

**September 2011****Issue 1****Sales Quote of The Month:**

"Success is finding a way to make your customer win! – Terry Beck

**Sales Tip of The Month:**

Nothing warns a gatekeeper faster than you are just another sales person than opening a prospecting call with "Hi, how are you today?" If you are using this opening, change your headline and watch your results improve!

***By using this process, your client is no longer thinking they have two months before they need to act; you now have a client who has determined their own buying cycle.***

## ***How to Shorten Your Customers Buying Cycle!***

*Written by Robert J. Weese, Managing Partner of B2B Sales Connections*

I used to work in an industry where the summer was a dead time for sales. Then late August and early September would come and sales would start again.

It turns out the problem was easy to fix once we identified the solution and put it into action. We ended up with busy profitable summers and calmer fall selling seasons. The technique also resulted in shorter sales cycles and improved forecast accuracy throughout the year.

What was this miracle of miracles? The solution was to get the customer to focus on the operational date.

The key is for your sales people to find out the date the customer must have the system in operation. From there they would work back the time lines to the date the customer had to sign the order if they wanted to meet their cutoff date. This is a powerful closing technique because it is the

customer who determines the timelines not us.

Here's an example: You find out from the customer that the new widget fabrication system must be operational in 60 days. You must probe the customer to find out the implications of not meeting this deadline. The key is the reasoning must be their words, not yours.

You then have the customer work back the time lines from their date. If the new system must be operational in 60 days and you will need 5 days for installation and training then we need 55 days. However, most vendors require 10 to 12 business days from the receipt of a signed order to build the machine. Now you are at 43 days. You determine their internal program to evaluate the vendors will take 20 days. Now you have 23 days left. Once the evaluation is complete it will take 5 days to get the paperwork signed off and the internal approvals in place. 18 days left from the 60. You have to research your requirements before you establish your evaluation criteria and that may take 10 days. You now have 8 free days in the 60 day process,

which allows for shipping and lost days. By using this process, your client is no longer thinking they have two months before they need to act; you now have a motivated client who has determined their own buying cycle.

I always did this exercise using a calendar and a white board so the client would get a great visual of the time as it was slipping away quickly.

The great thing about this approach is it can work for almost any product or service. By being the sales person who helps the prospect understand the time lines and the critical dates, you are increasing your personal worth. No need for offer end of month specials or big discounts to close the deal. They customer is in the driver's seat and you are along for a ride on your road to success.

By employing this approach we turned summer doldrums into busy profitable selling months. Once the customers began to understand how their summer holidays, short staff and closures were going to impact their busy fall production months we had no trouble keeping the sales pipeline full and more importantly profitable.



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## ***Ask The B2B Sales Coach***

Dear B2B Sales Coach:

My order processing department says my paperwork is a mess. Any suggestions?

- Ray, Oshawa, ON

Dear Ray: It is a common misconception that sales people are not good at sales order paperwork. In fact, the top sales producers, those that are making the highest incomes, are often also those that produce the cleanest paperwork. Why? They know that sloppy paperwork wastes time, is embarrassing in front of customers, and delays commission payments. Therefore, they simply choose to do it right the first time.

Whenever possible, have all the necessary paperwork to complete your sale filled out before you arrive at the customer's office. This is much less stressful than trying to complete everything when the prospect is watching you. Also, take the time and double check everything beforehand. If you are not sure what you have done is correct, ask your order processing department before you visit the customer. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Always carry in your briefcase at least two blank copies of every piece of paper a customer may have to sign. If you make a mistake while in front of the customer, at least you have a back-up that you can use without having to run back to the office.

The next time you are running out the door thinking that you do not have enough time to properly prepare for your closing meeting, stop and think again. If you don't have time to do it right the first time, when you going to find time to do it right the second time? Aim Higher!

- The B2B Sales Coach

For more ideas and detailed action items you can do to ensure you are always prepared to close the sale right the first time, check out Action Plan For Sales Success, now available in a print edition!

Do you think there really is a hidden job market for sales? The experts think so. Find out how to tap into it in our LinkedIn Discussion at [http://lnkd.in/ftW\\_ja](http://lnkd.in/ftW_ja)

## ***Recommended Reading***

### **Perfect Phrases for Sales Presentations by Linda Eve Diamond**

When I first saw the title of this book, I thought it was going to be a joke. But after reading it, I have to admit I was wrong. It is like having your best sales managers in your back pocket speaking to you in point form, reminding you of what you should do, when. I highly recommend this great sales read!

## ***About B2B Sales Connections***

*AIM HIGHER* is written and edited by Susan A. Enns, a b2b sales coach and managing partner of B2B Sales Connections. She has a proven track record of success, with over 22 years of direct sales, management and executive level business to business experience. She has also written the downloadable e-courses "Action Plan For Sales Success" and "Action Plan For Sales Management Success", numerous automated sales tools and her work has sold on four different continents.

B2B Sales Connections is the online sales training website with free sales resources, a specialized job board & free resume listing services dedicated only to business to business sales. Our mission is to help you achieve your sales potential!