

Jim Meisenheimer

# 57 Sales Tips To Reinvent & Distinguish

## Yourself From Your Competition



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# 57 Sales Tips To Reinvent And Distinguish Yourself From Your Competition

*by*

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## Introduction

This sales manual was written especially for entrepreneurs and professional salespeople who every day slug it out with their competitors.

Smart people win more business than their less smart counterparts.

I don't expect you to use all of the ideas in this sales manual. But heck, out of 57 you should be able to use at least a few. Just one idea employed can make a huge difference in your selling results.

I'm hoping these ideas create new business and additional income for you.

I also expect these ideas to stir your imagination to think of even better ideas that you can use to grow your business.

Don't let this down economy get you down. This is no time to give up - it's time to get up and start doing more if you want to start selling more today and everyday.

*Jim Meisenheimer*

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## 1. The Ultimate Business Card

The first idea is so good your first reaction to it will be to think it's "Impossible." The idea is to write a book about the expertise you have in the work that you're doing.

The goal is to write a book that solves customer's problems. If you have been in sales for any length of time, you probably have a lot of experience solving problems.

Writing a book makes you an expert. Writing a book totally differentiates you from your competition. Writing a book creates an incredibly strong first impression with your new sales prospects and existing customers.

This book or if you prefer booklet gives you instant credibility. In fact writing a book is not costly relatively easy to do. Imagine giving these books out as a business card.

Imagine autographing each book with your prospects name, a short note, your signature, and the date. You can wager almost any amount of money and bet that no other salesperson has ever given your prospect an autographed book written by the salesperson.

Okay that's the idea and here's how to get it done. First buy a copy of Dan Poynter's book titled, "The Self-Publishing Manual." This book has everything you need to self publish your first book.

Now, I haven't lost my marbles - trust me. Actually you can write a book without having to write the book yourself. Go to this website: <http://www.elance.com> .

At this website you can post a job. For example, you could say I'd like a 100 page book on (Insert the subject.) If you sell real estate you could post the job saying you'd like a 100 page book, original material, covering "The 27 Little Things Every Home Seller Must Do To Get Buyers Interested."

When you post this job you also say that all rights revert back to you. You can suggest a timeline and a budget.

You'll be amazed at how many people will bid on your book. Five years ago Bernadette, my wife, had a very successful garage sale before we moved to Florida.

I had an idea to write a book on garage sales. Bernadette was not interested in writing the book and neither was I - but I still thought it was a great idea.

Three weeks and \$400 later I had a book titled, "No-Brainer Garage Sales."

Don't be too quick to pooh-pooh this idea. You can also team up with three or four other sales people in your company and share the expenses.

What you say and how you look create a first impression when you meet a sales prospect. The book you give him creates a lasting and powerful impression.

## **2. The Bow Tie Guy**

In almost every sales training program I do I bring up the subject of differentiation. For me it's a personal thing. You see for so many years I tried blending in instead of attempting to stand out.

I didn't learn this valuable lesson until I traded the corporate world for the entrepreneurial world. When it's your company you truly understand the significance of standing out from your competition.

During the sales training programs I offer up a variety of selling tips and advice on differentiation. One of the things I talk about is the bow tie. I tell the men in my audience if they wore bow ties they would see an immediate spike in a sales.

People chuckle and laugh and seldom do they rush home to buy bow ties.

During a recent Sales Training Boot Camp we managed to get on the subject of personal differentiation. One of the participants raised his hand and told a short story about a guy in his company who wears bow ties.

It turns out, this bow tie guy attended one of my earlier Sales Training Boot Camps. After he heard me talk about bow ties he went out and purchased several.

Currently his collection includes 12 bow ties of different styles and colors. When he represents his company at trade shows he wears a tuxedo of course with a bow tie.

In his sales territory he's known as the bow tie guy. Yes it makes him a little different from everyone else who calls on the same sales prospects and customers.

Being a little different can have a big impact on your sales prospects and customers. In fact, the bow tie guy has achieved record sales ever since he started wearing bowties – making him more attractive and memorable!

If you're tempted to join the bow tie club - you can get started here:  
<http://www.bowtieclub.com>

### **3. Two Sides Of A Business Card**

Some things in life are just plain stupid. Here's a perfect example. Most, but not all, business cards are printed on one side.

It's huge waste of money.

It's huge waste of a marketing and advertising message.

Why do most companies only print on one side of the card - because that's the way it's always been done. Imagine having other things in a company that are being done the same way because that's the way they've always been done.

It's stupid!

What can you do on the other side of your business card?

Here are just a few ideas:

You can get a rubberstamp with red ink that tells when you check your voicemail's and e-mails.

You can print your personal mission statement.

You can print your elevator speech.

You can print seven reasons why your customers love working with you.

You can print a photograph of your family including pets.

You can print how long you have been in your business, how many customers you've worked with, and what percent of your business is repeat business. It might look something like this:

19.5 years . . .

795 customers . . .

74.7% repeat business . . .

You can print the name of the technical service representative who will handle your sales prospects and/or customers.

You can print the name of the customer service representative responsible for your sales prospects and/or customers.

Let your imagination run wild and I'm sure you'll think of even better ideas on how to use the other side of your business card.

We all know there are two sides to every story. Now you know there are two sides to every business card.

You use it or you lose it!

#### **4. More On Business Cards**

Here's another selling tip regarding your business cards. Don't be stingy with your business cards. Give out as many as you can and as often as you can.

Don't give them out sparingly. Sprinkle them all over the place. Just because you give someone your business card doesn't mean you can't give him another one.

Include your cards with all notes, correspondence, and literature that you leave with your customers and prospects. Make it a habit to send your sales prospects and customers relevant articles - and of course attach your business card.

Last week I had dinner with a good friend and they just opened restaurant. The staff was good and so was the food. After dinner the owner came by and introduced himself to us. We told him we liked everything about our dinner.

Obviously he was pleased and without blinking an eye he asked if we would take some business cards and copies of menus and pass them along to our friends.

We both agreed and I've already given out his business cards to friends and neighbors.



I think there is a lesson here!

The more sales prospects and customers who have your business card the more successful you'll be in the long run.

## 5. Article Directories

You might not be aware of this but there is an unbelievable resource waiting for you on the Internet – a surefire way to get a steady stream of new ideas.

Articles are a quick and easy way to catch up on a variety of subjects. Type in any keyword phrase on the Google search page and you'll find a gazillion resources - however not all of these resources will be articles.

There are article directories just waiting for you. One of my favorite article directories is <http://www.ezinearticles.com>

To give you some idea how big these article directories are let's examine the ezinearticles.com for a minute.

This directory has 30 different categories. Here they are. The business category has 40 sub categories which are also listed below.

You can find anything about anything on a website like <http://www.ezinearticles.com>

Here are a few other article directories you may want to take a look at:

<http://www.ideamarketers.com>

<http://www.selfgrowth.com>

<http://www.evancarmichael.com>

<http://www.expertarticles.com>

Sending copies of relevant articles to your sales prospects and customers says a lot about you. It also says you cared enough to send an article - and don't forget to include your business card.

Internet and Businesses Online  
**Business**

Finance  
Investing  
Insurance  
Legal  
Real Estate  
Home Based Business  
Writing and Speaking  
Computers and Technology  
Gaming  
Communications  
News and Society  
Relationships  
Reference and Education  
Health and Fitness  
Self Improvement  
Recreation and Sports  
Travel and Leisure  
Home Improvement  
Home and Family  
Pets  
Automotive  
Cancer  
Food and Drink  
Kids and Teens  
Women's Interests  
Arts and Entertainment  
Shopping and Product Reviews  
Book Reviews

***Business sub categories***

Business  
Accounting  
Accounting Payroll  
Advertising  
Branding  
Careers Employment  
Change Management  
Continuity Disaster Recovery  
Customer Service  
Entrepreneurialism  
Ethics  
Franchising  
Fundraising

Human Resources  
Industrial Mechanical  
International Business  
Management  
Marketing  
Marketing Direct  
Negotiation  
Networking  
Non Profit  
Outsourcing  
PR  
Presentation  
Productivity  
Resumes Cover Letters  
Retail  
Sales  
Sales Management  
Sales Teleselling  
Sales Training  
Security  
Small Business  
Solo Professionals  
Strategic Planning  
Team Building  
Top7 or 10 Tips  
Venture Capital  
Workplace Communication

These articles are tremendous resource for you to share with your sales prospects, your customers, your family, and of course your friends. Most people are not aware of these invaluable resources.

## **6. "I Spy" And Now You Can Spy Too**

In the mid-19 60s there was a TV show titled "I Spy." The show featured Robert Culp and Bill Cosby. The title of the show got me thinking about intelligence and how it can be collected easily today.

Years ago if you wanted to keep tabs on your competition you hired a clipping service. This clipping service would scour newspapers and magazines and clip the relevant articles featuring the competitors you identified.

Talk about Neanderthal. Today you can do the same thing at zero cost, with zero time investment, and get the latest updates on breaking news immediately.

Here's how it works. Go to this website: <http://www.google.com/alerts>

Using a quick fill form you can create an alert by topic, by company name, by an individual's name. It's a foolproof way to keep tabs, and I mean literally keep tabs on your sales prospects, customers, competitors, and even keep tabs on your company. You can keep tabs on the people and on the company.

I also suggest creating a Google alert with your own name to keep tabs on what's being said about you.

So here's what happens. Let's say you create a Google alert for Jim Meisenheimer. And you also create a Google alert for Apple Computer who happens to be your biggest sales prospect.

Anytime anything is written about Jim Meisenheimer and in this case Apple Computer you'll receive an e-mail with a link to what was written.

Can you see the potential of using this? As far as I know there are no limits on how many Google alerts you can set up.

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.

This is like having your own personal clipping service

Some clever uses of Google Alerts include:

- monitoring a developing news story
- keeping current on a competitor or industry
- getting the latest on a celebrity or event
- keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams

Sorry – I gotta go, three news alerts just came in that I want to look at.

## **7. Another Google Resource**

Install Google desktop here: <http://desktop.google.com>

Google Desktop makes searching your computer as easy as searching the web with Google. It's a desktop search application that provides full text search over your email, files, music, photos, chats, Gmail, web pages that you've viewed, and more.

By making your computer searchable, Desktop puts your information easily within your reach and frees you from having to manually organize your files, emails and bookmarks.

Have you ever spent hours looking for a file on your computer? Not any more. This Google Desktop is a tremendous resource for improved sales productivity.

Google Desktop doesn't just help you search your computer; it also helps you gather new information from the web and stay organized with gadgets and sidebar. Google Gadgets can be placed anywhere on your desktop to show you new email, weather, photos, personalized news, and more. Sidebar is a vertical bar on your desktop that helps you keep your gadgets organized.

Google Desktop automatically indexes, and allows you to search the full text over, the following types of items on your computer:

- Outlook Email
- Netscape Mail / Thunderbird
- Outlook Express
- Firefox / Mozilla / Netscape
- Word PDF
- Excel
- Music
- PowerPoint
- Images
- Internet Explorer
- Video
- MSN Instant Messenger
- Zip
- AOL Instant Messenger
- Text and others
- Google Talk

***Here's another Google tip for you:***

The fastest way to search the web, and your own computer, is to use the Quick Search Box in the center of your desktop (simply press the "Ctrl" button twice to call up the search box, and press "Ctrl" twice again to hide it).

## 8. Dress For Success

In sales first impressions are lasting impressions. You have to look good and of course you have to sound good.

Unfortunately appearance matters. And today with very casual dress codes you have to be very careful. In a recent Wall Street Journal article it was noted that only 6% of all American workers wear a tie everyday.

The casual dress codes today complicate the appearance factor. I suggest dressing up rather than dressing down. The best advice I've ever seen on buying clothes, and I wish I could remember the author's name but I can't, "Is to buy half as much and spend twice as much."

Naturally, good clothes look better and wear longer. In fact good clothes don't need to be dry-cleaned as often.

It's a small point especially for the gentlemen, but the color of your belt should match the color of your shoes.

Another small point is to keep your shoes shined - especially the heels which can get scuffed with all the driving you do.

Another small point is about shirts. Most shirts on the rack in department stores tend to be oversized which makes me feel like I'm walking around in a billowing hot-air balloon.

So during the last 20 years I've ordered custom shirts which fit me like a glove. The Custom Shop used to have stores all over the country. Now I buy from them online. <http://www.customshop.com>

If you want to look fit and trim you have to be fit and trim. You are a walking billboard on every sales call. When you look in the mirror what do you see?

Remember what you see is what your sales prospects and customers see.

Clothes don't make the person but they sure do influence first impressions.

## 9. Elevator Speech

How many times a year are you asked the question, "What do you do?" I'm sure you hear the question often especially when you're working and at social gatherings.

When I ask people, "What do you do" I'm amazed at how few people can articulate crisply, clearly, and concisely what it is they do.

You shouldn't have to think about the answer to this question you should know how to respond without thinking and without blinking.

Think of it as an "Elevator Speech." To be effective you have to spend a reasonable amount of time preparing your elevator speech.

Look - if I said to you "Take 20 minutes and describe the kind of work you do" that would be easy. You would just start talking, actually just start rambling on about all the things you do at work.

Ah, but an elevator speech that's different. This must be short and sweet. So you'll have to play with the words until you get it right. You can't do this in 10 minutes. It's a must if you want to have a spectacular career in sales.

Last year I held an "Elevator Speech" contest. About three dozen people sent me their elevator speech. Most were truly pathetic and horrible. One person wrote a 1000 word essay.

One person however got it right and he blew me away with what he sent me. He was the president of a small public-relations company. Here's what he sent me.

"Our business is making your business unforgettable." It's simply brilliant and it's only seven words.

Imagine there were four public relations companies competing to win a large account. Also imagine each company was given an hour for a presentation to senior management.

I'm sure several companies would come in loaded with PowerPoint slides.

I'm also sure that people listening to the sales presentations would be overwhelmed with data and information.

I'm also sure that very little of what was said and shown via PowerPoint would be remembered.

But when the senior management team hears the elevator speech "Our business is making your business unforgettable" they won't be able to shake those words from their minds. It will stick.

Those carefully thought-out words probably will also stick it to the competition.

Give some thought to preparing, in writing, your own brilliant elevator speech.

## 10. 3-step Follow-ups

Your abilities count. Your visibility counts even more.

Do you have a system established for following up all first visits with sales prospects and customers? If you don't - you should.

Whether your first sales call with a new sales prospect was great or good, you can make it even better with a series of follow-ups.

**Step one.** For example make it a point to send an e-mail within 24 hours of your first visit. This should be a simple "Thank you e-mail." You can thank your sales prospects for anything except his time. You want to avoid thanking people for their time because that's what everybody else does.

You can say thank you for showing me your facilities. Thank you for introducing me to your boss. Thank you for showing me the plans for the new project. You get the picture!

**Step two.** Three days later send a personal handwritten note. What you say of course depends on your particular situation. If your sales prospect agreed to a second meeting, your hand written note could simply confirm the meeting date and time.

Don't dismiss the power behind hand written notes. Especially today when more people are opting to communicate via e-mail. You can even add a touch of class to your handwritten note by using a fountain pen with blue ink. A well-written handwritten note has staying power.

Include your business card with your handwritten note.



**Step three.** 10 days after the first meeting send another handwritten note attached to a relevant article. All your note needs to say is something simple like "F.Y.I. - thought you might like to see this." Be sure to include the date, your signature, and another business card.

This little follow-up system says a lot about you. It says you care. It says you're professional. It says you're attentive to detail.

It also says you're different from most other salespeople on the planet.

## 11. Dragon Systems

One of my biggest personal regrets in life is letting a well intentioned high school guidance counselor talk me out of taking Typing 101. I'm sure he thought he was doing me a favor because he had visions of me going to college and succeeding in business, where somebody else would be doing my typing.

Boy was he dead wrong about that. As a result I'm not the fastest typist in the world. Now I'm also not the slowest.

Since then I have learned how to type 175 words a minute. I mean, I'm lightning fast. I'll bet I can type faster than you regardless of how fast you type.

Remember the title of this report is "57 Sales Tips To Reinvent And Distinguish Yourself From Your Competition."

Being extremely productive is one of the ways you can distinguish yourself from your competition. Even if you can type 75 to 80 words a minute you might want to consider this resource which would allow you to double your typing speed.

For only \$199.99 you can purchase **Dragon Naturally Speaking 10**. The number 10 is significant because this is the ninth version of this software. I've been using it since version 1 which was clunky and hard to use.

Version 10 on the other hand is easy to use. You can use it in all the popular applications and you can use it with your e-mail program too.

If you'd like to be productive here's the link: <http://nuance.com/naturallyspeaking>

## 12. The "Odds" Are Better

In sales odd numbers are better. Odd numbers are more credible.

Let me give you an example. Which of these statements sounds better and more credible?

1. Jim Meisenheimer has worked with over 500 corporations, more than 100,000 salespeople, has been in business more than 15 years, and has over 75% repeat business.

2. Jim Meisenheimer has worked with 512 corporate clients, 98,750 salespeople, has been in business 19.5 years, and has 83.3% repeat business.

Isn't number 2 more specific and thus more credible - of course it is? Accept this fact of life. Most salespeople prefer to generalize which means salespeople who are more specific have a distinct selling advantage over their competition.

How old is your company - be specific.

How many products are in your product line - be specific.

How many customers are in your database - be specific.

How many countries have purchased your products - be specific.

Avoiding the generalities and being more specific enables you to build credibility and rapport with all sales prospects and customers.

You'll win more sales if you focus on the "Odds."

### **13. The Pricing Game**

Nobody wants to talk about pricing but most salespeople always do. I used to do that, but not anymore. The more you talk about pricing the lower it usually gets. So I prefer not to talk about pricing as much as other people do.

Depending on what you're selling and how your company is organized you probably get involved in doing quotations, RFQs, and sales proposals.

This next sales tip is about the numbers in these documents. For example somebody's ordering 10 different products and the total cost is \$13,045. So in an attempt to give the customer a break your sales proposal shows an even \$13,000.

You may not realize this but those three zeros are an invitation to negotiate. Never, never, never, never invite your sales prospects and customers to negotiate.

Instead use a very specific number such as \$12,977.

If you happen to be face-to-face with a sales prospect or customer and they ask, "Can you do any better on this pricing?" You could respond, "Look at the pricing; we've already sharpened our pencil for you."

When you use specific numbers many times you won't be asked for a better price because these numbers scream lots of thought went into this pricing.

## **14. The Power of 7's**

Here's another incredible and powerful selling tip. I can't explain why it works or even how it works. I've read articles about this and have come to use it extensively in my own business.

Simply stated numbers (in sales proposals) that end in "7" sell more than any other number. It's the most powerful number you can use to win more sales.

I talk about this in every sales training program I do. Not too long ago, I received an e-mail from a sales training participant. He wrote and told me he really didn't believe the inherent power of the number "7" but he tried it anyway.

Over span of five days he presented four sales proposals to different sales prospects and customers. He said one customer in particular had always browbeat him on his pricing.

He went on to say he won all four proposals - each ending with the number "7."

Give it a try and I don't think you'll be disappointed.

## **15. It Makes Perfect "Cents"**

If you're selling Cessna Citation Airplanes you can skip this next selling tip.

When pricing your products for your sales prospects and customers I think it's a good idea to take your pricing to two decimal places for all sales less than \$5,000.

This is strictly my opinion. Going two decimal places for big-ticket items won't necessarily serve you well.

If you're selling price is \$3,927.37 that's fine.

On the other hand if your pricing is up to \$13,927 I don't think adding pennies does anything to the equation.

This says loud and clear, "This is our best price."

That's how I feel about it!

## 16. Enthusiasm Makes A Difference

John Wooden, the famous UCLA basketball head coach had this to say about enthusiasm. "Your heart must be in your work - and it stimulates others."

Establish a reputation for being enthusiastic - even if this is not your true nature. This is not about faking it - it's about acting it. When you act enthusiastic you'll be seen as enthusiastic.

Frank Bettger, who wrote the book "**How I Raised Myself From Failure To Success In Selling**" said this about enthusiasm. "Let me repeat - nothing but the determination to act enthusiastic increased my income 700% in a 10 day period!"

- Talk with enthusiasm.
- Walk with enthusiasm.
- Act with enthusiasm.
- Listen with enthusiasm.

Salespeople hope their sales prospects will become excited about the products and services they're selling. Well, that just doesn't happen by itself.

It takes spontaneous combustion to pull that one off. When you get excited and enthusiastic about your products and services so will your prospects and customers. "Hello!"

Enthusiasm - it's hard to describe, even harder to put your arms around it, but in selling it's more powerful than a locomotive.

Enthusiasm is infectious and contagious and it's your job to spread it around.

## **17. One More Sales Call**

Before we moved to Florida, Bernadette my wife, and I had dinner with two of her girlfriends back in Libertyville Illinois.

We were in a nice restaurant and the ladies ordered cosmopolitans and I had a martini. We were chatting when the drinks arrived.

Daphne, one of Bernadette's girlfriends, said excitedly I can't believe I just remembered to tell you something.

Daphne went on to explain that she wanted to tell me about a very special woman for the longest time - but she always managed to forget. Must be the Cosmos!

Now she remembered. She told me about Judy. Judy was a sales representative for a division of Baxter International. Judy was a working single mom. Judy was also the number one sales rep in her division for the last three years.

Now I'm getting interested in Judy. Because of the work I do I always enjoy hearing selling success stories.

I asked Daphne how did she manage to do it. How did she manage to be the top salesperson three years in a row?

Daphne said at the end of the day, no matter how tired she was, and how much she wanted to race home to be with her child, no matter what else was on her mind, she always made one more sales call.

One more sales call – the secret to consistent selling success. Think about it - I know I have and still do.

## **18. Secret To Successful Selling**

There are many secrets to having a very successful selling career. But I guess if you had to prioritize them one would always, in my opinion, jump to the top of the list.

Salespeople have products and services to sell and unfortunately that's what they spend most of their time talking about. At the end of the day the more a salesperson has talked about his products and services the happier he is.

That's too bad! Salespeople shouldn't judge the success of a sales call by how much they talked about their products and services. In fact, too much talking can interfere with the sales process.

If you're a sales representative you want to make more sales everyday and that's only natural. That's the way it should be.

Selling is not so much about talking and selling. I know that sounds strange, but selling is really about listening and helping buyers get what they want.

It's virtually impossible to find out what somebody wants if you don't get them talking. And the way you get your sales prospects and customers talking is by asking thoughtful and intelligent questions.

So then the secret to successful selling is helping someone to get what he wants and showing him the best possible solution based on what he's already told you.

The more you listen, the more you learn what your customer really wants. Helping someone get what he wants is easy, but only if you know what it is.

We all have the desire to talk. In sales you'll be more successful if you learn to suppress it a little. Your ears will always out earn your mouth.

## 19. Show Me Your Teeth

I really enjoyed the movie titled "Jerry Maguire." **Jerry Maguire** is a 1996 American comedy-drama film starring Tom Cruise, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Renée Zellweger.

One of the most memorable lines in the movie is "Show me the money!" When I think of this phrase it makes me think of something else which is specifically related to selling.

It's probably an understatement to say that most salespeople work under some stress, don't have control over the time in their life, work for demanding companies and even more demanding customers.

Back in 1800's a cowboy had his six-gun and a horse and these were the tools of his trade. Today professional salespeople are equipped with cell phones, blackberries, laptop computers, iPods, voicemail, e-mail, digital cameras, digital recorders and I'm sure I didn't mention everything.

What this adds up to is stress-on-your-face. When you have this stress-on-your-face look about you, it's a good indication you're not smiling.

If you're loaded with enthusiasm and wearing a genuine smile throughout the sales call you'll win more sales for sure.

I'm reminded of another movie titled "Grumpy Old Men." And as I observe the selling landscape I see a lot of faces that remind me of grumpy old men.

You probably like the sound of the phrase "Show me the money" because I know I do.

During a sales call you'd better be smiling. If you "Show me your teeth" your sales prospects and customers will no doubt "Show you the money" with the orders they give you. When you're selling, always be smiling!

## **20. Sales Dilemma - Risks Aren't Scary Once You Take Them**

A sales dilemma salespeople face sooner or later is taking risks. This isn't theory - I know this firsthand.

You see, I spent 19 years working for other companies when I returned from Vietnam.

13 of these 19 years were with American Hospital Supply Corp. which was acquired by Baxter in 1985. I had all the jobs I ever dreamed about including sales representative, regional sales manager, director of marketing, vice president of sales, vice president of marketing, and finally vice president of sales and marketing.

Back then I was never a big risk taker - I usually played it safe.

In 1985 I started thinking about going into business for myself. The emphasis was on the keyword thinking.

I talked myself out of it every six months for three years.

It was a scary thing I was thinking about doing.

Giving up and risking a six-figure income.

Giving up and risking stock options.

Giving up and risking a company car.

Giving up and risking a corner office.

Giving up and risking a phenomenal benefits package.

I was so scared I became paralyzed in my thinking about my sales dilemma.

This was risky business and I wasn't sure if I was up to the challenge.

Finally, I stopped thinking.

I made a decision that would change my sales life forever.

I established a written goal with a specific date. Here's what my written goal said on a sheet of paper from a yellow legal pad.

"On February 5, 1988 I will resign my position to start my sales training company."

I then signed it because it was a contract with myself.

The whole idea of doing this was still scary up until February 5th - the day I resigned.

What was once scary now became exciting and exhilarating to me.

The fear and concerns were replaced with new ideas, specific action steps, and incredible focus.

If you're sitting on a big risk today, add up the advantages and disadvantages. If the advantages outweigh the disadvantages - go for it. **Take the chance.**

Deal with your sales dilemma.

Your life will be better for it.

*It's one less regret you'll have during your lifetime.*



Don't fill your life with regrets when you can become the person you dream about becoming. Don't think about taking risks – take them!

These words are especially appropriate here: "If it is to be, it is up to me!"

## 21. Lasting First Impressions

In sales, first impressions are very important - you could say critically important.

First impressions often become lasting impressions.

Here are five things that influence your first impressions with every new sales prospect you meet.

1. Be prepared and do your homework. If you don't, you run the risk of turning your sales call into an amateur hour.
2. Dress for success. You have to get this right. Buy good clothes. Clothes may not make the man but they do make a first impression.
3. Walk like a winner! Walk with purpose. People who walk fast make more money than people who walk slowly. Put a little bounce into your step. Imagine every sales call is a call on your best customer.
4. Have you ever practiced smile-talking? It's not easy. Start smiling and then start talking. It's a wild experience - you have to try it.

I just read this the other day. "Being happy doesn't make people smile. Smiling makes people happy."

5. Be approachable. Make it easy for people to like you. Make it easy for people to want to talk to you. Asking a good question can get the ball rolling for you.

First impressions are fast - literally it only takes a few seconds.

There's a reason why "You never get a second chance to make a good first impression!"

Think about that for a minute!

## **22. Personal Brochures**

You need a personal brochure.

Remember a picture is worth a thousand words. So your brochure should have a memorable picture.

Your brochure should be memorable in content and size.

Forget the traditional 8.5" X 11.0" size paper. Make it a square sized 6.5" X 6.5" or 7.5" X 7.5".

This brochure is about distinguishing yourself from all competitors. I encourage you to buy a copy of Peter Montoya's book titled "The Brand Called You."

It's an excellent resource if you're serious about your personal branding and the impact it has on your sales prospects and customers.

## **23. Selling And The Puppy Dog Close**

The puppy dog close can be very effective in helping your customers make the right buying decision.

Now I know, this may not be possible or even practical for all salespeople, but if you can use it - you should.

What is the Puppy Dog Close?

Well for sure it works in pet stores. Imagine a man and a woman in a pet store taking a close look at an adorable yellow-lab puppy.

The couple seems to like the puppy but can't seem to make a final decision.

This is when the salesperson might say something like this:

"You seem to really like this puppy and he obviously likes you. Why don't you take him home with you for a few days? You can always bring him back if you change your mind."

Once the couple takes possession of the puppy, they own it. They're not likely to return it. If you have a "Try before you buy" policy in your company - I hope you are using it.

When talking with your sales prospects about this you could also say, "To try is not to buy." It's very effective!

It makes the decision easier for all sales prospects and customers - especially if you are selling high quality and high value products.

## **24. A Bad Habit**

Here's one thing you can do to simplify your life a little.

Stop going through your mail every day.

Instead do it once a week.

You know the drill. You go home. You go through your mail. You finger it. You open it, look at some of it and then re-stack it.

You leave it piled high on your desk for another day - when you have more time to deal with it.

There is a better way and it involves forming a better habit. This new habit is to schedule a time once a week to take care of your mail.

Look, if you don't have time to go through mail everyday - why bother doing it?

I take an hour every Saturday morning to go through a week's worth of mail. It's amazing how fast you can do this when there are no distractions and interruptions.

Starting next week schedule an hour to go through your mail. Do it for 21 days and you have created a new and better habit.

## **25. How To Turn Cold Calls Into Warm Calls**

Unless your business is really unique, you probably have to invest at least some (Probably not enough) time cold calling on new sales prospects.

Very few sales people enjoy doing this, though I have met a handful over the years that do enjoy it.

And why don't more sales people enjoy the task making cold calls. That's easy - the gatekeeper.

She sits there like "Brunnhilde." Whether you're calling on the telephone or visiting face-to-face her mission is the same - deny all salespeople access to her boss - the decision-maker.

There are many ways to deal with the gatekeeper. This one may surprise you.

Here's the best way - don't even try!

That's right don't even try.

With what I'm recommending you can eliminate her from the picture completely.

Here's the cold calling selling tip. Make your calls when she's not there.

Just limit your cold calling between 8:00 – 8:20 in the morning and also make these calls between 6:00 – 6:20 in the evenings.

Obviously, you don't have to do this every day of the week. But making these calls during these times will give you a better return on your time investment.

You'll have easier access to the decision-maker when the gatekeeper isn't in the picture.

Here's another sales tip. The more referrals you ask for the less cold calling you'll have to do.

## **26. Happy Anniversary**

Let's say you've been selling for almost 10 years. Your 10th anniversary in sales will be in September. Imagine getting a card from a business associate that simply said, "Congratulations on your 10th anniversary in sales."

How would that make you feel? Probably pretty good. How would you feel about the person who sent you this thoughtful card? Once again - probably pretty good.

What would sending this card say about the person who sent the card to you? Well, it might say he was thoughtful and professional and that he cared enough about you to send a card.

This is a little idea that always has a big impact. And it only requires a little extra effort on your part. Your sales prospect will think more of you and less of your competitor – guaranteed!

Here's the game plan and you can use this with existing customers as well. Whenever you meet someone for the first time ask them, "How long have you been doing this work?"

If they say, "18 years" be sure you confirm the exact year and then ask "Which month did you start?" You see everybody knows the answer to this question.

You then take this person's name and the anniversary number and put it on your electronic calendar so that it pops up every year.

Just imagine this for a moment. You make a sales call and talk to Jack Anderson for the first time. You ask him this question and make note of it on your electronic calendar.

Now up to this point Jack hasn't given you a stitch of business. One month after meeting Jack you send him a card that says, "Congratulations on your 17th anniversary in environmental engineering."

Jack will feel good about the card and probably will feel even better about you. Now get this - you've known Jack exactly 1 month and send him a personal anniversary card.

His current supplier has been selling to Jack for 12 years. Do you think Jack might wonder why he didn't get a card from his current supplier?

Try this and you'll be very pleased with the results.

## **27. Great Big Attention Getters**

One of the biggest challenges salespeople face is grabbing the attention of the sales prospects and customers you're working with, especially in big deals.

I came across a fabulous website that is loaded with attention-getters you can use.

The site is: <http://www.greatbigstuff.com>  
They have some very unique attention-getters.

This first one can be used when you deliver a large sales proposal.

It's a huge 6 foot Wooden Ruler. Marked off in one-foot and inch increments. It has a beautiful lacquer finish and is solid wood, complete with metal straightedge. Each ruler, handcrafted in the USA, is unique since every piece of wood has differing grain, color, and other natural variations.

Imagine the impact of receiving your sales proposal, this six-foot ruler, and a note that says, "Any way you look at us, our customers say we always measure up."

Here's the link that will take you directly to the ruler:  
<http://www.greatbigstuff.com/ruler.html>

They have another very unique item on their website. From time to time important people don't return your phone calls. If it's really important that you talk to this person send them this gift.

This ceramic Cup and Saucer set is over a foot wide! Consider filling it with bags of coffee. Include a note that says, "Let's talk business over a cup of coffee."

Include a business card and the best times you can be reached. He'll call you back after he gets this cup filled with coffee.

<http://www.greatbigstuff.com/cupsaucer.html>

## **28. Hail To The Chief**

Here's the situation. You have spent several months working with a very large sales prospect. You are in the running along with one of your major competitors.

You feel good about this one and you want it. You've done your homework and now it's time to build an outstanding sales proposal that sends a strong message to your sales prospect about the value of doing business with you and your company.

The sales proposal is almost complete. But you want to add something special that speaks volumes about your company.

Ask the president of your company to send a personal note to the decision-maker you have been working with. Attach this to the sales proposal.

Your president shouldn't mind helping you close the big one.

Be sure to give the president of your company sufficient background and personal information about your sales prospect. This can have a very big and positive impact on the final outcome.

You can even take this good idea and kick it up a notch. Imagine that you're working on the largest sale in the history of your company. Everybody in your company wants to get this one.

Ask your CEO to do a five-minute recorded video message talking to the decision-maker. All you need is a video recorder and someone who can download it to a CD.

This would make an incredible impression and get your CEO involved with the people making the final decision.

Actions follow thoughts. You have to invest enough time thinking about how you can out-fox your competition.

You see, the old adage is true, "Actions do speak louder than words."

## **29. Family Follow-up**

You probably won't be able to use all of my selling ideas. Even if you can't use this idea it still has the potential to stimulate your thinking about how you can reinvent and distinguish your self from your competition.

I can't resist sharing this idea with you. I'll tell you right now it's not for everyone - and that's too bad.

If in your business you routinely send out quotations and sales proposals to your sales prospects and customers try something different.

Send a one-page follow-up to the decision-maker within three to five days after your sales proposal is delivered.

On this page include a family picture (the more casual the better) include pets and just remember you're looking for human connections.

Under the picture include a headline that says "The entire Meisenheimer (insert your name) family is looking forward to doing business with you."

You can play with the words of course to accommodate your personal style. This one-page will get your decision maker's attention.

If your sales prospect is devoid of any sense of humor then of course I wouldn't try this.

This one-page will probably put a smile on his face and it just might give you enough of an advantage to win the order.

### **30. Ask For Introductions Not Referrals**

Most salespeople dislike making cold calls. Yet most companies expect an influx of new business to keep growing.

You don't have to make cold calls if you're good at harvesting referrals from your happy customers.

I know from conducting thousands of sales training programs that most salespeople don't know how to ask for referrals.

Most feeble attempts sound like this.

"Do you know anyone else who might be interested in our products?"

The happy customer responds, "I can't think of anyone right now, but if I do I'll call you."

Now based on your own past experience how many times do they call you? Well - they don't.

So it's important that you know how to ask for referrals.

You can also stop asking for referrals and start asking for introductions.

You're sitting face-to-face with a happy customer. You know he's happy because he just told you he's happy.

There's no better time to ask for an introduction.

You could say something like this.



"Your business is like my business it depends on meeting new people. Would you be kind enough to introduce me to one or two people like you who might have an interest in hearing about the work we do?"

Just ask him to call these people right now. There's no harm in asking, is there?

### **31. "To Do Lists" and Not To Do Lists"**

Every time management book and article I've ever read talks about the importance of having daily written "To Do Lists."

In my own book, "**57 Ways To Take Control Of Your Time And Your Life**" I talk about the importance of doing this, only I refer to it as starting your day with a six-pack.

The six-pack refers to a prioritized list of the six most important things you want to do and people you want to call.

Whether you begin your day with a "To Do List" or a "Six-pack" there is one other list you should have.

This is a "Not To Do List." As a reminder write down everything you shouldn't be doing. Everything that has a low return on your investment of time.

From time to time you might want to add to your list.

### **32. The Most Powerful Word In Sales**

The most powerful word in sales is probably not what you think it is.

It's a little three letter word that works like magic.

The word is "Why."

The word "Why" when used properly and with the right tone will get people talking. And the more they're talking, the more you're learning.

This powerful word also has a way of taking the wind out of an objection's sail.

For example, when you tell someone the price of your product and they respond, "We can't afford that."

When you respond with a simple "Why" it forces them to tell you all the reasons why. This of course gives you an opportunity to deal with the resistance.

You might find yourself asking "Why" several times during one conversation. The more your sales prospect talks about the reasons why the more likely he is to respond more favorably to your products and services.

A variation of the word "Why" is "Why not."

In the future when you meet with resistance there's is no need to get defensive. Just respond with a calm and casual one-word question "Why?"

Why should you use "why?" Why of course because it works!

### **33. The Second Most Powerful Word In Sales**

The second most powerful word in sales is also a three letter word.

It's one of the biggest propellers to achieving selling success. I'm always amazed at how reluctant many salespeople are to use this word.

Just thinking about this three letter word will make you more productive.

Thinking about this three letter word every day will open more doors and opportunities than you can imagine.

The word I'm referring to is "Ask." This particular word will not be used in your conversations with sales prospects as the word "Why" is.

This word is designed to get you thinking about specific action steps you can take to win more business.

For example, here's a short list of things you can ask for throughout the selling process:

Ask for the gatekeeper's help.

Ask for the appointment.

Ask to see the decision-maker.

Ask prepared open-ended questions.

Ask for a facilities tour.

Ask for a demonstration.

Ask for the next appointment.

Ask for a trial order.

Ask for the opportunity to send a proposal.

Ask your customer's to visit your home office.

Ask for the business.

Ask what else can be added to the order.

Ask for introductions to potential referrals.

To sum up, I believe the more you ask for the more you'll receive.

If you're in sales and you're afraid to ask you're probably in the wrong line of work.

### **34. How To Ask Great Sales Questions**

If you're in sales you have to ask questions. Unfortunately, based on my observations and experiences with salespeople, most fail miserably in the questions department.

Salespeople like to avoid scripts, which means they ask questions spontaneously. When you do this of course you believe your question is absolutely terrific.

Well, you're not the judge your sales prospect is. And your typical sales prospect sees lots of salespeople who don't prepare their questions in advance and so they end up sounding the same - sometimes even pathetic.

David Frost once said, "You can judge the quality of the question by the quality of the response." If you want to ask really good questions you should prepare them in writing.

You probably have never done this before and not terribly excited about doing it now. Open-ended questions are designed to get your sales prospects and customers talking.

Here are four characteristics of a good open-ended question:

**Necessity** - every word is essential which means you take out every word that isn't essential. Each word should have value, if it doesn't yank it. A good question is often like a burning ember; it has the potential to linger on.

**Brevity** - less is more. Try to prepare questions that have no more than 7 to 10 words. Think of it this way, short and sweet is better than long and sour!

**Personalized** - and the way you do this is to use the words "You" and "Your" in your question. Another way to think of this is if you put your customers into your questions they may put you into their responses.

**Open-ended** - if your question can be answered with a single word it's definitely not an open-ended question. Remember your objective is to get your sales prospects and customers talking.

Silence is golden during a sales call - especially when the salesperson is being quiet and giving a sales prospect and customer an opportunity to spill his guts.

Finally learn how to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

## 35. Sharpen Your Selling Skills

Don't get lazy. The longer you've been selling the more complacent you're likely to become. It's only natural - but don't get too comfortable with your selling skills.

Keep fine-tuning your skills. You will be rewarded for your extra effort.

Dull saws don't cut as much wood as sharpened ones. Letting your selling skills become dull will have a negative impact on your sales and your income.

Here are sources for new selling ideas. Check them out frequently.

<http://www.startsellingmore.com> - this is the official website for Jim Meisenheimer. At this writing there are 110 different pages of content for you. I keep adding 1-2 pages every week.

<http://www.ezinearticles.com> - this is an article directory. For example they currently have 98 of my sales articles on their website. You can do a search on any sales topic and be pleasantly surprised at all the articles you can read and download. This is an excellent website.

Subscribe to the **Wall Street Journal**. You can't scan/read this paper and not pull out one idea you can use to grow your business. It's an excellent resource for business and for your life.

Invest in a digital recorder if you don't already own one. As you're driving from account to account you can practice various elements of your sales calls including the opening statement, the questions you ask, handling the price objection, asking for the second appointment, and even asking for the business.

Practice can't make you worse it can only make you better and distinguish you from your competition.

And remember the less you say the smarter you'll sound!

## **36. Bread Gifts**

When you close a big sale how do you say "Thank you?"

Showing your sincere appreciation is important. It has a way of confirming to the buyer that he made the right decision selecting you and your products.

Now I realize many companies have a "No gift" policy. If you're selling to the Pentagon you probably should adhere to the policy.

So it really depends on what you're selling and who you are selling to.

If your situation allows you to say "Thank you" with a gift to show your appreciation, I have the perfect solution for you.

I have personally used this many times during the last six years.

One of the best gifts to give is the gift of food. And one of the best food gifts to give is bread.

You can check out The Great Harvest Bread Company at [www.breadgifts.com](http://www.breadgifts.com). They have a wide variety of bread baskets to fit any budget.

They have an extravaganza basket which includes the following:

### The Extravaganza

- 2 lb. loaf of Honey Whole Wheat
- 1 lb. loaf whole grain bread fruit bread
- 6-pack of our giant cookies
- 12 oz. bag of Peet's coffee & box of Peet's Tea
- Whipped Fruit Honey or Gourmet Jam
- Premium soup mix
- Our own Groovy Granola

When you close a **big** sale say "Thank you" in a **big** way!

## 37. Sending Christmas Cards

Every year entrepreneurs and salespeople send out millions of Christmas cards. And why do you do this? You do it because everyone else is doing it. And if you don't do it you believe it will place you at a competitive disadvantage.

Most of these cards are mailed between December 10th and December 24th. Salespeople, for whatever reason, like to believe their cards are very special because they sign them.

Good golly Miss Molly you send me a Christmas card and you signed it for me. I'll never forget this. Please!

The reality is that the people who get your card are also getting cards from all of their other suppliers. Your card comes in over the transom with dozens if not hundreds of other cards.

I'm not suggesting that you stop sending Christmas cards. What I am suggesting is a strategy that gets your a card noticed.

Mail your Christmas cards the day after Thanksgiving so it's likely to be the first Christmas card your customer gets.

You could also mail your Christmas card, with a little note explaining why it's late, the end of January or the beginning of February. Now you're card is the last card your customer gets.

The point is if you want to stand out you have to be different and this applies to sending Christmas cards to your sales prospects and customers.

Make your Christmas card either the first one your customer gets or the last one.

## **38. 20 Card Trick**

This isn't really about card tricks. It's about postcards. You can find some of the best postcards in airport and hotel gift shops.

About five years ago I was buying a USA Today in a gift shop at the Tampa Airport.

Next to the newspaper display was an assortment of postcards. One particular postcard caught my eye. The only thing on the front of the card was a picture of a 12 foot alligator.

The week before my trip I spotted an alligator in my backyard. You see, I just moved to Florida so having an alligator in my backyard was a new experience for me.

There were 24 alligator postcards in the display and I bought them all. I sent the alligator postcard to 24 customers with a short note saying "I had one of these guys in my backyard last week - welcome to Florida!"

Whenever you go on vacation or go to a sales meeting at a great resort, buy 20 postcards.

Send 10 of these postcards to sales prospects you're working with right now.

Send the other 10 postcards to your best customers.

It's also a great idea to send cards to your internal customers – the people who support your sales effort.

Doing this simply sends the message that you cared enough about this person to send this card.

In sales, little things mean everything.

## **39. Autographing Books**

Authors are not the only ones who can autograph books. In fact anyone can autograph a book.

Up to this point I've written five books. I use these books as a way to introduce myself to new prospects and of course when I send them I always autograph them.

Here's something else I do and if you like the idea you can do it too.

I buy books written by other people. One of my favorite books to send to my sales prospects and customers is "**Discover Your Genius - How To Think Like History's 10 Most Revolutionary Minds**" written by Michael Gelb.

Inside the front cover I write the name of the person I'm sending the book to with this note. "I hope this book helps you discover your genius." And then I autograph and write the date in Michael Gelb's book.

Every time your sales prospect or customer picks up the book to read it, he is reminded who sent him the book. And that's a good thing for you.

How many salespeople send good books to your prospects and customers? Probably not too many. It's a little known secret that screams you're **FIRST CLASS**.

The road to success in sales means doing things other salespeople are not doing.

## **40. The Reason Why**

This is a no-brainer. People are busy. Some people are overwhelmed in their jobs. There's more work to do than there is time to get it done.

As a professional sales representative you deal with internal and external customers.

Many times you rely on your internal customers for support. You make a commitment to an external customer and you rely on your internal customers to meet that commitment for you.

Salespeople are usually pretty good at turning on the charm when working with external customers. However this charm often vaporizes when working with internal customers.

It's easy to make demands on these internal customers without regard to what they already have on their plate.



When dealing with external customers there are things that need to be done to move the sales process along.

One of the best things you can do to get someone, internal customer or external customer, to respond to your requests is to give them a "Reason why."

Simply say, "The reason why I'm asking you to do this is . . ."

Here's another sales tip you can use. In addition to telling people the "Reason why" also use the word *because*. The word *because* is very special and it helps you to justify your request.

People will become more responsive when you tell them "The reason why."

## 41. Keeping Tabs

How do you keep tabs on different things? When you get a good idea where do you put it? When you come across an inspiring quotation where do you put it?

During a sales call, when you say something brilliant, where do you put it? When you're reading the comic strips and you read one that tickles your funny bone and inspires you at the same time, where do you put it?

When you ponder the question, "How can I do it better" where do you record and keep your thoughts and ideas?

Reinventing and distinguishing yourself from your competition is no easy task. It makes no sense at all to squander your good ideas. Your good ideas are like nuggets of gold - it's up to you to safeguard them.

And the best place to do that, I have found, is a good old-fashioned composition notebook. Take it everywhere and never leave home without it.

Thumbing through your composition notebook will provide you with all the inspiration you'll ever need and you can access it 24/7.

Use your composition notebook to keep tabs on everything that's new, exciting, inspirational, and of course important.

Another reason for doing this is because most of your competition is not.

## 42. Hard Work Pays Off

Tim Russert was a television journalist and a lawyer. For over 16 years he was the longest-serving moderator of NBC's Meet the Press Sunday morning program.

He was also NBC news Washington bureau chief and also hosted CNBC/MSNBC weekend interview program *Tim Russert*. He also appeared regularly on NBC's The Today Show and Hardball.

In the days following his sudden and tragic death at the young age of 58 much was written about him and his work.

In the beginning of his career he was doubtful that he could make it and compete in the big leagues. One day while working for Senator Patrick Moynihan Russert told him about his lack of self-confidence when competing with the Ivy Leaguers.

Senator Moynihan apparently gave him some great advice. He said, "Tim, what they know, you can learn. What you know, they'll never understand."

Tim Russert worked hard at his profession. He was always prepared and that's why he was so good.

Hard work is the shortcut to your selling success. Always be prepared. Always do your homework.

After each sales call take a minute to reflect and ask yourself, "How can I do it better next time?"

## 43. Becoming Unsuccessful

There is a long list of characteristics that make salespeople successful. There's also a short list of traits that should be avoided like the bubonic plague and they include:

**Un-adaptable** - in sales you can't succeed with rigid thinking, an unwillingness to adopt new ideas and new ways of doing things. Think of it this way, your future should never be behind you.

**Uncommitted** - if you're serious about selling you have to be serious and focused on a steady diet of self-improvement. Salespeople have to increase

their knowledge of their customers, their customers' customers, product knowledge, market knowledge, and dedicate themselves to being a team player.

**Unemotional** - Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." You have to be excited about your work and your products if you expect your sales prospects and customers to get excited about these things. Your emotions and passion for your work are contagious. Make sure your customers are catching it.

**Unhappy** - ever notice how unhappy people are? When you're selling, remember how costly your expressions can be. You can't remove the pain that you suffer, but you can remove your pained expression. Think of every sales call as a leap onto a stage. When you knock on the door it's show time!

**Unmotivated** - years ago I had the opportunity to work with a sales representative who completed a sales training program I did. During the post-training follow-up, he told me he was experiencing what he called the January blahs. He showed me his list of goals for the year. Not a single goal had a completion date during the first quarter. If you want to get motivated establish goals with deadlines **ASAP**.

**Unwelcome** - so many salespeople wear out their welcome. They stay too long and talk too much. Say less, listen more, and as soon as you've achieved your sales call objectives, end the call. If your customer has to end the call for you, you've overstayed your welcome.

To achieve genuine selling success you must take out all the little **un's**.

## 44. Learning Behind The Wheel

When it comes to cars and driving, one thing is for sure. The roads aren't getting wider and faster. The cars themselves however are more comfortable, more luxurious, and better equipped.

As a professional sales rep you do everything in your car don't you? You eat, drink, make telephone calls, use your computer, and who knows what else?

You can even listen to XM satellite radio while driving from account to account.

Have you ever considered turning your car into a classroom for 20 minutes every selling day? I know, "You're too busy to do that."

Warning - don't be too busy to get smart!

20 minutes is a fraction more than 1% of the time in a 24 hour day. What would happen to your personal and professional growth if you invested 1% of your life listening to motivational, educational, and inspirational CDs while you're driving?

Experts say to get the real benefit from a CD it should be replayed to allow key points to be reinforced. Obviously repetition is essential to the learning process.

Take advantage of the increasing driving times you're experiencing. Turn your radio off, turn your CDs on, and if you do this every day, you'll develop a very significant strategic advantage over all your competitors.

"Stupid is as stupid does." Stupidity can't exist in a learning environment.

Start learning today and you'll start earning more money tomorrow.

## **45. Was It Good For You Too**

At the end of every sales call take a minute to evaluate how well it went. Ask this question - "Was it good for you too . . . the customer?"

Usually the sales call post-mortem is evaluated from the seller's perspective.

The next time you're in the mood to evaluate your sales call, you may learn more about your selling skills if you have the courage to ask your sales prospect/customer a few questions. Questions like:

1. How could I have made this a better sales call for you?
2. What qualities do you look for in a professional sales representative?
3. What advice would you give me for my next sales call with you?

If you owned a new restaurant and wanted to get your customer's feedback about the dining experience would you simply ask, "How is everything?" Of course not!

How much more could you learn from every customer if you asked this question, "How could we make dinner better for you next time?"

What you think about the sales call matters.

What your sales prospects and customers think about your sales call matters even more.

When you think it was a good sales call, find out if it was good for them too.

## **46. Walking Billboard**

Belief it or not you are a walking Billboard. This Billboard is perched on a mountain for all to see.

What people see on your personal Billboard is up to you. What do you want your Billboard to say about you? Have you ever thought about that? If not why not?

Okay - so now you have a personal Billboard what do you want people to see?

Here's a short list of possibilities:

- Your attitude
- Your appearance
- Your ability to communicate
- Your self-confidence
- Your experience
- Your ability to solve problems
- Your responsiveness
- Your ability to focus on solutions
- Your dedication to your customers
- Your work ethic
- Your product/service knowledge

You are responsible for your personal Billboard. What's on your Billboard literally becomes your personal brand.

Never forget the importance of the brand called you.

## 47. Personal Website

Do you have a personal website?

This is the 21st century and you need a personal website.

The first thing you want to do is to get a website with your name as the URL.

For example my name is Jim Meisenheimer and I own <http://www.meisenheimer.com>

There are 60 million websites in the world today and even if you aren't sure how you might use a personal website I suggest, I strongly suggest you lock up a URL that you can use later.

I currently have two websites and soon we'll be adding a third. That's not important, what is important is the experience I've had building my second website.

I've learned more about websites in the last six months than I have in the previous eight years.

I'm bringing this to your attention not to get you committed but to get you interested.

Look if you're an entrepreneur you definitely need a website. On the other hand if you're a professional sales representative working for a company you're probably wondering why you should have a personal website when your company already has a website.

Here are just a few things you can do with your personal website:

- Your personal website builds credibility.
- Your personal website differentiates you from your competition.
- Your personal website will have online information about you 24/7.
- Your personal website can have a page about you and your family.
- Your personal website can have a long list of customer testimonials.

- Your personal website can have a long list of your customers.

Having a personal website completely differentiates you from other salespeople who are calling on your sales prospects and customers.

When you have a minute take a look at this website.

<http://www.sitesell.com/Strategist.html>

They are totally committed to your success and the price is very reasonable.

They make building a website literally a no-brainer for you.

The best overall introduction to Site Build It! and SiteSell. Site Build It! (SBI!) Is the only, all-in-1, site-brainstorming-and-building-and-hosting and-marketing, step-by-step system of software tools that delivers a thriving, profitable business.

Here's that website again. <http://www.sitesell.com/Strategist.html>

## 48. The 80/20 Rule

The Pareto principle states that, for many events, 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. Management thinker Joseph Juran suggested the principle and named it after an Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto.

This is rule # 1 in business and trust me it works. Specifically in sales, it means that 80% of your sales come from 20% of your customers. It also means a 80% of your sales prospects potential comes from 20% of your sales prospects.

It also means that 20% of your activities represent 80% of the value for everything you do.

With interruptions and distractions at an all-time high it's wise to consider the 80/20 rule in your daily sales activities.

Ask yourself:

1. Are you devoting enough time to the 20% of your customers that represent 80% of your sales?

2. Are you devoting enough time to the 20% of your prospects that represents 80% of the potential?

3. On a daily basis do you focus on doing what's important first? Because what's important represents 20% of the tasks you perform and accounts for 80% of the value for everything you do.

Here's a practical example. Your company is planning to introduce a new product next month. Your sales manager asks you for a sales forecast for expected sales during the next six months.

Don't be overly optimistic and be thinking you can sell one unit to every account. A more realistic forecast would assume that 80% of your sales would come from 20% of your accounts. Now you plug in the number of unit sales for each one of those accounts.

The 80/20 rule has never let me down and I'm sure if you use it, it won't let you down.

## **49. The 85% Rule**

The 85% rule is something I've used in my sales training presentations during the last 20 years.

This past week I had a coaching assignment with a president of a manufacturing company. Like many businesses he was experiencing a downturn during this soft economy.

Based on year-to-date results he would likely finish the year 75-80% to his original sales plan. He asked for my advice. Here's what I suggested.

First I asked him to write down his revenue goal.

Then I asked him to write down the action steps he was taking to achieve his ambitious revenue goal.

He came up with a list of five action steps.



I pointed out to him that this list was indeed too short to ensure success in achieving his annual sales target.

So I gave him a homework assignment. I suggested he schedule a meeting with his sales and marketing staff. I also suggested he use a flip chart with post-it paper - so they could put all their ideas on the wall.

I suggested he start with the annual revenue goal. I then suggested he ask his staff what action steps could be taken to achieve this robust goal.

Every suggestion should be written on the flip chart.

Periodically he should ask the group this question. "If we did everything on this list would it give us an 85% probability of success?"

If the answer is no, keep adding action steps.

You continue this process until the group consensus is, "If we do everything on this list there is an 85% probability that we will achieve our sales goal."

The next step is to prioritize the entire list and then begin working the list from the highest to the lowest priorities.

If you want to succeed in sales you have to plan to succeed in sales.

The 85% rule is an excellent resource to consider if you're serious about over achieving your sales quota.

## 50. Your John Hancock

Don't you just love e-mail? Actually, I have a love-hate relationship with e-mail. I get so many of them which makes me mad and yet it's a very convenient way to communicate with sales prospects and customers.

How do you sign your e-mails? What kind of signature do you have?

When you sign your name, it's known as giving your John Hancock. Born in 1737, John Hancock is most famous for his **bold signature**.

On August 2, 1776, he was the first member of the Continental Congress to sign the Declaration of Independence, the document first demanding independence for the United States from the rule of Great Britain.

How do you sign your name at the end of your e-mail?

I would skip things like fondly, warm regards, and sincerely.

Here are a few suggestions for your e-mail signature.

- Use a different font for your signature.
- Make the font size a little larger than the rest of your e-mail.
- Use the color blue for the signature font.
- Use a creative tagline if you can think of one.
- Always include a **PS** and use the color red for the boldface **PS**.
- Use a **PPS** (in red) whenever there's something else you want the reader to remember.

This respects the law of recency. They will remember the last thing they see in your e-mail.

## 51. Creative Organization Charts

Here's an idea especially if you prepare high dollar value sales proposals.

List everybody in your organization who will, if you win the contract, have some interaction with your customer.

If you really think about it you should be able to come up with a list of five to seven people.

The list may include you, your sales manager, your vice president of sales, a customer service representative, a technical service representative, and operations person, etc.

Use boxes to create your organizational chart. In every box include name, title, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address. These numbers scream accessibility to your sales prospect.

And do one more thing that will blow your sales prospect away. Include a digital headshot photograph of each person. This makes the organization chart come alive.

If you happen to be presenting your sales proposal face-to-face you can use this page to introduce your potential customer to their new support team. In fact you can label this page **Your Support Team**. If you prefer, you can replace the word **Your** with the name of a sales prospect's company.

And remember this, it's easier for a sales prospect to say no to a salesperson than it is to say no to his entire support team.

## 52. Grabbing Attention

One of the biggest challenges facing salespeople today across North America is getting and grabbing the attention of sales prospects and customers.

The plain truth is most people in business are overwhelmed with work. Every time a company lays off staff it means more work for the people who weren't laid off.

This is a small and simple sales tip to help grab attention for your product literature. Most literature is created in standard 8.5" X 11.0" paper size.

You realize of course you are not the only salesperson to leave literature with your sales prospects. When you leave your literature gets added to the stack.

The next time you're in an office supply store pickup a ream 9 x 12 bright orange or bright canary yellow paper.

Staple your literature to this paper. When your sales prospect takes your literature and puts it on a stack of other literature - yours will stand out.

You can also use the leftover margin of this bright color paper to hand write a note or a reminder.

## 53. Lumpy Mail

I love this idea and use it often in my off-line mailings.

Everybody gets e-mail and everybody gets snail mail. And sometimes the snail mail just keeps piling up.

And when you look at a stack of mail it seldom gets you excited. How often when you look at a stack of mail do you think, "Gee, I need to open this right now?"

Well if you want to **get your mail opened first** - make it lumpy.

Visit this website for ideas: <http://adcomarketing.com/stressballs.htm>

Scroll down the page to see their entire list of stress relievers. When you take a stress reliever and put it in a 6.5" X 9.0" bubble wrap envelope you've created lumpy Mail.

Your lumpy mail will always be opened first.

## 54. The Ultimate Selling Resource

The ultimate selling resource is probably not what you think it is.

I believe the ultimate selling resource is language. You use words to do everything you do in sales.

Here's just one example of how using the right word can make a big difference when you're talking to a sales prospect.

I can't tell you how many times I've overheard salespeople on the telephone telling a sales prospect, "I'm going to be in your area next week and I thought I'd stop by and introduce myself."

Please! Give me a break! How many times in his lifetime has your sales prospect heard that before?

Imagine for a minute that your sales prospect works in Baltimore. Imagine calling and saying, "I'm **scheduled** to be in Baltimore next Tuesday and was hoping you could see me for a short time in the morning or the afternoon."

What does the word "**Scheduled**" say about you?

- It says you're busy!
- It says you're organized!
- It also suggests you're successful!

The power of language is undeniable - when you employ it to your advantage.

## 55. Quarterly Business Reviews

During my sales training programs, I'm always surprised at the response and reaction I get from salespeople, when I ask them if they do formal quarterly business reviews with their biggest accounts.

It's amazing how few have ever considered doing this.

It's no fun being told you lost the business to a competitor only to find out, after the fact, there was a small festering problem that your customer neglected to tell you about.

Talk about being blindsided. Never let this happen to you. It's totally avoidable.

Do quarterly business reviews with your biggest and best customers. It doesn't have to be fancy or formal.

During this formal business review you can review purchases and deliveries.

More importantly you can ask questions like these:

- What's working?
- What's not working?
- What would you like us to do that we're not doing?
- What are your priorities for the next six months?
- What new programs and projects are on your drawing board?
- What would it take to win your supplier of the year award?
- What kind of challenges are your customers facing?

If there's a problem you want to be the first, not the last, to hear about it.

If there's a new opportunity you want to be the first, not the last, to hear about it.

Doing quarterly business reviews, is a great way to keep the lines of communication open and flowing smoothly.

If you can include a breakfast, lunch, or a dinner that's even better.

## 56. Small Gifts That Keep On Giving

Here are two small gift ideas that won't break your budget and will likely keep your sales prospects and customers thinking about you for quite some time.

If you know what kind of special interests, outside of work, your customer has you can always buy a subscription, in their name, to a magazine that specializes in that particular interest.

Every month when the new issue arrives your customer just for a moment will think about you.

If your customer happens to enjoy the game of golf here's a website you can visit to order personalized golf tees. You can get 1000 personalized golf tees, with 3 lines of text, for only \$48.95 plus \$5.99 for shipping.

1000 personalized golf tees will remind your customer about your thoughtfulness for quite some time.

Here's the link: <http://golftees.com/tees218.html>

## 57. Reconnect With People

As you begin reinventing yourself consider reconnecting with people you value the most - personally and professionally. These are the people that have been a positive influence in your life. Chances are you don't get to talk with these people is often as you'd like.

Now you can change that and it will only take a few minutes to get it done.

Here's a how you can do it. Create a written list of the 25 people who you value most in your life. 25 is a starting point for you. It's okay if your list is a little bigger or a little smaller - that's not the point.

Once a month contact everyone on your list. Call them, send an e-mail, send a handwritten note, and send a postcard when you're traveling, send a fax, or send a small gift - like the book you've just written.

I have to admit I'm terrible at keeping up with the people I value most. So I just created my personal list of 25 and plan to work the list every month. I don't want to ever regret not having talked enough to the people I value the most in my life.

Not only will you feel good, so will the people on your list who you value most

### **57 Sales Tips To Reinvent And Distinguish Yourself From Your Competition**

If you got some ideas you can use to grow your business please do two things for me.

1. Tell your friends to send me an e-mail and ask for order information.
2. Send me an e-mail with a testimonial quote I can use.  
[jim@meisenheimer.com](mailto:jim@meisenheimer.com)

Thanks!

*Jim Meisenheimer*

**P.S.** – Discover what it takes to become the best within your company and industry.

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