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# The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH* E-zine

**Volume II, Issue 5**

**June 2005**

## **How Do Your Sales Efforts Stack Up?**

**What Causes Sales  
By Douglas G. Davidoff**

**What Can Go Wrong?  
By Douglas G. Davidoff**

## **How Do Your Sales Efforts Stack Up?**

In our work over the last 20 years, having reviewed thousands of business development efforts, we have gained a tremendous amount of wisdom about what works and what doesn't work. We are now in a position to share this knowledge with you. To make this offer even more irresistible, we are making this available to you free of charge and with no obligation.

Simply go to our website [www.ImagineLLC.com/consulting.htm](http://www.ImagineLLC.com/consulting.htm) and click on Diagnostics

[\(or click here\)](#) and complete The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH Diagnostic™* online. When we receive your submission, we will provide you with a written analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of your business development efforts with some specific recommendations as to what

Growth, and all things associated with it, is the buzzword of business today. However, successful growth is fraught with pitfalls and obstacles. Growth does not guarantee success, nor even improvement. As a matter of fact, ineffectively pursued, growth can lead to bigger and bigger problems. As Peter Drucker, the famous management consultant, is fond of saying, "Most businesses do not go out of business because of starvation, they go out of business because of indigestion."

Every month, The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH E-zine* focuses on important issues that enable you to grow your business intelligently--that means faster growth with better margins and profits. We look forward to hearing from you about issues that are important to you and ways that we can continue to deliver more value and help you with *INTELLIGENT GROWTH*.

Welcome to The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH*

you can do right away to improve your results. We will provide this customized report to you within two business days from your submission. Make sure you provide us with your contact information so that we can provide you with your report. If you prefer to complete the diagnostic on hard copy, you can e-mail us here: [diagnostics@ImagineLLC.com](mailto:diagnostics@ImagineLLC.com) and we will e-mail you a .pdf version of the questionnaire.

Begin improving your best sales results by completing The *INTELLIGENT GROWTH Diagnostic* today!

*E-zine.*

- **What Causes Sales**  
**By Douglas G. Davidoff**

Let's face it: selling is complicated. Think about it for a moment. What does it take for your business to sell successfully? By "sell successfully" I mean that your business is able to sell enough of whatever it is that you provide to meet your organization's goals and objectives. The list of those objectives, were you to list them all, would be overwhelming. Among many things, it might include: excellent product/service, successful salespeople, effective training, outstanding customer service, effective advertising, good PR, positive word of mouth, a supportive economy, knowledge of what your competitors are doing, and on and on.

When looked at from this perspective, it is no wonder that so few companies take a scientific approach to selling - there is just too much monitor. It is also no wonder that companies are having a more difficult time than ever achieving *and* sustaining the growth rates they desire, let alone achieving margin growth. For most companies (and for most salespeople), selling has become too complicated.

It doesn't have to be that

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way. Sure, there is a lot that goes into successful selling, but the reality is that there are very few things (in many cases only one thing) that really determine whether or not a profitable sale *will* take place. These activities, gates or issues are what we collectively refer to as *What Causes Sales*. If you are like most organizations we work with, you are looking for ways to streamline your organization and simplify things. This issue of *The INTELLIGENT GROWTH E-zine* may be just what you are looking for.

#### THE FOCUS BELONGS ON WHAT CAUSES SALES

Make a list of everything you or your company does that leads to sales. Go ahead, get a piece of paper and start writing down everything that comes to mind. No, don't read further until you've done this. Completing this exercise will save you hundreds of hours of time and frustration; failing to complete this list will cost you hundreds of hours of time and dollars.

Do you have your list completed? Now, go through that list and cross out anything that does not *directly* cause a sale to be completed. This should dramatically reduce the list of options you are considering. Now go through this list and determine the one item that has the most direct cause-effect relationship

with completing a sale.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT CONFUSE PROXIMITY WITH CAUSALITY.**

For years, salespeople have made the mistake of over-focusing on "closing skills" as the most important determinant of sales success. Because asking for the sale comes just before getting the sale, they confuse proximity with cause. The ask is not the same as the creation of a significant need, as an example of a cause that produces sales. In pursuit of discovering what causes sales, sales professionals measure how many times they had to ask for the sale to be successful. I know a sales trainer who says that if a salesperson hasn't asked for the sale at least eight times (I repeat, at least eight times), the salesperson has no right to expect a sale. Don't make this mistake.

**WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE**

There is an old rule that says what you measure, gets done. If you choose to measure the number of meetings your salespeople have, they will begin having more meetings. This is good if more meetings are the *cause* of increased sales, but it is useless if it is not the cause. If you measure proposals going out, more proposals will go out. If you measure referrals attained, your people will get more referrals. If you

measure calls coming in, more calls will come in. The key is to make sure that what you are measuring is *actually the cause of sales for your company*.

Finding that one thing that causes sales is typically very difficult, especially for entrepreneurs and executives who are so used to watching a myriad of factors. As a matter of fact, this concept seems so simple to some people that they find it difficult to trust the concept.

As you isolate the causes of your sales (preferably one, but no more than three) and you begin monitoring and measuring those issues, you will have found the most leverageable activity in managing your pipeline. The key - again - is to make sure that you are measuring what actually causes sales.

#### YOU STILL MUST DO OTHER THINGS WELL

When you have identified what causes sales for you, this does not mean that you can stop doing everything else that you do to build your business. Those activities must continue to be done well and deserve attention. However, what causes sales deserves the *focus* of everyone in the organization. And everything that is business development related should be pursued in the effort to support the

cause.

If you would like to get a jumpstart on applying this concept to your business, call or e-mail us ([click here to e-mail](#)). Simply mention this issue of *The INTELLIGENT GROWTH E-zine*, and you will qualify for a free half-hour coaching session where we will work with you to begin to isolate the activities that cause sales for you.

- **What Can Go Wrong?**  
**By Douglas G. Davidoff**

What can go wrong? This question is not asked often enough when it comes to sales and marketing plans and activities. The question, "What can go wrong?" is either asked in a highly panicked mode, or, more often, it is avoided altogether, in an effort to remain positive. Asking this question, however, can have a tremendously powerful impact on your effectiveness and your company's efforts.

#### ESTABLISH RED TEAMS

A red team is a person, or team, whose job is figuring out what can possibly go wrong with the plans a company has created. During the Persian Gulf War of 1991, after the initial war plan had been developed, the leaders of the planning turned their plans over to a red team tasked with

the job of defeating the plan. This red team was actually involved in the planning of the war, so there were no secrets. By making 'negativity' a part of the planning process, the Pentagon was able to save thousands of lives, millions of dollars and months of war.

#### WHAT CAN GO WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

The most common mistake I've seen on the part of salespeople or entrepreneurs is their dominant view of what looks good in a situation. As an entrepreneur and salesperson myself, I certainly understand that this is a fundamental strength that supports success. However, if this view is not balanced with an appropriate amount of "What can go wrong?", this inherent strength leads to a waste of time, money and other resources.

When I help companies hire salespeople, I teach them that one of the keys to avoiding a mis-hire is to focus on the attributes that indicate candidates are not the right fit, rather than on the attributes that support them being a right fit. When working with salespeople to help them develop effective sales strategies that dramatically increase their closing rates and reduce the time spent on opportunities that never amount to anything, I

teach them to focus on all of the reasons that support the idea that the prospect/customer will *not* buy from them, instead of focusing on all of the aspects that support the idea that the prospect will buy.

Once you've identified all of the possibilities that support a result you do not want, you are able to systematically work through them. This approach is powerful because it prevents our emotions from clouding out reality. Asking the question, "What can go wrong?" and considering real answers to the question is the antithesis of negative thinking. It is the type of thinking that leads to positive results.

Imagine Sales Consulting enables companies to move their salespeople and business development processes beyond merely communicating value to truly creating value. This transformation make companies valuable resources to their clients which leads to increased sales, increasing margins and shorter pipeline times.

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