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Introduction

I stood there numbly in my mum's garage, like a shell-shocked soldier unable to get to grips with what was happening to me. This was not the script I'd chosen for my life. My little daughter was saying something, but I couldn't respond. I was struggling to simply breathe. I'd just carried the last box from the removal van and dropped it with the rest of my worldly belongings in my mum's garage. For weeks I'd been getting stuff done, packing, organising the move and then, standing there looking at those boxes, all I could do was ask myself how, how, how had I got here? This was not how it was supposed to be. This was not how it was meant to work out!

And yet there I was ... forty-six years old, moving back into my mum's house with my six-year-old daughter. My marriage was over. I had no job and no money. I felt like a total failure. Surely, I should have had my sh*t together by now!

But life doesn't always go according to plan, does it?

I was born and grew up in Zimbabwe when it was still called Rhodesia. My dad was an expat from Northern England who came to Africa with the RAF. He met my mum at a 'drinks do' when she was on a working adventure from South Africa. When I think of my childhood, it's sky blue. The weather was beautiful, my parents, brother and I lived in middle-class suburbia. There was so much open space, and we were happy. It was a great life ... until it wasn't.

Things changed when I was 15 years old. I arrived home from school one day and as soon as I approached the house, I felt like I'd hit an invisible wall. I was literally stopped in my tracks, and I knew something was wrong. I walked into the house, and I could see that dad had been crying. Turns

out he'd been diagnosed with cancer, and we all had to pack up and leave Zimbabwe to go to South Africa so that he could get treatment.

That was my first experience of upheaval, but it wouldn't be my last.

In what felt like a whirlwind of a few short days, with just what we could fit into the combi, we set off with our bags on the long, sad drive south. And I hated it. I hated that dad was ill, I hated leaving my school, my friends and my boyfriend. Plus, when we got to this new country I immediately felt like an outsider. And to make everything 100 times worse, Dad died just a few months later – he was only 58 years old.

He'd been my hero, an airforce captain with two great loves – flying and his family. He'd always been the strong, thorough, uniformed, impressive and present father. He was always 'there' and then suddenly he wasn't. I'd watched him fade away as cancer took hold and while people would say things like, "At least you could be prepared"; one never is.

Until you've been through it yourself, you just can't fully appreciate how life as you know it disintegrates when someone you love becomes terminally ill. This journey to certain death for one person is a seismic dislocation that cuts everyone else around them off at the knees. For me, it also brought a deep-seated anger at the injustice, prematurity and finality of it all. I was broken by the grief and unspeakable unfairness of all the combined losses piling up for me at a time when other teens were enjoying life, worrying about spots on their faces and what to wear for their school-leaving dance. That's a lot to process at 16 years old.

What followed was hard. We stayed in South Africa because Mum had family there and moved into a small house that felt like it was at the wrong end of town. Mum worked two jobs to support us. My brother did the garden and DIY, while I was the self-appointed 'cook and bottlewasher'. Life as a teenager certainly wasn't what I'd hoped it would be. Plus, we were all trying to wrestle with our grief in our own way. I'd always planned on going to university, but now it felt more important than ever. In Zimbabwe, I'd been on track for a good school result, but in South Africa I needed to pass 'Immigrant Afrikaans' to get my school-leaving certificate, otherwise there'd be no university for me. Luckily, I have a good memory, so I was able to scrape through. But inside, I was miserable, and in that misery, I comforted myself with food. The new school only added to my feelings

of disconnection, as I struggled to make any true friends, which wasn't helped by being the sad, chubby girl. So, when it came time to choose my university, I decided to go to whatever university no one else from my school was going to. I think even then I'd been hoping for a fresh start.

What followed were some fun times, but mainly a series of adventures and experiences where I found myself in the wrong place with the wrong people doing the wrong thing – nothing bad or criminal, I just didn't feel like I really belonged. Everywhere I went I felt like a fish out of water, wanting to but never quite fitting in. I did however graduate with an Industrial Psychology Masters. By the time I was 28, I'd had some solid work experience behind me, I'd had a mixture of great and unpleasant experiences, and I'd managed to make some decent money. I'd also managed to take a few more significant wrong turns in life. I just couldn't find my place. My solution: I decided to travel. No one belongs anywhere when they're travelling – that's the whole point! And although I had some means, I wasn't rolling in cash, so I decided to travel on the cheap by backpacking. Once again, I packed the bare minimum, this time into a rucksack, and off I went. Over the next few years, I travelled by myself right across Africa. I started in Cape Town and travelled up through Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, the DRC and the Republic of Congo. I loved travelling. I loved the freedom. I loved meeting new people and the magic and synchronicity that springs up on the open road. I can't tell you how many awesome, funny, wonderful experiences I had, all the incredible people I met, the gorgeous places I visited and the many times where I felt truly guided or supported by some invisible force. I came to call that invisible force God and, over time, that relationship has become settled, sweet and secure.

But I had shrugged off His influence in my youth. I was too busy living the adventure. Once I'd ticked off most of the eastern side of Africa, I swapped continents and started travelling through Europe. This time, I started in Istanbul and travelled through Germany, Spain, Austria, France, UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Monaco, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Turkey and the Czech Republic. Packing only what I needed, each new place was a fabulous new start. I got very good at new starts. When I finally stopped, I went back to Uganda to be with a man I'd met while travelling



PART ONE

**Getting YOU to the
Start Line**



CHAPTER 1

P = Purpose

“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

– Mark Twain

Purpose may sound a little lofty, especially if we are up to our neck in crisis or overly busy, but that’s exactly when we need it most. Purpose is a big part of the content of our True North, and it doesn’t have to be a bumper sticker or motivational poster that speaks of world peace or curing cancer. It’s usually much more powerful when it’s personal, simple and meaningful to us.

Perhaps your purpose is to pay next month’s mortgage or making sure your kids are okay through the change. I worked with a bloke once who overheard his father-in-law say that his daughter ‘could have done better’. His purpose suddenly became crystal clear – he wanted to be successful enough to buy a BMW Seven Series so that he could drive past his father-in-law’s house and quietly give him the middle finger – out of view of course. It may sound petty, but his determination to prove his father-in-law wrong was enough to bring out his ‘inner cheetah’. Every time things got tough, he thought about that comment, and it spurred him into action. And it worked.

Ultimately, purpose is about finding something that excites our passions, where we can make a contribution to something or someone we value or believe in while using our skills and strengths.

Although there are many ways to help us find our purpose, it is incredibly easy to get lost in the self-help labyrinth. So much so that we can get stuck in inertia or indecision about what's the best way to discover our purpose. So, let's focus on practical, workable to-dos that ordinary people like you and I can use without necessarily having any special talent, money or resources. Certainly, when I was in the middle of my crisis, I wanted simple, practical uncomplicated ways to get back on track. I was still having to eat on a budget, bring up my child and engage with other people while I was feeling like a bit of a failure, so 'doable' was essential. Here are some simple to-dos that worked for me and have universally worked for my clients:

- Resolve your Spirituality
- Find your Why 101
- Explore your Beliefs.

Resolve Your Spirituality

Sometimes life gets too big for us, and we're faced with a struggle that makes us question our ability to cope. In those moments, it's more than physical, mental or emotional. It becomes spiritual – a matter for the soul. This spiritual work doesn't necessarily mean resolving a relationship with God, although it did for me and many I have worked with. I am also acutely aware that God may be called by different names in different cultures and that sometimes people are referring to some type of Universal Force. I don't want to get hung up here on terminology, or get into a debate on whether there is a God or which God is the 'right' God, but rather to say that human beings are made up of mind, body and soul. We all have a soul, even if we choose to ignore it. And making peace with our soul, especially after a life-shattering experience, usually involves an internal wrestle where we reach out or up to someone or something bigger than ourselves. When we do, we can often find a place to ask the hard questions, live through our rage or despair and find a measure of inner peace amongst the hard, big, personal stuff we may be facing. Help from an expert may also have its place here.

My experience, irrespective of culture, has been that purpose is found in the realm of the soul. Deep-seated values and beliefs that we live or die by, also seem to reside in this soul-space. So, when we experience change and upheaval that pull the rug from under us, part of learning to cope is by making peace with hard, not-always-answered whys and becoming able to live with that which remains in our hearts and souls. There are very deep, personal waters that we have to navigate when faced with questions like:

- Whose hand can we hold when the hands we normally hold are no longer there?
- Who or what can help us make sense of the big life questions that have no easy answers so that we can find a reason to keep going through the chaos?
- How do we forgive the seemingly unforgivable?

These and even harder questions are sometimes in our path and finding some level of acceptance of them is part of what we have to do when connecting with our spirituality.

I remember meeting Maddie (not her real name) at church. She was such a wonderful, warm, open woman. As I got to know her, I discovered that she was the daughter of a minister and, up until the age of 19, her father had raped her regularly. I remember my stunned disbelief as she told me this. And the disbelief was twofold. First, how could anyone have had to deal with, let alone recover from, that? And second, I couldn't square her past with who she was in the present. It seemed utterly unbelievable to me that she could have gone on, never mind forgiven her father, and become the happy and contented human being she was. She'd even invited her father to her wedding, and he'd walked her down the aisle.

Now that's 'next level' forgiveness!

And I'm certainly not saying you should aim for such lofty heights, but Maddie not only survived her trauma, she went on to thrive because she was able to resolve in her soul what she still believed to be true about herself and her world and find something – in her case, someone – bigger to hold on to in her protracted storm.

What Maddie discovered was one of the greatest powers given to us as human beings – the power to decide what things mean to us.

Picture me on stage. I hold up a glass coffee mug, and I ask the room how many people feel deeply emotionally attached to this coffee mug. Obviously, no one does. Then I say, “If I dropped and broke this mug, you might think I’m all thumbs and a bit haphazard, but you wouldn’t be emotionally devastated.” At this point, everyone can agree. Then I say, “But what if this mug belonged to your mum or dad, and they used to drink their coffee from this mug every day of your life growing up. On their deathbed, they gave you this mug and said, “Whenever you drink from this mug, know that I am smiling down on you from Heaven,” and then I grab it and smash it on the ground. How many would be crushed by this situation? Almost everyone can agree that we all would. What’s the difference? It’s the same mug. The same molecules, the same glass, but now you’ve decided that it means something.



One of the greatest powers given to us is the power to decide what things mean to us.

Maddie took control of what things meant to her and defined them in such an empowering way that she was even able to restore her father to an honour no one in their right mind would think to ask of her. She was able to do it because she wasn’t serving her history; her history was serving her. When she redefined what it meant in a way that empowered her life, she moved from being victimised to being empowered. This is a critical concept to overcoming or rebuilding anything in business or in life and, in most cases, it is a matter of the intersect between choosing to rethink, determining to do things differently, and then engaging in some deeply personal soul work.

To me this soul work embraces connecting with something bigger, because the issues at play are often ‘beyond us’. I call that something bigger, God. But you may call it Fate or the Universe or God by some other name. But this essential soul work needs to culminate in you finding your centre and identity – who you are in relation to something or someone bigger. It needs to help you connect with a hope and purpose that’s not derailed by life’s crap.

This soul work has to enable you to find and collate your values and your ‘forever trues’ so that you can be clear on what you stand for, what

- Identify a specific reward for each of the completed tasks that are currently half-done.

#24 Plan Tomorrow's Activities Today

Another great productivity hack is to plan tomorrow's activities at the end of each day so you know in advance what you will be working on.

It ensures that you ready and aim the night before so that you can fire at the right target in the morning of the new day. Plus, it's very easy to implement. Whatever time you routinely finish your day, wind up 10 minutes earlier and spend those 10 minutes going through the next day's diary to see if you've got everything you need to get started on those tasks and/or whether you need to amend, add or delete anything.

It's akin to Abraham Lincoln's advice, where he said that if he had to spend all day chopping down trees, he'd invest time every hour sharpening his axe, or Martin Luther King's axiom that the busier his day, the longer his before-the-day started prayer time.

You will always get better results if you know in advance what you are going to focus on in the morning. Try it.

- Diarise those extra 10 minutes at the end of each day to plan for tomorrow so you can hit the road running.
- Get your team and family to adopt a similar habit of forethought and watch your collective productivity improve.
- Until it becomes a habit, set an alarm to initiate 'planning time'.

#25 Use Watermarks and a Clear Filing System

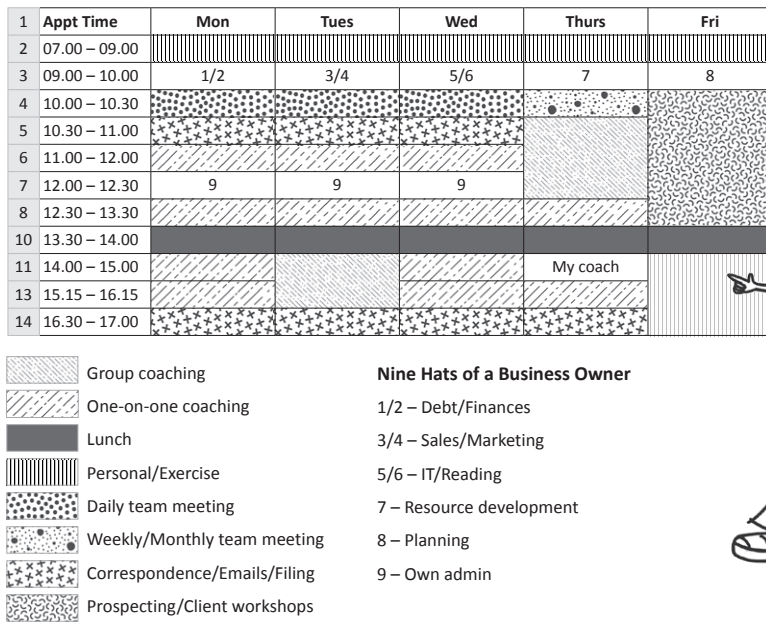
Science has recently discovered that there is no such thing as multitasking, regardless of gender. We are all only capable of thinking about and actioning one thing at a time. What can appear like multitasking is actually just efficient switching between tasks and some people are better at this than others.

Anything that helps us maintain focus and switch quickly is therefore always going to help with productivity. One way is to ensure that you allocate time for specific activities by divvying up your day into different

watermarks – one for each task group. These watermarks then sit on the calendar and to-dos are put into them. They are called watermarks because each one is always in the same place. If the slot allocated to each watermark runs out and you don't get all the tasks done, then the task moves to the appropriate watermarked slot the next day. Don't allow the task to bleed into the next slot, which is a different category or watermark.

Figure 7.4 shows my watermarks for a normal week in a four-week month. In a five-week month, I use the fifth week to prioritise marketing and selling because this is the fuel or lifeline of any business.

Figure 7.4 My Watermarks for a Week



- Take some time to work out what your watermarks might be. These are broad topics or functional buckets that you need to achieve or touch consistently and into which specific tasks and activities can be slotted to make the business successful. Use mine as a starter.
- Block out the time for the areas or watermarks and then allocate tasks to those areas strictly.
- Don't run over into the next watermark but do run over into the same watermark the next day or week.

Everyone has to find their own ways to get stuff done, but I have found these productivity and life hacks to be particularly effective.

Executing the 2-BEs Successfully: Their Story

Alcid John Martin, known as AJ to his clients, qualified as a chartered accountant in 2001. He worked in commerce for about 12 years as a financial manager at three larger companies in various industries before being retrenched. At 48, AJ had to decide whether to find another job, with the same job insecurity, or use his professional qualification to start his own accounting and tax practice. He opted for the latter and started AJM Financial Services Inc. in 2013, as a way to provide for his family.

It was a big decision. And the all-important starting point was to make the mental transition from an employee to a business owner. This is something that many new business owners underestimate and it's why sometimes being forced to make the jump can be a real blessing in disguise. AJ's decision was certainly made easier because of his retrenchment. He wasn't even that old and the realisation was that if it could happen to him at 48, it could happen again, and he would have no control over his future. Setting up his own business put him in charge of that future. He was also excited to see the back of corporate red tape and politics, as it would allow him to make more time for his family before they got too old. Work-life balance was therefore an important factor.

Although the risks and stresses of the two options were different, he was convinced that going his own way would be the easier option, and oh how wrong he was!

It took AJ two painful months to appreciate that his capability as an accountant was one thing and turning that into a successful business was something else altogether. AJ is a great accountant, but that skill set just got him to the start line. Essentially his skill set was AJM Financial Service's 'product'. Building a business off the back of it required a completely different skill set. It involved learning how to scale his craft, how to market his craft consistently, how to sell to customers and ensure that they could 'see' and 'feel' the value he delivered. It was about successfully transitioning from the base layer of Michael Gerber's triangle, the technician, to be able



CHAPTER 10

5-Ps

The last puzzle pieces for building a powerhouse business are the 5-Ps. They are all about promoting you, the business, what you do and making money, but, specifically, they are about how to turbo-boost sales. You can have the best business in the world, but if you can't make consistent sales then the business – and the life it funds, which is primarily yours – will not survive.

The 5-Ps are:

- **Proposition:** Not just what your product is or the service that you're offering, but who it will appeal to and why.
- **Prospects:** Who will buy, how often, how much and how many?
- **Process:** What are the steps to follow to successfully 'date' prospects and find and close sales?
- **Preparation:** What tools, scripts, emotional questions and prep pre-work will help secure you an edge?
- **Practice:** Role play, review call recordings, committed learning for better results and the like that turn those who can't into great rainmakers.

When implemented in your business, these last five remaining puzzle pieces and the deliverables associated with them will go a long way in helping you smooth out the scary financial or cashflow peaks and troughs of business as usual, so that you can secure and maintain a strong, predictable and consistent monthly income.

It may be tempting to look at the 5-Ps and think: "This is the crux of the issue; we need to make more money so I'm going to start with the 5-Ps." Please don't; there is a sequential reality around building and scaling

a business and it really does start with YOU and, specifically, the PEACE puzzle pieces in Part One. We all need to arrive at the business start line as a largely whole, fully functioning adult. And that means finding some measure of peace with who we are and where we are right now, so that we can focus on the future, not the past, and be ready, willing and able to do whatever it takes.

Then, we need to be sure that we are mentally ready and have sufficient business collateral to keep us working at the 5-Ps when we may be tempted to give up. The 5-Ps are deliberately positioned next after the foundational stage and the necessary thinking that precedes every great sales strategy. Getting sales right, and especially resiliently so, relies on getting the other puzzle pieces in place first. It's the only way I can pretty much guarantee owners that once this has been done, sales become less hard. Never easy, but definitely less hard.

So, let's get to it ...

P1: Proposition

Proposition embraces two important components. Firstly, what are the offerings on your Grocery Shelf? And secondly, who will these products or services appeal to, and why – your Value Proposition.

Your Grocery Shelf

You don't need to have premises or a storefront to have a grocery shelf; any business – or even a service – can ensure that they offer a range of products or services that their customers know about and can 'see'. Customers want visible, easy-to-buy choices and it is always easier to sell if there is a range of offerings on view that they can choose from. Additionally, customers want value. They want to know they have bought something that will make their lives better in some way. The 'so, what' of what we do, therefore, becomes critical.

So, what is on your grocery shelf? When you sell each of your products or services, is it enough to get you the monthly turnover you need to fund

Prospects are People

It is easy to forget, in the stress and pressure of sales, especially in the learning phase, that prospects are people. People we have met, established some links with and people we are getting to know. People with whom we build relationships and who, over time, buy from us because they know, like and trust us and what we make or do.

The nirvana of any business is repeat customers – those who buy regularly. But customers who feel hassled, manipulated, neglected, tolerated or pressured are unlikely to turn into repeat buyers. Even if they love your product or service, if they don't also feel comfortable buying from you then they won't come back. Never lose sight of what you are doing; as Dan Pinker⁴¹ puts it, you are “professionally helping people to buy.”

People have choices and it is your job to ensure that, if they are to be included as part of your tribe, they get to hear about your business, your solutions, and how these can help make their lives easier, better or solve a problem that they have. If you are proud of what you create or deliver, you owe it to those who could benefit from your offering to tell them about it and make it easy for them to enjoy the benefits.

And people don't have to be threatening. Get used to delivering your elevator pitch in the car park, in the bank queue or while waiting for the library to open. Start by remarking to the person next to you, “*Well, it seems that we're stuck here for a bit. I'm Kathi ... and you are?*” Then ask them what they do and, if they don't ask you back, smile and ask, “*Would you like to hear what I do?*” I've never had a “no”.

The very best time to start prospecting is when you don't need to. Diarise a few coffees. Start with one a week and simply ask prospects in your target market, “*How's business going?*” Brian Grazer, the Hollywood producer, does something similar, although he calls them ‘curiosity conversations’.⁴² Instead of selling, he just makes dates with people who know things about topics he's interested in but doesn't know much about. Think of your coffee dates like that – your way of acquiring information and getting to know something that you don't already know about your prospect and their business.

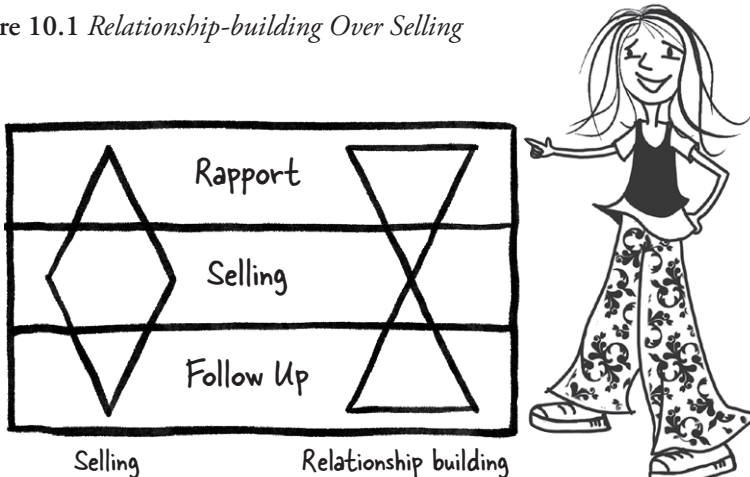
Just about every client I've convinced to try this has found it odd and uncomfortable at first but, after a couple of months, what felt so hard at the beginning, is less hard and the buzz they get from actually interacting positively and successfully with prospects encourages them to go out again. Even the anti-sales business owners discover that the 5-Ps work and they close sales.

I was reminded of these 5-Ps when I was watching Wim Hof, the father of cold-water swimming and the power of breath, talking to various celebrities in his TV show. He laughed out loud when Gaby Logan and Tamsin Outhwaite exclaimed, "It's freezing!" as they jumped into a cold shower. "Of course it is," said Wim, "what did you expect? It's the Italian Alps, the rivers are frozen and there's snow everywhere. It doesn't get less cold and it won't get less cold. You just get better at it. It's all in the mind; you decide!"⁴³

The same is true of sales. It doesn't get less challenging, it's just that we become better at it. Get armed, get prepared, have your tools, do your homework, write your scripts, role play, make your calls, follow your process and keep at it. What's the worst that can happen? Someone can say no? Big deal!

Sales is about building relationships. Gone are the days when we could just inform our intended audience what our opening hours were and what we sold, and they arrived at the door (Figure 10.1)

Figure 10.1 *Relationship-building Over Selling*



With the choices customers have, we have to move away from flogging a product or service toward building relationships with our customers who will then, in turn, buy our product or service. At any time that the economy is shrinking or under pressure – when ‘economic winter’ sets in – knowing how to prospect or sell well is what will keep the roof over our head and the wolf from our door.

If we run out of people to buy our awesome products or services, everything else becomes academic. We have to learn and get good at sales. It’s that simple.

P5: Practice

I’ve said it a few times already, but business – and especially sales – really is a full-contact sport. It involves the andragogic reality of learning by doing. Andragogy is the science of how adults learn and it’s best done by doing or by experience. The old-fashioned apprenticeship where one learned at the knee of a master, was good stuff. Alas, it is in short supply these days, although mentoring forms similar rhythms. We cannot teach sales as well as we can show or demonstrate sales.

Remember, as a business owner, you must lead from the front when it comes to sales – at least initially. Role plays, recording calls, setting goals you can control and listening to sales mastery podcasts are great ways to help take your practising to a new level so that you can demonstrate sales mastery to your people and encourage the same behaviour in them.

Role Play

Various role-play selling scenarios can be found online on YouTube or in selling podcasts. These are learning dynamite. Watch as many of them as you can and find your heroes who look and sound the way you want to. I’m a huge fan of Dan Lok⁴⁴ because of his settled sense of mastery in the sale and his laconic, laid-back style. In training yourself and team members, the role play separates the masters from the rest and what better place to start than by copying those who can demonstrate that mastery?

Learning a successful sales process is a lot like learning a new language – we become fluent by using it. Putting ourselves into different selling scenarios and practising how best to react, allows us to develop new neural pathways that make the selling process easier over time. When we encounter that scenario in ‘real life’, we know what to do because we have practised and rehearsed it. And just like rock climbing or playing bridge or icing a cake – we don’t get good by reading about it; we get good by doing it, paying attention to what happens and fine-tuning our approach, so the doing gets better. We master the art of selling by selling.

Role Plays to Practise

- Different ways to get past a gatekeeper.
- Handling objections.
- Different ways to close the sale.
- Dealing with particularly difficult customers.
- Building interpersonal rapport.

It’s also worth checking out your competition. How are they making a sale? How are they closing the sale or handling objections? Try buying from your competition and see what they do very well and what they do badly that you can improve on. And pay attention to all the sales calls that you ever receive from now on. Pay attention to what they do well – could you incorporate that into your own sales process?

Record Your Sales Meetings and Calls

While it may make you cringe, the best way to learn is via feedback on how you sound. Push record on your phone at a sales meeting and listen to it when you get back to the office. You’ll very quickly hear whether you:

- Established rapport or jumped into business mode too quickly.
- Asked enough questions or did all the talking.
- Listened to what others were actually asking and answered their questions or just pressed on with your ‘pitch’.
- Timed your offer or asked for the sale well or not.