

89 Seconds to Sales Success - Foreword

I worked the phones for four hours a day, five days a week, forty-eight weeks a year for five years. I made one hundred seventy five cold calls a day, eight hundred and seventy five cold calls a week, forty-two thousand cold calls a year, and two hundred and ten thousand cold calls over a five-year span. That was the cauldron in which my sales persona was formed.

In the late 1980's and early 90's, I worked as a financial consultant for the largest securities investment firm in the world. There were no "no call" lists in those days, so when I arrived at the office I pulled out a massive book filled with every address on every street in Albuquerque, New Mexico. For the next four hours, like clockwork, I punched out numbers on my phone and made my pitch:

"Hi, this is Mike Faber calling from ABC Brokerage, and I'm calling to let you know that for a limited time we're offering a one-year certificate of deposit that pays 9 percent interest. Would you have an interest in hearing more about this investment?"

My sales career actually began in the back seat of a 1962 Chevy Impala. No, this isn't about my parents' love life. That back seat held a dry-ice freezer where the Skippy Ice Cream Company in my hometown of Rochester, New York put the popsicles, fudge bars, and icecream sandwiches that I sold (and ate) in the summer of 1978. There's not a ton of strategy in ice cream sales when you're seventeen. You look for neighborhoods with lots of small children, and you try to arrive in those areas in the hour or two before a meal. That's when kids are the loudest and most obnoxious, and when the parent-in-charge is most likely to give in and pony up cash to minimize the consequences on their own psyche.

My sales career took a turn for the better when I began coaching and training salespeople in 1994. Seeing the business from a coaching perspective gave me valuable insight into why some salespeople succeed and some salespeople

fail. Coaching was like traveling back in time. I saw others making the same mistakes I'd made years ago with similar results. In a way, while this book was written in six months or so, the genesis of the book began in the last millennium!

Typically my client's inability to sell well came down to one or more of the six strategy sections you'll find in the following pages. What I consistently find is that somewhere along the line successful salespeople set themselves apart through effort and an unwavering focus on what will make them reach and exceed their goals.

Sales is a maddening career choice. One month you're riding high and paging through watercraft catalogues. The next month you're wondering which utility to turn off. It's a lonely business no matter what you're selling or how. In my more than thirty years of selling stocks, ice cream, bonds, and myself, I've come to realize that along with what you know, it's who you know. More important than either of those however, is how you relate. In the ensuing pages, you'll learn what I have learned over these three-plus decades about the maddening and joyous profession of sales.

Having said that, this book was written with you in mind. Tackling the challenges of sales head-on by yourself is like trying to play a musical duet alone. You can try to sound competent, but an extra pair of hands to play alongside you makes the music sound more lyrical and the experience more enjoyable. Here's what you can expect in the following pages:

- Reading a strategy will take you no longer than 89 seconds, assuming you read at the adult norm of about two-hundred words per minute.
- You will get tangible benefit from each strategy, something you can use right away to make you a stronger and more compelling salesperson.
- Anytime you want more—an idea or tool or resource to put into action—simply register your email address with www.89Success.com and you'll receive at least one dynamic action step each week specifically related to the scenarios and stories in this book.

Since selling has the potential to take us places we've never been before, these action steps will be updated frequently to stay a step ahead of changes in business, economies, and the world.

In all those years of cold-calling, I constantly tinkered with the script and the offer. I wish I could say that my tinkering was about finding the right investment for my prospective clients, but it was far more about change for the sake of change. I simply got bored. In sales, we *should* be constantly looking out for our customer's best interests. All of us will pay more to the professional we can trust with our car, our massage, or our dental care. The lowest bidder doesn't always win the job, which means consumers of a product or service are far more discerning than we give them credit for.

Given that your customer is more cautious about making a buying decision than any generation before them, recognize that this book is less about you than it is about the people you're trying to reach. Sales is not a profession for the faint of heart. It is demanding. It can break your heart one day and make you feel like you're on top of the world the next. To be good at it, you must pay attention to all aspects of the sales process, from what you do to prepare for a sale to how you pay attention to your customer throughout the sales cycle. I sincerely hope you find value in the tools I'm about to present to you.