

SIX EASY STEPS TO CURE YOUR SALES ALLERGY

Most of us have a negative reaction to **SALES**. Who wants to be a salesperson? Um, no thank you.

We've all been sold to badly – and we don't want to do that to someone else. That would mean manipulating, coercing, or convincing someone they need to do something.

But you own a business. And as much as you'd like to have nothing to do with sales, the business won't survive if you don't do it.



So what to do?

Shift your orientation and approach to sales from being about you and your business to serving the customer or client's concerns.

That may seem obvious, but it takes practice and experience.

Step 1

GET THE ATTENTION OFF YOURSELF

When we're uncomfortable "selling", we think we're getting something or we benefit and the other person doesn't. Put your attention over on your customer or client.

- o Listen to them.
- o Hear their concerns and the results they're wanting.
- o Understand the obstacles they're facing making their vision real.

- o Listen **WAY** more than you talk.
- o Listen for “How can you help”.
- o Don’t bring in “how you can help” too soon. Be sure you understand their situation first. You may listen and ask questions for an hour or more before you say much about what you do at all. You will build relationship with them if you do that because there is so little authentic listening taking place in our lives.

If you do this well, they will be asking you about how you can help them and what your fees and services are. It will open up naturally in the dialogue.

Step 2

COME FROM SERVICE NOT FROM SALES

If you are focused on your sales, you’re focused on your business and not on your customer. Don’t focus on your cash flow, your quotas or your targets. Focus instead on them, their needs and concerns. Otherwise you’re not truly listening but instead you’re listening with your own agenda to make a sale. We know how that feels as a customer and we don’t like it!

Step 3

CONTRIBUTION VS. SALES

Every time you pick up the phone or have a meeting, you are offering a gift to help solve someone’s problems. People may be interested in that gift or not. Either way is ok. But you’re offering them a way to address an issue or challenge they have, to make their life easier. Remember that you’re not “bothering” them, “bugging” them or other conversations you may have in your head.

*Our sales are a measure of our **contribution** to solving challenges and concerns of our customers and clients.*

Yes, it helps your cash flow and business – but that isn't the point. Of course you must focus on the viability of your business or you won't be in business. But if you focus on your customer, your business will do well. For example, I want every potential client walking away from a conversation with me in a better place – i.e. they see a new action to take, they're thinking about a challenge in a new way that's more creative vs. reactive, or they're less critical of themselves. I want the conversation to support them and forward them. That's priority number one. Sales will follow.

Step 4

MANAGE YOUR INTERNAL DIALOGUE

Don't take it personally if someone doesn't call back. o Your customers are busy. They have a million things coming at them.

- o Whatever you're proposing is just 1 of the many problems they need to solve.
- o You're helping them address something that is bothering them.
- o Keep picking up the phone, keep following up – until you get a “yes” or a “no”, or learn more about what is challenging them that you may have missed [timing is intuitive on this one – give them time to respond!].
- o Don't take yourself out of action because of conversations you made up in your head that aren't based on facts. This is so common! We've made stuff up [i.e. “They're not interested”], we think it's the truth, and we stop taking action because of what we made up.

Quit it. You see – we're focusing on ourselves again – **VS. ON THEM!**

My clients prove this over and over again. I'll get an email or a call about a sale closing that they thought was going nowhere. You never know. Take it all the way to the mat if you can.

Step 5

THE SECRET TO JUMP START YOUR SALES: REQUESTS!

Develop a new practice.

Make requests daily – 3 minimum.

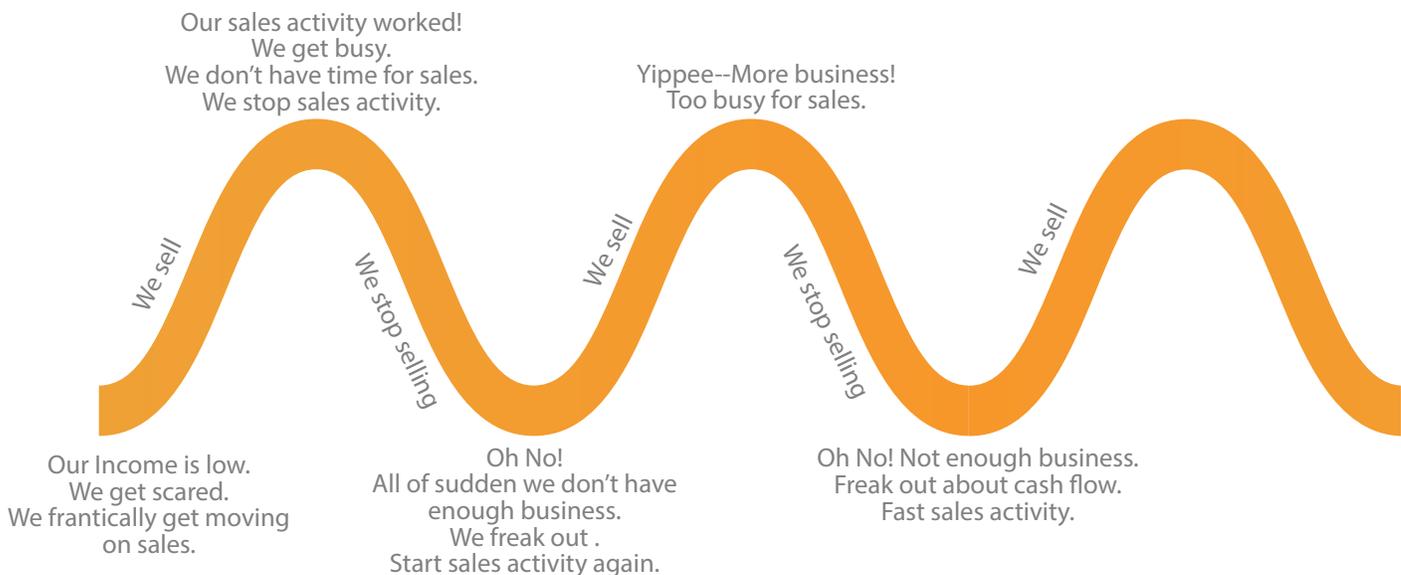
Request a meeting, a coffee, a “by when” on a proposal, an introduction, a referral, or a recommendation. Develop a daily practice of making requests. Just be direct about it. Don't apologize for the request. Simple, straight requests like:

- o Would you be willing to write a recommendation for me on LinkedIn?
- o Do you know of other people like you I might talk with who might benefit from my services? [People love to recommend companies/services/people they've had or are having a good experience with.] Requesting referrals from satisfied clients is commonly overlooked. **It's often a source of some quick wins for your business.**
- o Are you open to a conversation about how I might help you in what you're wanting to achieve?

Step 6

BE CONSISTENT IN YOUR SALES ACTIVITY

- o Have a regularly scheduled time daily you work on sales, preferably at the same time every day. If you need to move it, treat it like an appointment with someone else – reschedule it somewhere else.
- o A cycle I see frequently with clients is the following roller coaster:



This is an exhausting cycle for you and your business. Staying consistent solves this and then your business grows in a way you can manage and serve your clients.

PRACTICING IS KEY

Decades ago, I was an English teacher. I thought I didn't know anything about sales. **[What did I think I was doing when I succeeded in getting a high school student to read the first book in her life?]**

I love sales now – because it's about contributing, solving others' challenges and making other people's lives better.

But it takes practice getting there. Along the way, I blew it. I'd miss something or I would come on too strong. It was all learning.

Keep at it – as you develop a new practice, your sales allergy will go away and your business will grow and thrive as you address your clients' concerns.

It will become natural – and not, as a previous client described it **“like I'm selling snake oil.”**

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