

Do You Wanna Dance?

A white paper on How Anyone Can Be a Great Salesperson
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About the Author

Paul Alexander is the author of many white papers which apply to the financial industry. He is the creator of the bank process ADvantage-SOLutions and programs such as RealtyReferral, RealtyConnect, Customer Service as A Sales Tool and Negotiation is a Foregone Conclusion. Paul brings more than 22 years of highly diversified experience in the Performance Improvement Industry to his writings.

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In business nothing happens until something is sold.

You can have the most efficient manufacturing facility in the world and produce incredible goods but until there is a process in place to aggressively and successfully sell those products, the machine that we call "Business" will not run.

If we were to prioritize the disciplines of which any business is comprised, sales would naturally be at the top of the list. Unfortunately, for business owners and managers; people with a true ability to sell account for only 3% of our population. There are many people who work in sales type positions and do not fall within that 3%. Those people fill roles such as retail sales clerks, telephone sales people and counter clerks. All fall within a basic category of "order taker" and only sell something when the customer says "I would like to buy". In fact there are a large number of people in corporations who fill high level sales jobs and who are truly not sales people.

The challenge is the same for every business. We all ask ourselves: "How do I fill the sales positions that I have with qualified people who can; not only sell but who understand my products/service and who my clients/customers will respect and trust?"

Find the right people or your sales will suffer is a reality that more often than not plagues every business. There is, however, a solution. It is quite possible to create a process, utilizing the proper tools, within which your good employees who understand your products or services will sell without feeling like they are selling. In fact when properly done, those people will sell with the same effect and success as the best of the 3% and at the same time they will enjoy a level of credibility in their work which generally eludes the 3%.

First, we must accept the fact that customers and clients buy when they are ready to buy not when we are ready to sell. In fact we humans do what we do whenever we

are ready, and always on our own schedule. Outside circumstances may affect us in some way, but in the end our actions are driven by need, desire and emotion.

“Do You Wanna Dance?” is the name of a popular song but it also represents an analogy that demonstrates the dynamic of a non threatening, no pressure, approach to selling.

We do not all frequent the club scene as adults but I am sure that we all remember what our social interactions were like in High School. Picture if you will this scene:

We walk in to the common area of a medium size High School and find the room decorated (on a budget), a live band playing on the stage and a nice crowd gathering. The room is set with sitting areas throughout all on the fringe of the dance floor. The room is not overly bright or dim and the lighting provides adequate visibility to take in the entire scene and does not provide any substantial shadows for anonymity.

Our star players are John and Jen. They are both juniors, both are from nice families, popular within their individual peer groups and both are only outgoing in a controlled familiar environment.

John has been thinking for quite some time that he would like to get to know Jen better. He is aware that she does date but does not have a steady boyfriend in her life. Jen knows John on a very casual basis and even though she has no negative thoughts about him she does not have any thoughts of dating him. Her last several dates have been disappointing and she is really indifferent to the prospect of dating anyone on a regular basis and does not want anyone or anything to get in the way of her studies.

Jen is sitting with her friends on one side of the big room and John is standing with his friends near the punch table on the other side of the room. John is paying attention to Jen as he makes conversation and is thinking of what approach that he might take to ask her to dance. Jen is unaware of John and has no similar thoughts at all.

John finally decides to take the direct approach, crosses the broad expanse of the dance floor, all the while feeling as though all eyes are upon him. He approaches Jen, leans down where she can hear him over the music, and

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Jen is really taken off guard by this approach she did not see him coming and out of surprise and a little embarrassment she says; “no thank you”.

Jen becomes more aware of all of the people on the dance floor enjoying the music and their dance partners and she begins to think that she would like to dance.

If John were to cross the room one more time and ask her again the answer would have been yes.

he asks her to dance. Jen is really taken off guard by this approach she did not see him coming and out of surprise and a little embarrassment she says; “no thank you”. Now John is really self conscious, mutters something like thanks anyway, maybe another time, and retreats to his friends.

The party continues but now Jen is aware of John across the room with his friends. For the first time it occurs to her that if John asked her to dance it means that he may have some interest in her. She thinks that he is a nice guy, handsome and polite. Jen becomes more aware of all of the people on the dance floor enjoying the music and their dance partners and she begins to think that she would like to dance.

Jen glances across the room at John hoping to catch his eye and perhaps send a signal that she would really like to dance. John is now involved with his friends and does not notice that Jen is watching him.

John set the stage when he approached Jen but the time was not right for her. She had not been thinking about John or dancing and when presented with the opportunity at a time when she was not ready she said no. However, as time passed, with the thought of dancing with John in her mind she made herself ready. If John were to cross the room one more time and ask her again the answer would have been yes.

This is exactly how it is in selling. If we approach our potential customers and ask them to buy something from us the answer will usually be “no”. We must put ourselves and our products or services in their mind. We must provide them with information that will allow them to see how; they need and will benefit from what we sell, and when the time is right we can ask for the business and they will say yes.

If John, rather than asking Jen to dance with no forewarning, had engaged her in conversation in a non threatening environment and with no agenda he would have put the thought of himself in her mind. If he had done this on several occasions prior to the dance and had continued at the dance he could have approached her on the first time, asked her to dance and she would have said yes.

The people and companies that we envision as our prospective customers are probably not thinking about us. In fact the only way that ever happens is if what you sell is a well known commodity and when a customer needs that product they will think about who sells that product and the price. The only way that you will enter into this thought process is if you continually insert yourself into the customer's environment and thoughts.

If what we sell is a high end product or service which requires several decision makers within a company to say yes we are faced with a Complex Sale. In this case we must first identify the buyers, what roles they play in the company and the purchasing process and begin the work of preparing the environment with each individual. This can be as simple as ensuring that they know who we are what we do and they have an idea of the value that we represent. In our "Do you Wanna Dance" analogy this is like requiring the permission of several people to be allowed to dance with one. Not all of the people that you will identify in buying roles will have the power to say yes, but any of those contacts will always have the power to say no.

The thrill and gratification to receiving a yes for whatever challenge we undertake is a very meaningful and fulfilling emotion. Whether that be the opportunity to interact with the man or woman of our dreams or the joy of making a significant sale, it will have a positive impact on our lives.

The key to successful selling is the same as the key to being successful at anything. We must:

- Establish our presence (make ourselves known)
- Provide positive representation of that which we offer
- Show value
- Be appealing without being aggressive
- Maintain continual contact (passive interactions are effective)
- Be there when the time is right and the buyer is ready to buy
- Ask for the business
- Always do what we promise

Follow these guidelines and anyone can be a great salesperson. If you do so you will never feel like you have been overly aggressive or that you have sold someone something that they did not truly want or need. You can

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be proud of the work that you do; your customers will appreciate your value and want to stay in contact with you which will lead to future sales and referrals to others. All that you have to do is make a plan and put yourself out there!

“Do You Wanna Dance?”