

A recent editor's note in a sleep products magazine discussed how many people suffer from poor sleep and the editor referred to these individuals as zombies. Instantly, I thought of dozens of sales people I have encountered over the years who could be classified as zombies, too.

Here are 14 signs that you might be turning into a sales zombie.

**1. You no longer ask high-value qualifying questions.**

Asking questions takes too long and you'd rather spend your time talking about your product so let's not waste time. Besides, prospects won't tell you the truth anyway so it's better just to move past this step.

**2. You launch into your sales pitch as quickly as possible.**

Telling is selling and if you're not talking about your product you will lose the sale.

**3. You make quick assumptions about your customers and prospects.**

"They said no last time so I won't call them today" or "They can't afford our product." Assumptions are deal killers and you need to avoid them.

**4. You use the same sales pitch with every customer.**

You have refined your pitch so why so should you change it? It's been working just fine and besides no one has complained. Plus, you're closing about 20 percent of your sales opportunities.

**5. You frequently refer to the "good old days".**

Yeah, nothing like the good old days when you could take a prospect out for lunch and close a deal over a few beers. Or you could make a few calls and reach your quota. Times have changed but you haven't.

**6. You don't seek clarification.**

Prospects and customer don't always clearly articulate their thoughts but that doesn't matter because you understand everything they say.

**7. You don't listen for underlying clues.**

Many people say one thing but mean something else. If you're not listening for those nuances and underlying clues, you are missing sales opportunities.

**8. You pitch your most popular/current product.**

We've all been there. The latest product with all the bells and whistles has finally been released so let's suggest that product to all of our prospects and customers even though it may not be appropriate. At least they'll know about it, right?

**9. You don't clarify objections.**

You've been selling so long that you "know" what someone means when they say, "You're too expensive" or "Let me think about it." As a result, you just plunge ahead and rebut the objection hoping that you will overcome it.

**10. You have stopped learning.**

You can't teach an old dog a new trick is your favorite motto. Besides, sales is sales and you don't need to learn anything other than the basics ewest products.

**11. You believe that sales is a numbers game.**

The more doors you knock on and the more calls you make, the more sales you make. While this may be true, your time is valuable and you can invest more effectively. Focus on talking to high-value prospect instead of pitching to anyone who will listen or that you connect with.

# 14 Signs You Are a Sales Zombie

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Notes from the Chair



Of your newest products.

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**12. You believe that research is for scientists.**

Who has time to research every prospect? You don't need to understand their business challenges or how what changes are occurring in their company in order to close a deal. It's just as effective to show up or make that call and pitch your latest solution (see point 8).

**13. You think that price buying motivator.**

Let's face it; most buying decisions are made based on the price of a product or service. People don't care about value so let's just offer a discount and move on.

**14. You think that social media is just a fad.**

Who needs to blog, podcast, or produce webinars or create a business presence on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook or other social media sites? Besides, I don't have time to engage in this social chit-chat; I'd rather make cold calls and appointments.

If you want to succeed in today’s sales environment and increase your sales, it is critical that you avoid becoming a sales zombie.

# Understand the Process of Failure and Let It Work

**The Story**

On the way back downstate, Barry kept thinking back on all the times he’d heard his colleague Ray state that next month would be the killer month.  In fact, for the past year-and-a-half, that’s all he had heard.  All Ray seemed to do at these monthly meetings was hand out one excuse after another.

Perhaps I am better off being downstate, away from the main office, thought Barry as he pulled into the parking lot for a late afternoon appointment.  This was his first face-to-face with this prospect.  The three phone calls that had gotten him this far had been tough.  First the CEO had played hard-to-get, then we-have-no-money, and finally we-already-have-a-supplier.

As he pulled open the main office door, he wondered if he would be confronted with the gee-I-forgot-you-were-coming-in-today game.

“Ah,” said the CEO, greeting Barry after a wait of  just a few minutes, “you must be that persistent salesperson that doesn’t take no for an answer.”



“Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.”

gee-I-forgot-you-were-coming-in-today game.

“Ah,” said the CEO, greeting Barry after a wait of just a few minutes, “you must be that persistent salesperson that doesn’t take no for an answer.”

At a momentary loss for words, Barry was initially stunned by the CEO’s appearance.  His Grateful Dead t-shirt had rips in it, and though cleaned, the old grease and dirt stains were still there.  The jeans had holes in both knees.  Finally, Barry could not stop staring at the huge gold earring and the long, silver-haired pony tail.

“Surprised you, didn’t I?” asked Malcolm, the CEO.  “Expecting a three-piece and wing-tips, maybe?”

“Well . . . you certainly don’t look like you sound on the phone.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“You sounded like someone who was in charge.”  The moment Barry said that, he knew it was over.  It didn’t come out the way he wanted, but it was too late.

“I am in charge.  Tell you what; since you don’t think I’m in charge, turn around, head out the door and find someone else in the company to talk to.”  With that, Malcolm turned and walked back into his office.

Barry turned and walked back out to his car.  Man, he thought to himself, did I ever screw that one up.  Instead of driving off, he sat in his car and began mentally reviewing his approach to Malcolm starting with the first phone call.

**The RESULT:**

Without a doubt, Barry failed at his attempt to sell.  He was thrown out of the CEO’s office, but he was determined to learn why this happened.

**DISCUSSION:**

Babe Ruth, one of the all-time great baseball players, struck out more than two-thirds of the time.  In other words, he failed to get a hit more often than not.  Does that fact make his career a failure?

Newly hired salespeople do not close most of the prospects they encounter.  It’s a fact.

If you remove sales to existing customers, even veteran heavy-hitters do not close most of the first-time non-referral prospects they encounter.  Does this make veteran heavy-hitters failures?

Should you think any of these are failures, then sales is a career you should leave.  Quickly!

**APPROACH:**

As you can see from the story, Barry has learned to discipline himself.  By not taking Malcolm’s comments personally, he will be able to objectively review what he did, and what some alternative approaches might have been.

Seeing each “failure” as an opportunity is one of Barry’s sales goals.

A second goal of Barry’s was to write down at least one thing he learns from every prospect/customer contact.  This one thing might be a new sales approach, something he learns about himself, something he learns about the prospect.  As a result of this failure, what Barry writes down will be very important for his own growth as a salesperson.  This failure has given Barry the opportunity to grow and become stronger.

XXXX

 

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Part of dealing with failure is just that, truly seeing it as an opportunity to grow.  If you see failure as some sort of blemish on your abilities, you will then seek to avoid failure situations.  Thus, if you never fail, how can you possibly grow stronger?  You cannot.

By establishing goals that make failure a learning experience, you can become a stronger salesperson.

Most salespeople set goals that have one thing in common; they are all number related.  “I will make X number of sales in Y amount of time at Z profit margin.”

You can only manage your behavior; you cannot directly manage how much money you will make.  If your goals, like Barry’s, are behavioral, you can manage them.  Since failure to close happens the majority of the time, why not have behavioral goals that deal with it?

**THOUGHT:**

If you have failed, and then learned why you failed, you are 99% closer to increased success.

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“Success builds character, failure reveals it.”