



TOM HOPKINS
THE BUILDER OF
SALES CHAMPIONS

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21 Ways to Increase Sales This Year

by Guest Columnist, Jim Cathcart

1. Prepare Yourself To Excel

Use a checklist to prepare your attitude, appearance, customer information, company and product information and the selling environment, so you can be at your best on every call.

2. Notice What Is Working

Study yourself, your product or service and your company to know what is working now. Reinforce the actions and tools, which are generating results. Learn from your successes as well as your failures.

3. Know Your Competitive Advantage

Study your company and your products and services in relation to what your competitors offer. Know where and how you stand out, and where you don't. Be prepared to discuss these comparisons at any moment.

4. Improve Your Sales Skill, Not Just Your Product Knowledge

Don't rely on product knowledge to make you more persuasive. Sharpen your skills in reading people, describing your offer in compelling ways and in asking for the order at the right time.

**The best place to increase your selling skills
is at Tom Hopkins' 3-day Boot Camp Sales Mastery!**

This year's program is August 21, 22 & 23 at the fabulous Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. If you want to earn more, invest three days of your time with Tom Hopkins and his guest speakers

...including Jim Cathcart (the author of this article)...to learn how.

[View details about Boot Camp 2008.](#)

5. Target The People Who Are Your Best Prospects

Best customers have patterns. Most will fit the same pattern, so prospect among those who fit the pattern. Calling on people with similar needs, circumstances, and interests makes you more likely to create another best customer.

6. Know What To Be Curious About

Know in advance what questions to ask by knowing what answers you need. Cultivate a strategic curiosity. Learn to be curious about the things that will advance your chance of making a sale.

7. Realize Who Is In Your Market

Create a profile of the ideal market for what you offer. Define who they are, where they can be reached, what they care about, what they fear, what they read, whom they admire and more. Know them well.

8. Understand The Person And Their Situation

Create an awareness of the psychological needs of your prospect as well as knowing what their technical needs are. Sometimes the way someone wants to feel has more influence on their decision to buy than what they actually need.

9. Find The Diamonds In Your Own Backyard

More business exists around you than you know. Look among your friends, neighbors, existing customers, past customers, colleagues, competitors and coworkers for the opportunities that others overlook.

10. Ask For Specific Referrals

Tell people what your ideal customer or prospect looks like. Ask them who they know who fits this description.

Then ask them to take a specific action to help you meet the prospect; a telephone introduction, a testimonial letter, arrange a luncheon or coffee shop meeting, etc.

11. Manage Your Sales Reputation

Determine today how you want to be thought of tomorrow. Specify the reputation you want within each group of which you are a part, and then work a plan to earn it piece by piece.

12. Grow Your Brand Identity

Get yourself and your company known within your market area. Write articles, letters to editors, offer expert input for reporters and publishers, conduct surveys, provide free services to key people, donate your time to worthy causes, put your photo on your business card, share valuable ideas via email. Create a broad awareness of yourself as an authority on what you do.

13. Build A Fortress Of Great Relationships

It is not only who you know that determines the value of your relationships; it is whether they know you as a valuable business resource. Define who you need to know today and five years from today. Start now to cultivate the relationships and the reputation, which will expand your possibilities.

14. Learn To Manage Points Of View

Half your job is keeping yourself and others in the right frame of mind. Cultivate your ability to keep the focus on the things that matter most. Become a person who can put everything in perspective for others.

15. Manage Tension Throughout The Sales Process

As tension rises, trust falls. Be aware of the ebb and flow of tension as the sale unfolds. Learn to reduce it when it gets in the way and to momentarily increase it to add urgency to the decision process.

16. Look Like Good News To Your Customer

The way you are perceived by your customer determines how much resistance you will encounter as you sell. Learn to project a positive feeling among those you communicate with. Become a partner in problem solving, not a sales persuader.

17. Cultivate A Selling Style That Uses Your Sales Strengths

Use the combination of online communication, in person calls, telephone contacts, trade show attendance, and public speaking, which allows you to shine. Build a mix of activities to diminish your sales weaknesses and amplify your strengths.

18. Give Samples Of The Experience You Represent

A movie ticket doesn't just buy you a seat in the theater; it buys you the experience of enjoying the movie. What experience does your product or service bring to people? Give them a way to sample that experience through your presentation.

19. Stay Conscious Of The Meaning In What You Do

When a person doesn't find much meaning in what they do, they don't bring much value to what they do. Write down specifically how your product or service makes life better for those who buy it. Read this description every day briefly, to keep in mind the reason behind the purchase. It's not about buying; it's about benefiting from buying.

20. Know When And How To Ask For The Order

Learn to recognize buying signals, how to ask differently with different people, when to let the customer sell himself, how to negotiate details and when to walk away. If you don't ask you don't get. But how you ask often determines success or failure.

21. Deserve To Have Loyal Customers

Know how to cultivate dedicated clients. Become competition-proof by delivering more than people expect. Overfill your client's needs and be their business friend, even when they are not buying from you. Be the kind of person people rave about.

This article is distilled from 130 powerful sales ideas in *The 8 Competencies of Relationship Selling* by Jim Cathcart. Mr. Cathcart is also the author of *Relationship Selling*, and *The Acorn Principle*.

For information on these topics or to book Mr. Cathcart to speak to your group, call 1-800-222-4883. Or inquire via email to: info@cathcart.com. Visit our website at www.cathcart.com.

TIMELY TIP

Using the Telephone Hold Button

The hold button on your telephone is an excellent tool for inquiry calls. Ask the caller to hold just a moment while you get the information they've requested. This break allows you to mentally prepare yourself and clear your mind while gathering the information the caller is seeking.

Putting someone on hold puts you in control. However, never place anyone on hold for more than 17 seconds. If you leave people on hold longer than 17 seconds, they tend to get irritated and their thoughts are allowed to wander. Even if you don't have all of the information you need, check back with them every 17 seconds to explain what you're doing.

If you didn't get the caller's name, say the following when you come back to them from hold the first time: "Thank you for holding. My name is _____, may I ask who is calling please?" When the caller gives you his or her name, write it down and use it throughout the remainder of the call.

CLOSE OF THE MONTH

The Put the Shoe on Their Foot Close

This close can be used when you meet someone who either does not like you or does not like salespeople in general.

Phraseology: "First, Mr. Johnson, let me apologize for the poor service you obviously received. Tell me, if you were President of ABC company and a sales representative treated a customer the way you've been treated and you found out, what would you do?"

Be patient and let them tell you what they'd do. Then, if appropriate, say:

"That's just about what happened in this situation. By the way, it's now my job to show you how professional our company is. And, do you know, when I meet someone like you that's unhappy with a person in our company, it represents a challenge to me. I'd like to give you such special service. Could I just keep in touch with you over the next 20 years?"

For more closes, refer to: [Sales Closing for Dummies™](#), \$16.99.

[For additional training, visit our Free Resources Page.](#)

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