

The perSPECTive

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Knowledge for Creating
and Sustaining
the Built Environment

8 Steps for Improving Commercial Salespeople

A slow economy is only one reason why non-residential business may be sluggish these days. Wendall Bedell, president of Building Services Institute, listed at least five other factors for contractors who attended his workshop, "Why Commercial Salespeople Fail: A Blueprint for Success."

"The first and major reason salespeople fail is due to a poor sales attitude," Bedell said Dec 4 to contractors gathered here for the Design Build 2003 Seminar sponsored by Contracting Business magazine and co-sponsored by CONTRACTOR and HPAC Engineering magazines. A proper attitude blends a belief in the company's services and products; enthusiasm; persistence and follow-up; optimism; consistency; and empathy for the customer, he said.

Citing a study published in the Harvard Business Review, Bedell said that 50% of commercial salespeople lack core competencies such as organizational and communication skills and never should have been hired. Another 25% have potential but were not hired to sell the right service or product. That leaves just 25% of the salespeople who are a good match for the sales job and make 80% of a company's sales.

Yet, even the successful 25% of the sales force is operating at only 40% of capacity for a variety of reasons, Bedell said. Besides a poor attitude, these include a lack of formal training, failure to use available technology effectively, poor selling processes, and inadequate marketing and lead-generating processes.

Success":

To address these shortcomings, Bedell presented his eight-point "Blueprint for Success":

1. Adjust attitude to fit the sales job. This step includes taking responsibility when something goes wrong, ignoring the status quo, and developing skills through listening

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More BIG Blackouts likely, experts agree

Six months after that nation's worst blackout, experts say the electric grid is still vulnerable to widespread outages because many of the problems that contributed to the massive failure have not been resolved. "Without significant investment in the transmission system, we're all going to face another blackout. It's inevitable," according to Jonathan Smidt, and associate in the energy group Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., a private equity firm.

Among the few tangible steps taken to strengthen the grid, according to several experts, are the intense scrutiny of the root causes and better intra-regional communication between power providers and grid operators. However, a repeat of the havoc wreaked on August 14, when outages in Ohio rapidly spread through southeast Michigan, six other states and Canada, remains plausible so long as the industry remains polarized by regional interest and competing ideas about market design, both of which inhibit cooperation said Lawrence Makovich, senior director at Cambridge Energy Research Assoc.

Stalled energy legislation, which is being attached to a massive transportation bill now before the Senate, is intended to clear up some of these issues, but Makovich said it could still take the industry several years to make the requisite changes. "Setting the goals is only half the battle," he said, adding that one of the stickiest issues will be determining who picks up the tab for upgrading the power lines and computer networks that are the technological backbone of the grid.

Nora Brownell, a commissioner at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, said power providers need not wait for an energy bill to be passed before taking action. New hardware and software, better employee training and aggressive vegetation management "could be implemented today" and would be useful regardless of what types of

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February 2004

Mark Your Calendars

March 18, 2004
Joint AIA Meeting
CADD — Building
Information Modelers
The Forge

April 5, 2004
Meet & Greet Social
Social Event
The Forge

May 3, 2004
Awards Dinner
The Forge

April 21-23, 2004
The 48th Annual CSI
Show & Convention
McCormick Place
Chicago

June 7, 2004
Board Meeting
Location to be
Announced

Sept. 10, 2004
4th Annual
Golf Outing
Gamblers Ridge
Cream Ridge



Chapter Meetings are the first Monday of the Month @6:30 at The Forge Inn.

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Awards, Certification, Student Liaison, Newsletter Editor, and Finance, committees still have open Chairs. If you are interested please contact Mike Debiak @ 718-777-6809



Presidential Specs

The coming and going of Groundhog Day makes the passing of two significant milestones - the proverbial indicator of the end of winter, and last four months of CSI calendar year. Punxsutawney Phil may have seen his shadow but I see nothing but sun, the future of NJ CSI is bright. The coming months are full of energy and new beginnings.

First, the February joint meeting with the NJ Professional Engineers was very well attended by CSI members with 26 in attendance. It is encouraging that each month the attendance has improved. Tabletop presentations were provided by MAB Paints and Garden State Panel. This is an indicator that the program selection is working and the word is getting out. As you will notice the venue for our monthly meetings has changed. This is in response to comments from the membership changes to the geographic location of our membership base. Again this has apparently help attendance as many new faces were at the February meeting. Thanks to Les Cadigan, Dianna Rattazzi and the rest of the NJ CSI leadership for putting forth a great effort. The substitute guest speaker, Bob Johnson, CSI, FCSI, CCS, CCCA, is a former CSI President and current MasterFormat Task Team member. His informative presentation shed a lot of light on the revisions to MasterFormat and the thought process behind them.

Second, the annual joint meeting with the AIA is March 5, 2004 – mark your calendars. This event is always attended very well, last year we had 98 attendees. The topic is geared to the design profession but intended to offer a bit of something for everyone in the industry. There are still a few spaces available for Tabletops, currently presenting are MAB Paints, and Garden State Panel.

Next is the April networking meet and greet party. This is a first for NJ CSI but something we felt was very important to do. The Chapter is hosting the party to encourage members to bring co-workers, clients, industry partners, etc. out for an evening to meet CSI and network. The event is a cocktail party to encourage socializing and is FREE. So, get out your party hats, dial the phone, and let's get the party started.

Last but not least is the May Awards Dinner. We have a lot of accomplishments to celebrate, we install our new President, and we present the new Board. Speaking of which, anyone interested in a Board position, fill a leadership role, Chair a Committee, or just offer some time now and then should call, e-mail, or talk to us at the next meeting. So let's not forget to show our support for the hard work of the leadership team. This is also a great time to discuss the coming CSI year as no meetings are held June - August.

ReSPECtfully,
Michael Debiak



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On Time
As promised
or We pay



rew09/2004

You
have to
think
anyway,
So why
not

**THINK
BIG!**

**Donald
Trump**

8 Steps for Improving Commercial Salespeople continued

to audio tapes and attending seminars.

2. Develop sales competencies. These include core behaviors such as leadership, problem solving and alliance building that required across all job functions and skill specific behaviors that are required to be successful as a salesperson.

"When you're in front of a customer, you're a consultant, not a salesperson," Bedell said "You're helping them to solve their problems. We're here to find their pain."

3. Identify existing and new target markets. Bedell suggested that contractors buy business-to business lists to target customers, prioritize which customers to pursue based on highest return on investment and then identify differentiating unique selling propositions for each customer segment.

"Don't waste your time on prospects that are a 50% or less chance of closing" he said. "There's so much else out there."

4. Brand services and messages. After creating a differentiating brand for each of its services offerings, a contractor should create a unique selling proposition for each brand and then review promotional materials, proposals and sales letters, modifying them so they are all consistent to the brand message. "Name your service agreements 'Protect' or 'Protect Plus,' for example, or else you're like everyone else," he said.

5. Invest in sales technologies and software. Contractors must take advantage of programs that help salespeople manage their time, scheduling and contact information to improve their efficiency. They also should leverage off-the-shelf estimating, proposal and presentation templates, he said

6. Make a weekly sales tasking plan. Salespeople should advance all deal opportunities to closes. They also should work to achieve 100% reach into existing and new target customers to make them aware of their company's offerings and then report their actual performance vs. their tasking plan.

7. Create an effective sales process. This step includes contacting target customers to obtain decision-makers' names, sending customized messages to target customers, and setting up appointments during non-peak selling hours. Bedell suggested that salespeople schedule weekly new business developments from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, avoiding Mondays and Fridays. "The minute you stop foraging is the time you go dry," he said. "It's all about grabbing your unfair share of the market."

8. Get a top performer coach or mentor. Finding someone inside or outside the company who is willing share their experience can greatly benefit a salesperson's performance.

As reported by Bob Miodonski Contractormag.com



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More BIG Blackouts continued

what types of new federal rules are enacted, she said.

To spur investment in new transmission, experts argue, utilities need to be pass along more of the costs to consumers. And some say power providers should be allowed performance-based rewards for reliability. It remains unclear whether the enforcement of reliability standards will be in the hands of the government or the industry. "We've been grappling with the issue of how to maintain reliability as the market evolves," said Eugene McGrath, chairman and chief executive of Consolidated Edison Inc. If there's any silver lining in the events of Aug. 14, McGrath said, it is that the areas of vulnerability are better known. That, in itself, reduces the risk of another cascading blackout, he said.

Originally built to handle the flow of electricity from monopolistic utilities serving a local customer base, the nation's power grid had been expanded over the decades to handle power transactions that crisscross the continent, giving generators the opportunity to sell their juice for the highest possible price. Moreover, the power industry is only partially deregulated, with producers selling electricity in robust wholesale markets and most utilities receiving a fixed rate or return for the costs of transmission and distribution. That had led to significant investments in generation, where the profit potential is highest, while corporate spending on the grid had lagged. And because the grid had been interconnected piece by piece over decades, Makovich said there are many loose ends, particularly in the Midwest, where power providers rely on different grid operators—a source of confusion on Aug 14, according to the findings of a binational commission investigating the event.

As reported by Brad Foss/AP 2/14/04 Detroit Free Press

"Every improvement in communication makes the bore more terrible."
Frank Moore Colby

******* TAKE A BREAK !*******

I was caring for a woman from Kentucky and asked, So, how's your breakfast this morning?" It's very good, except for the Kentucky Jelly. I can't seem to get used to the taste," the patient replied. I then asked to see the jelly and the woman produced a foil packet labeled " K Y Jelly . "

Dr. Leonard Kransdorf, Detroit, MI

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