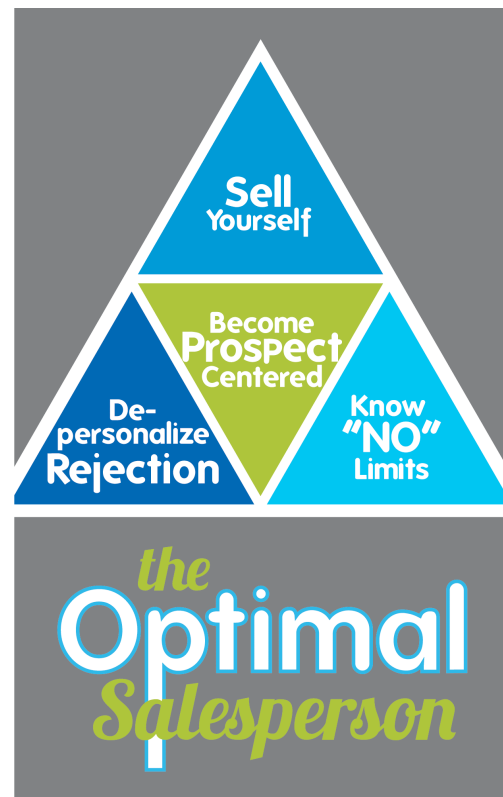


INSIDER: The Mindset of a Sales Superstar: Achieving Higher Sales and Compensation By Donald Jackson, M.B.A. Candidate

How can I achieve higher sales and develop better relationships with my clients? What are some hidden obstacles that are slowing my growth as an agent? In *The Optimal Salesperson*, Dan Caraminico and Marie Maguire answer these questions and go in-depth to identify the appropriate mindset and strategies that turn good salespersons into optimal salespersons. Using fifty years of experience and knowledge, the authors identify ways to eliminate self-limiting beliefs, ignite passion and motivation, and establish confidence to pursue any sale. By harnessing individual traits that most already possess, the authors provide analytical insight on how to tap into these strengths and make them work for you.

Think Point #1: Let's start with the basics. There is a high causal relationship between essential attributes and success in sales. The optimal salesperson exhibits personal motivation, realizes proactive tools and hidden obstacles, and has compelling reasons to succeed. Some personal motivators include desire, commitment, outlook and responsibility. Salespeople also need to develop a proactive sales activity plan, selling process, interpersonal skills, and a prospecting program that will allow them to reach their personal goals. Some hidden obstacles that the optimal salesperson will encounter and overcome may be self-limiting beliefs, need for approval, limited funds, dry spells in sales, and becoming too emotionally involved.

Think Point #2: The first person you must sell is you! As important as it is to set sales goals, it is more important to recognize and exploit the necessary incentives that are needed to motivate you in achieving those goals. In other words, the first person you must persuade during a sale is yourself. In order to be effective, an agent must set goals that are specific and incite passion. Appropriate metrics and milestones should also be put in place to keep track of progress along the way. While plans can always change, and unforeseen obstacles can appear, it is important for agents to be resilient and work through adversity and failure. Agents should become emotionally involved with their goals. In order to do this, it is important to ask the 'tough' questions:



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- Why do I want this particular goal?
- What will happen if I don't achieve it?
- What will happen if I succeed?
- What will happen if I fail?

By analyzing your goals to this extent, it is more probable that you will take them seriously and maintain the necessary focus and prioritization to make them successful.

Think Point #3: Optimal salespeople are prospect-centered rather than close-centered. The optimal salesperson needs to be able to develop a sound sales activity plan that tracks the number of sales activities needed to achieve sales success. By keeping track of sales activity (those activities that directly affect sales), agents can have an accurate metric to determine what is and what is not working. Optimal salespeople realize the relative importance of prospecting related to closing. In sales, a heavy emphasis is commonly placed on closing the deal; however, prospecting proper clientele beforehand can increase sales efficiency and ease the process of closing sales. Some of the main strengths that are needed to be a good prospector are utilizing proper introductions, identifying target clients, and maintaining a functioning referral database. Overall, the optimal agent's number one priority is making sure that networking, sales activity planning, and selling processes are all prospect-centered.

Think Point #4: Optimal salespeople limit self-limiting beliefs. The competitive nature of sales can take its toll on any individual who pursues success in the field. Consequently, one of the largest obstacles an agent can face is self-limiting thinking and beliefs. The good news about self-limiting beliefs is that they usually all go away at once. By taking the appropriate action, agents can rid themselves of these beliefs by adhering to the following:

- Picking a belief that is causing you trouble and working to diminish that belief with these steps
- Analyzing how the belief affects you and your sales process
- Making a conscious decision to change
- Establishing a reinforcement mechanism to adopt the proper mindset
- Holding or committing yourself to maintaining the mindset

Another hidden obstacle exists in agents who always yearn for approval before taking on a particular venture or strategy. By challenging yourself to eliminate your need for approval, you

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will be able to effectively maneuver strategies and projects, and expose yourself to beneficial risk that can reap high rewards.

Think Point #5: Optimal salespeople “de-personalize” rejection. Maintaining an abundant pipeline can take away the amount of ‘cold-calls’ an agent needs to make; however, in the case that you must make a cold-call, remember that a rejection of your product or service is not personal. In most cases, agents refrain from making sales calls due to fear of rejection. If fear of rejection is keeping you away from active prospecting and making cold-calls, realize that no physical damage occurs as the result of a rejection, and also that the person is rejecting the service or product you offer and not you as a person. By developing these beliefs, and keeping resources for reassurance, you will be able to conquer your fears and get past the hidden obstacles that are hampering potential sales. *(See the March 2010 Keller Center Research Report article on dealing with fear of rejection or call reluctance issues.)*

Recommended Reading

Caramanico, Dan and Marie Maguire (2009), *The Optimal Salesperson*, Great Falls, VA: Linx Publishing.

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