brief checklist should get you thinking.

Here are **10 questions** for you to answer. Beneath the checklist are some ideas and thoughts on what you can do where your answer was no.

First, the questions:

- 1. Can you state your sales objectives accurately and in detail?**
- 2. Have you a written sales plan?**
- 3. Have you communicated your plan to your manager?**
- 4. Have you identified your key accounts and do you have a plan for each?**

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Here are **10 questions** for you to answer.

5. Do you regularly spend time prospecting and cold calling?
6. Have you a communication plan for your customers?
7. Do you have a system for collecting customer feedback?
8. Do you invest time and money in your own development?
9. Do you invest in your business wardrobe?
10. Do you feel confident in the current economic climate?

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1. **Your sales targets include more than just your financial targets.** What else does your company expect from you? Are you expected to open new accounts? Does your company want you to sell across your whole range? Are new products coming out in which case are you ready?
2. **Without a written sales plan you are at a disadvantage.** I've got a template for a sales plan free on my website.
3. **How well do you communicate with your manager.** Your manager is a great resource. Communicate your plan and get some feedback. What are their expectations and how can they help you reach your objectives? This may sound obvious and there are some really great sales managers out there, but you'd be amazed how many sales managers there are who fail to communicate effectively with members of their team. Take the responsibility. Manage upwards!
4. **The Pareto principle tells us that 80% of our business typically comes from 20% of our customer base.** Your key accounts matter because if you lose one it can have a devastating effect on your results. When asked, companies who changed suppliers gave 'neglect' as their main reason for leaving. Get close to them. Put a plan together with them. Get feedback on your performance and the level of their satisfaction

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5. For most sales people prospecting is an important part of their job, but one that is easy to stop doing when other things need sorting out. Be ruthless. Put prospecting time in your diary every week and stick to it. Set yourself an achievable target, I try to contact 10 prospects each week. Not 50 or 100 but 10 each week. Make prospecting an important part of your time each 3 week and don't get distracted. The more you do it the easier it becomes.

6. As with question 4 you need to consider all your accounts and decide what is the best way to communicate with them. Physical visits aren't always necessary and can be very time consuming. Would a phone call do? Have you tried Skype? I use it with some of my customers as a video conferencing tool. I use Face Time on my iPad to communicate with one of my customers. I will repeat what I said before. When asked, companies who changed suppliers gave 'neglect' as their main reason for leaving. Keep communicating with your customers and if you do go and see them make sure you have a good reason for being there that adds value.

7. Get regular feedback from your customers on how they see your levels of service. When professional buyers are asked to rank three criteria for buying in order of importance, service comes first every time, product comes second and price third. Most product and service improvements come from customer feedback rather than from within the supplier's organization. Smart salespeople ask for feedback and act on the feedback they receive.

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8. You may be lucky and work for an organization that invests in training and development. Even if you are, take responsibility for your own development. Read books, surf the internet, buy CD's and DVD's about sales.

9. This was advice I was given a long time ago. You may work in an outdoor or industrial environment where it is not appropriate to wear a suit. Most companies seem fairly relaxed about what you wear in the office. What I feel is still important is looking good in front of customers. Good clothes cost more but last longer and look better. If you feel and look successful you are going a long way to achieve that success.

10. Finally, turn on the radio or TV and listen to the news and then ignore the doom and gloom merchants. This is my fourth recession and my experience has been that if you work harder and smarter while others give up, there is business still to be had and you can do well. The next time someone tells you there is no money about tell them that the US economy is worth trillions. Try to be confident. Yes, you will get knocked back; that is what sales is all about. The more confident you feel and the harder you work the more successful you will be.

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This is a series of Training for your
Management, Sales & Office TEAM

Good Selling !



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