



travel, time and tools... the moving world of sales

INTRODUCTION...

Article written by: Ian Selbie, CEO & President of Conselleo, an International Sales Effectiveness Firm with offices across Canada, USA, Mexico and Europe. Conselleo has trained more than 12,000 sales professionals from 4 different Continents throughout a multitude of industries. Some of Conselleo's clients include Vodafone, Microsoft, Waste Management, Kal Tire, Bell and UniCredit. Ian is also author of the book entitled "If You Were Arrested For Selling, Would There Be enough Evidence To Convict You"?

In today's accelerated, ever changing world of sales, the need to be highly effective with travel, time and tools has never been more important.

TRAVEL There is a difference between Smart Sales Travel, and simply getting there. Smart sales people take full advantage of this valuable travel time and make it work to their advantage. Enter the 3 Ps of Smart Sales Travel; Plan, Pursue and Persist. When traveling we have on-line and off-line time. While waiting at a gate for a flight, or commuting during business hours we're online, and given mobile internet access, providing communication opportunities for both voice or email. Pursue and Persist. Pursue is all about having a clear target of new clients or opportunities that you want to have proactive communication with. Persist is about following up, getting back to people, arranging meetings with existing clients or partners. So while still online, be it at the gate or in the car, there is an ideal opportunity to Pursue or Persist. While on the plane our focus must switch to the third P, Plan. Plan is really focused on what many sales people don't do enough of, which is reading, thinking and creating strategy on opportunities.

As a part of Conselleo's training we share video taped interviews with CEO's asking them what mistakes sales people make when calling on them. The number one answer is failure to do enough research on the prospective client's business, their structure, their business objectives and most critical challenges. In the world of sales we call it identifying the customer's business pain.

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ARTICLE



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While in the air smart sales people have an ideal opportunity with no typical office interruptions to proactively study their customers. While understanding their client's business pain, smart sales people also take the opportunity to create a strategy to bring the business gain and thus solve their client's problems. Are you making the most of your travel time? What improvements can you make on your next trip?

TIME is the most important resource a sales person has. Whether they invest it smartly or simply spend it, has direct impact of their results. To examine how to get the best return on sales time we should disclose the two most significant wasters of sales time:

- 1) Ineffective Travel and Waiting Time
- 2) Calling At Non-Decision Making Levels

In the highly dynamic world of selling, there are two very desirable words- "yes" and a quick "no". The slow "no" robs sales people of their most precious asset, time. The quick "no" allows sales people to move onto opportunities they can win. The most significant contributor to the slow "no" is calling at non-decision making levels. Spending time talking to middle managers and influencers of prospective clients not only creates a slow "no" proposition, but commits your level of contact in the account. Once established at the influencer level you are now at their mercy in terms of moving up to meet with the executive or senior management, where the real decisions are made. In fact, to get the meeting with the executive, you may need to climb over the influencer, putting your relationship and chances for success at risk. Always calling high first, can more than double your company's win percentage. How often do your sales people meet with senior management within your customer's organization? Could your sales force be calling higher on a consistent, more confident basis?

TOOLS can make the difference in winning or losing an account. Technology can offer a wide range of tools for the sales profession today, ranging from notebook computers and cell phones to wireless PDAs that provide voice and data services such as Blackberry or Palm Treo.





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The Internet can be an amazing tool, from helping us to conduct research on clients and competitors, to email and web applications that help us track our customers and report back to our companies. When flying to see an existing client or prospect where you will be presenting information, smart sales people always have plan A, B and C in terms of information management. Plan A is ensuring that all presentation files, contracts, white papers or brochures and customer information including research is up to date and in their carry-on baggage. It is also a good idea to carry extra batteries for your notebook computer and PDA. Plan B is to burn two CDs with copies of all files you will need and keeping one of them in your carry-on and the other in your checked bag. Plan C is doing Plan A and B as well as emailing yourself the required files. Once you get to your destination, should you lose your checked luggage or have any problems with your carry-on at least you still have access to the files you need from someone else's computer by logging into your remote email.

Smart sales people always use the most powerful tools they have; Themselves, Their Relationships and Their Proof. Perhaps a little strange to think of yourself as a tool, but you and you alone will determine the impact and results of your activities and the time you invest. Take care of yourself! Your relationships are a major resource in helping you succeed. Build all of your relationships for the long-term based on integrity and trust. Proof from existing customers that your company's value proposition has had a measurable impact on their business. A great way to crystallize your proof is to develop a reference letter library and share it across the entire sales force. These letters are a wonderful physical tool to show prospective clients.

In today's accelerated changing world of sales, the need to be highly effective with travel, time and tools is a requirement. Have you optimized your sales tools to help you succeed? Do you have a company-wide reference letter library?

For more information on the moving world of sales or about Conselleo their web address is www.conselleo.com. Their head office is located in Vancouver at 604 531-2878.

