

Seeking sales answers – beware the charlatans

In our time on this planet, most people encounter challenges, issues and problems. These come in many guises – hair loss, relationship issues, being overweight, work problems and pressures health issues and, in the case of salespeople, coping with the pressures and problems of surviving and succeeding in sales.

 By [Peter Gilbert](#) ^{30 Aug 2007}

For most, if not all of these problems, it is not difficult to find somebody offering a cure or solution, without the slightest evidence to support their claims. A couple of examples illustrate the point.

- A blend of olive oil, garlic and African potato will cure or alleviate Aids.
- Strap on these electrodes and, by simply lying motionless on your bed, you can flatten your abs, with any effort.
- Applying a potion to your gleaming cranium will produce a lustrous crop of bushy hair.
- A teenager reports visions of the Virgin Mary and droves of the needy, disabled and infirm, come to seek a miracle cure.

Many of the purveyors of these cures are, at best, misguided, but are mostly charlatans who firmly believe that the world is filled with sheep waiting to be shorn. Most of us are seeking answers of some sort, and salespeople are no different.

Tough decision

Any person who chooses sales, even as a last resort, is making a tough decision to depend entirely on his/her own effort, pride, and willingness to practice long enough to succeed. It's tough not to be able to hide behind a corporate security blanket, make excuses, or blame the product, the boss, the company, or anybody else. When they choose sales, they accept the risk to their egos, some people's derision, and the fears of those not brave enough to stand up to that kind of heat.

Predictably many salespeople seek inspiration, motivation, guidance, advice and skills in order to cope with an extremely demanding job. Much of the guidance available is useful and productive, but beware, there are charlatans lurking in the weeds. They are principally recognisable by their exaggerated claims.

“Come to our one-day seminar and you too will become a sales superstar.” “Attend my seminar and you will be able to sell anything to anybody, any time.”

Can you teach anybody to sell? Yes, of course you can, just as you can teach anyone to play golf. However, all of the lessons and practice will not turn the average weekend golfer into an Ernie Els or Tiger Woods. It simply does not happen, and the suggestion that any person can become a sales superstar is no more credible than the claim that any golfer can become a Tiger Woods. Consider the facts. Take a large population of golfers and the most common handicap is 17. I would not want the sales equivalent of a 17 handicapper on my sales team.

In sales, depending on the sales role, research shows that between 20% and 55% of salespeople hit their quotas. Not all salespeople are created equal and they do not all respond equally to training and coaching.

no matter who delivers it.

So forget the hype. Use industry best practice for recruiting talented salespeople and use the best training available. The results will speak for themselves.

ABOUT PETER GILBERT

Peter Gilbert is the MD of meta-morphose International (www.meta-morphose.co.uk), a sales recruitment and training company that identifies talented young salespeople, places them, trains and coaches them with guaranteed results. Contact him on tel +27 (0)11 801 9400.
View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>