

SALES AND SERVICE

# Excellence

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**Sales  
Results  
Become  
Unstoppable**

**Sell Value,  
Not Price  
Sell Trust and Value**

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# Salespeople

*They're intrapreneurs.*



by Nikolaus Kimla

**T**HE INTERNET HAS TRANSFORMED a seller's market into a buyer's market—and the role of sales is crucial. It is now time to give salespeople the role they can play: *entrepreneurs within the enterprise*. They must freely share information and contribute to product and service innovation resulting from being the prime contacts with customers.

Sales—and people who do sales—rarely receive the credit they deserve in companies. That has to change. Sales constitute an essential function, the success of which depends on transparency and flexibility. *Transparency* means information flows in all directions needed for success. And *flexibility* means no longer being forced from the top down to change behavior but instead obtaining more possibilities from and for those at the bottom.

*Many small innovative steps yield decisive progress in innovation.* Employees offer an essential source of innovation, and their potential is not fully utilized. They are the closest to customers and the production processes. They know and learn what could be done better, differently or in a new way. Their analysis of purchase behavior is crucial to competition.

IT helps companies to uncover this *treasure trove of knowledge* and to evaluate and make use of it. IT provides and makes available the *transparency* so that innovation can be demanded and provided *from the bottom up*. In many cases, innovation is attributable to the *wisdom of the many*. Appropriate IT applications are the only alternative for rendering this wisdom recordable and usable. They must put the *internal employee suggestion system* in a systematic and easily evaluated format.

The right mindset is essential, since salespeople tend to respond negatively to greater transparency requirements. People are afraid of being monitored, afraid of a management that prefers seeing a half-empty glass when it comes to opportunities.

This attitude is obsolete, however, for management and for sales. *Greater transparency in sales is not a threat but rather a big opportunity for everyone involved.* The more information is

available about sales and about opportunities, the more effectively expertise can be transferred among functional units in the company. Greater transparency in sales allows better support from Marketing, for example. That is important. People who do not find out about something affecting them always have to react after the fact instead of acting proactively as it happens.

Salespeople should no longer be forced simply to fill out report forms and feel that their every move is being monitored by IT applications. They need solutions whose *transparency* and *flexibility* benefit them and their activities. Only then will sales be strengthened as a company function. *Transparency* does not mean *top-down control*. It means *information flows in all directions* needed

for success. And *flexibility* means *not being forced from the top down to change behavior* but instead *obtaining more possibilities from and for those at the bottom*.

*Steve Jobs showed what is possible if you make people and their requirements the focal point of your efforts.* Develop IT products not from the standpoint of their systemic usefulness but rather from the standpoint of the individual user to gain greater transparency and flexibility from IT solutions. Salespeople must *think and act as entrepreneurs*, taking personal responsibility in freely shaping economic events. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Think and act like intrapreneurs.**

## MARKETING/BRAND

### Develop a Brand

*Nurture your firm's culture.*



by Hillel L. Presser

**T**HERE'S A STRONG CORRELATION between the growth of your firm and the strength of your culture and brand. The most successful firms put a high value on their culture—how they do business and the written and unwritten rules for behavior.

Firms where everyone plays by the rules and values dictated by the leadership are *more successful* in part because they brand themselves. Branding—developing a unique, distinctive and consistent image—is vital for any organization or individual hoping to stand out from the competition.

*How can you develop your brand?* Start by giving your culture a closer look. What values define your culture?

What rules govern interactions with clients? Do you have a collaborative team approach or independent individualistic one? The answers will help you define your brand. If you're an individual professional, you are your brand. Your personality, look, and presence and all contribute to your identity. To build a strong brand, be sure these things convey what you want them to—and appeal to your market.

Use *four tips* to build your brand:

- **Identify your personality, your specialty and your target market.** These form the basis of your brand, and it's important for all three to work well together. I define my personality as an

*innovator and educator who's very social and very serious about financial protection.* My specialty is asset protection, and my target audience is individuals with money, property or other assets that are not secured in the best way.

- **Decide what will appeal to that target audience.** Look for what your clients have in common (the clothes they wear, the cars they drive, the information they share)—it says a lot about what they value and what appeals to them. Maybe it's reliability, non-conformity, social status, quality. Is that who you are? If so, *make sure it's reflected in your brand.*

- **Identify what makes you different from your competition.** Every industry has rivals selling the same products. Via branding, they distinguish themselves to appeal to their target audience—to set themselves apart. What makes you different from others? How does that fit in with your *personality, specialty and target market?*

- **Look for ways to incorporate your personality into your practice.** Everything from office furnishings to clothes to business card and website should incorporate the *personality and values* you want to convey.

Your brand will be the foundation for your marketing, so ensure all of the elements work in harmony. You can't be *everything to everyone*—so focus on your niche audience and *what's important to them* and *what's important to you*. It will help you to set yourself apart and attract the target clients. **SSE**

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**ACTION: Develop your distinguishing brand.**