

Creating Time to Sell, Lead or Manage...

by Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey

The **Creating Time to Sell** program was originally created and delivered for the BC Management Team of the St. John Ambulance, with all of their branch managers coming together. The objective for our morning session was a skillful blending solid sales principles with a good use of time to allow their respective teams to be more productive in their sales efforts. It was very well received, and I've spent time over the past few years refocusing it, expanding it as a tool to offer my clients to help them succeed in selling and retaining customers and building repeat business.

The secrets and tools we cover in our workshop have allowed sales professionals, their managers and their staff to find ways to be more pro-active in reaching and retaining clients for their organizations.

While flying to a speaking engagement in the US a few years back, I read a study that indicated the **average sales person puts in a 53-hour week, and this might be a low estimate**. And yet, in spite of this long week, **less than 8 hours of face-to-face sales activity was recorded (about 15%)**. More recently I read that the average leader or executive has 40-60 hours of *unfinished business* on their agenda at any one time.

I think something is radically wrong with this picture. Work more and produce less is not a good indication for any organization which wants to survive or thrive in the 21st Century. What ever happened to work smart not hard?

To be effective in sales and business in general, I've been telling my audiences and clients that we must deal with **three areas as they relate to our potential clients**.

- Pain
- Gain
- Sustaining

To the degree that you work with your clients to take care of these three areas, your profitability and long-term viability will be impacted. Each area has its focus and profit center; and in the sales process each area has its impact and effectiveness. At times we will work with clients who have one or more of these areas as their focus. The time we spend finding out what their '*real*' need is, increases the likelihood that we will be the one engaged to help solve it.

If we help people with their **pain** - will they need us when it is gone? What motivation do people have to visit a doctor or dentist when they are feeling well? A word to the wise!

Helping them **gain** offers a bit more opportunity to serve and build a profitable long-term business relationship built on repeat purchases.

But, if you can work with them through their **pain**, help them **gain** in the process and then take them through to helping them grow and **sustain growth** you will become a vital, major part of their team for years to come. That is taking full advantage of leveraging your time in the sales process for maximum return.

They will deal with you time and time again, if you help them see and receive the value you provide. I offer it as a mental jog to focus on using your time more wisely, and blend some proven sale principles (I'm sure you've had lots of sales courses) into the mix.

Having said that, how can you focus on the above 3 success tools, if you are bogged down with minutia and paperwork or are unwisely using your time each day in non-productive, non-sales oriented activities?

Ask yourself, no make a decision to track and analyze exactly how much time you spend in the sales process. The results will surprise you, and they may even scare you!

Most of us in the sales field find ourselves easily side tracked. We spend time doing 'paperwork,' filling out reports, or 'busy work,' chatting on the phone, chatting with our colleagues, reading the paper, taking long breaks and other such non-productive activities.

Am I saying to eliminate these in their entirety? NO! Simply be aware of what you invest your time on – and track the results to ensure that investment is well placed.

You **make money** in the sales field primarily when you are in face-to-face, phone-to-phone sales or follow up contact with your clients.

You **earn that money** by delivering on what you contract and you **leverage that money** by good client contact and ongoing service. But, you need to be, or keep in contact with them first.

- Prospecting is good use of time in the sales process – how much time do you spend doing it? Have you developed a systematic way to track and follow up on each one?
- Have you set-aside specific times each day to contact potential clients? When?
- Have you set aside specific times to maintain contact with existing clients to find out when and where you can help them again. **Repeat sales are the best** and the most profitable! I love it when a client I've spoken for calls and asks me to come again. And the referrals don't hurt the sales process either! Many of my clients hear about me from another client, speaker or trainer and then call to see if I can help their teams. I love it!

See my new "**Thinking Beyond the FIRST Sale**" for more ideas on how to build *profitable* repeat business. www.thinkingbeyondthefirstsale.info
(Release - late fall 2007)

- Have you set aside specific time for follow up, to make sure your clients received what you promised and are satisfied with their relationship with you?
- **Customer service is a definite success tool for the champion sales person.** And it amazes me when you call – so few sales people do! It helps turn them into your champions and fans when you follow up and ensure they are happy. When you find out early when something is not working correctly or needs adjustment and fix it!
- Have you worked to make it easier for your clients to find you, get the information they need and track their order or service process. UPS and FEDEX use a tracking system, which is really a very effective sales and marketing tool. Michael Hammer drives home the point about being ETDBW (easy to do business with) in his latest book, 'The Agenda.' Add it to your sales library!
- In my own case I have been continually evolving my primary website www.ideaman.net and expanding and enhancing it's different customer driven segments (eg. www.LeadersEdge.biz outlines my leadership consulting, training and coaching services; while www.bobhooey.com gives and overview or the services I provide to my potential clients) to make it easier for my clients to investigate what I offer and make the decision to hire me. www.fullofhooey.com is one of my new mini-fun sites. Visit it for a glimpse into the man behind the web!

- My web work is becoming a series of true value-added sites, as well as very productive and profitable. It is time well spent in creating time to sell, lead or manage my business and customer contact relationships.
- For more information on my series of websites please take a moment to visit www.ideasatwork.ca
- Have you systemized your work area to make it easier for you or your colleagues to access information, client files, literature, etc to serve your clients?

- Have you spent specific time thinking about all the potential challenges or questions that might come up from a prospective client? Do you have solid, well-researched, value-enhancing answers ready and burned into your mind? Why not?

If you invest even a small amount of time working on these questions and implementing the results of your deliberations – you'll find yourself spend more time on the sales and marketing process.

And, amazingly enough when you are **Creating Time to Sell, lead or manage** - you end up selling and making more money too!

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Bob 'Idea Man' Hooley is a productivity strategist, [creativity catalyst](#) and [idea farmer](#) who regularly writes for North American Consumer and Trade Journals, on-line magazines and company intranets. He is the author of ten books, a mini-book series, four success systems and an e-book series. Bob was the 48th person in the history of Toastmasters International to earn their coveted professional level Accredited Speaker designation. Bob is a motivational, business and association keynote conference speaker and executive leadership coach. Bob is a professional member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and the International Federation for Professional Speakers. Visit his website for additional articles like this one: www.ebusinesssuccess.biz