PUBLISHED BY
bookboon

Niraj Kapur

How to Sell When Times are Tough

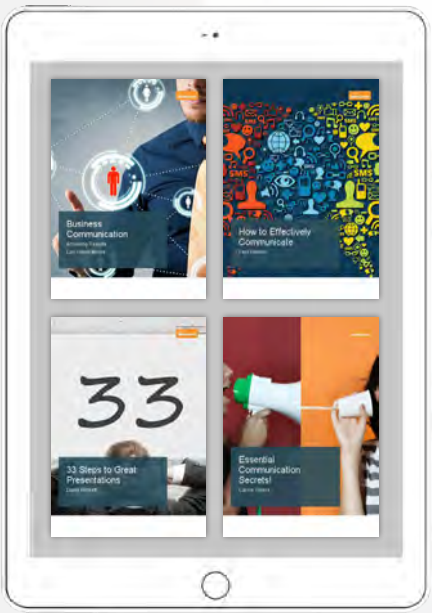
NIRAJ KAPUR

HOW TO SELL WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH

How to Sell When Times are Tough
1st edition
© 2020 Niraj Kapur & bookboon.com
ISBN 978-87-403-3333-6

CONTENTS

	Dedication	**6**
	Introduction - The World Has Changed	**7**
1	**Sales Process**	**9**
1.1	Is it okay to keep selling?	9
1.2	Listen	10
1.3	Adjust	12
1.4	Have a Proper Workplace	13
1.5	Overcoming Objections	14
1.6	Measuring Success	18
1.7	Customers First / Testimonials	18
1.8	Pick Up The Phone	21
1.9	Email	23
1.10	The Meeting	24
1.11	Virtual Networking	26



Discover our eBooks on
Communication Skills
and hundreds more

Download now

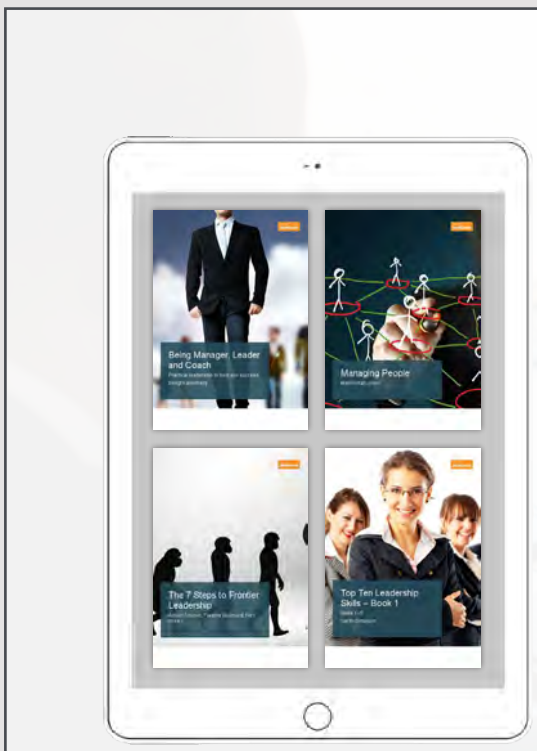
bookboon

1.12	LinkedIn	28
1.13	Social Selling	33
1.14	Closing The Sale	33
1.15	Customer Complaints	34
1.16	Pivot	36
2	**Health**	**39**
2.1	Mental Health	39
2.2	Physical Health	42
2.3	Soul	43
3	**Final Wrap Up**	**45**
3.1	Your Staff	45
3.2	Your Clients	47
3.3	Questions	49
3.4	Taking Action	51
	Reference	**52**

DEDICATION

To everyone who suffered in the dotcom bust of 2001, the recession of 2008 and the coronavirus pandemic of 2020.

I was there with you and I know how you feel.



Discover our eBooks on Leadership Skills and hundreds more

Download now

bookboon

INTRODUCTION - THE WORLD HAS CHANGED

March 16th, 2020.

The news channels that had been covering Coronavirus interspersed with other news suddenly changed tack.

Each news article and each headline now rang out with the devastation this pandemic was causing. In Great Britain, we tuned in for a daily video update from the Government. The consequences were far-reaching.

Businesses collapsed overnight.

Self-employed people lost their future income.

Hotels, events and hospitality were shattered and began making mass redundancies as events were postponed and hotel bookings cancelled.

Networking events, a wonderful way to do business suddenly stopped and social distancing became part of everyone's daily vocabulary along with furlough, unprecedented and Zoom.

My own expert sales coaching and training business was hit hard. I lost two speaking slots at events, one client said they wouldn't be able to pay for the invoice "for a while". Three clients said everything was on hold and two clients were put on furlough. Unlike previous recessions where we knew there would be a way out, this time we didn't know.

Fear, uncertainty and doubt rang out, affecting businesses all of sizes.

People were scared. Many only had one month of savings in their bank accounts. It was not enough.

Money reserves, government grants and interest-free loans will help but for your business to survive you need to adapt and evolve, and not be afraid of selling.

People are working from home which is a massive adjustment. It's fine for a week or two, after that you go stir crazy. More on this later.

By nature, we will all put up barriers to selling, even more so when times are tough as we over empathise with people on the negative rather than focus on the positives we can deliver to help.

Here are just a handful of the questions/objections that I am sure are running through your head…

- Does anybody really want to hear from a salesperson when times are tough?
- Is it still ethical to sell if people don't have as much money?
- Is it still ethical to sell if people have no money?
- If so, how should I get the attention of a buyer?
- Once you get over these you may start to think…
- So how do I sell when times are tough?
- Should I be lowering targets?
- How do I keep selling?
- Should I be on social media all day?
- Is it time to buy more data and GDPR compliant lists?
- What new trends are taking place?

IBM, Microsoft, Apple's iPod. Some of the greatest businesses and inventions have been launched during tough times. These giants took a risk, adapted and became massively successful, proving that it's possible to thrive during hard times.

There's a wonderful quote from Steve Jobs. "Everything around you was made up by people no smarter than you."

It gives you hope. People who are more successful than you are not smarter than you. Their success is contributed to having better strategies and habits.

In this book, I will share with you proven techniques, strategies and habits to help you and your business continue selling during tough times. I know this works because I'm using them with my clients to turn their businesses around.

Niraj Kapur
Buckinghamshire, England, UK
April 2020

1 SALES PROCESS

1.1 IS IT OKAY TO KEEP SELLING?

"Call us back in 6 months!"

"Everything Is On Hold!!"

"We have no money left!!!"

"Not you again!!!!"

You have no doubt experienced at least a couple of these. I know I have heard them all many times.

Like most business owners, I've seen much of my future earnings wiped out by cancellations and postponements.

It's been brutal. So what are the solutions…?

- I have adapted how I work. I've focused my coaching and time on supporting my clients who are enduring enormous change and haemorrhaging money as they too are experiencing clients cancelling.
- I've given my time to support charities who are receiving fewer donations than usual as people limit their spending to essentials in this period of uncertainty.
- I've offered guidance to friends who have lost jobs by improving their CV's, making massive improvements to their LinkedIn profile and recommending them to recruitment consultants.

Each aspect mentioned above is a form of selling, offering value and building trust and loyalty.

Sales is how you make money.

Sales is how to survive.

More sales is how you grow.

So yes, 100%, it's okay to keep selling.

However, sales has forever changed.

You can't just call clients and sell your product.

You certainly shouldn't call clients and say, "Hi, I'm just checking in."

Never cold call unless you have done a massive amount of prep on the person and company you're speaking to.

You can't simply recap the previous conversation and ask, "A you ready to go ahead?"

Here's what you need to do when times are tough.

This isn't just for recessions /downturns which are often cyclical, taking place every 8-12 years.

The 2001 recession is often cited to have been caused by the dotcom bubble bursting and stocks being massively overvalued. Few businesses survived. This was quickly followed by the 2008 recession caused by the carelessness and greed of certain banks.

Both those recessions hurt me, my friends and my family hard.

So this time I was ready.

Many forecast that we would expect a recession in 2019/2020 and of course, the great Brexit campaign certainly impacted business with declining revenue and some job cuts.

What nobody expected was that a virus would send shockwaves through businesses and our personal lives and cause a massive economic downturn.

So what do you need to do when times are tough?

1.2 LISTEN

When I give a keynote speech I like to ask a simple question…

Who are the founders of Virgin Records?

Invariably the response is "Richard Branson".

Look back at the question, the question I actually asked was "who are the FOUNDERS of Virgin Records?"

This is how bad people are at listening.

Virgin Records was founded by Richard Branson, Simon Draper, Tom Newman and Nik Powell.

Listening is more important than ever. Talk 30% of the time. The client should be talking for the rest of the time.

1.2.1 THIS IS WHAT LISTENING DOES

- Helps you uncover clients' needs
- Helps you understand their buying process
- Saves you time as you will be more aware if people are interested in buying and can make that decision
- Helps you understand who else is involved in the buying process
- Enables you to understand tone when they talk about previous suppliers
- Gains you more respect since you're not seen as another bad salesperson with their own agenda

Notice this is all about the client and has nothing to do with your product or your value proposition.

Make sure you acknowledge the information they are sharing with you with "I understand" and "I see" from time to time. Don't forget to recap what the client has said every few questions, you don't want to come across as a police officer interrogating a suspect.

This opener works well. "My clients are going through a tough time right now. I want to call and see how I can help you."

Some will tell you to "get lost." Some will say call back in 6 months.

You can still turn those around.

If a client tells you to get lost, ask them, "How can I help you if I get lost?" If a client says "call back in 6 months" you never agree.

Nobody makes a note in their diary that you will call them back in 6 months to sell to them. They will have forgotten all about you.

We will delve into this in more detail in the Overcoming Objections section.

When I deliver sales training, I always give people takeaways to implement. Sales training isn't just learning, it's implementing and this is where most people make mistakes.

You have to be held accountable for your actions. That way you learn, grow and improve.

1.3 ADJUST

There may be casualties in your company. Staff redundancies, hours being cut, team members needing to be placed on furlough and even firings.

That puts more pressure on you to perform.

Working from home sounds great. Initially!

The vision is less stress, saving money on travel, no wasting money on lattes and eating out, no back to back meetings all day and no office politics. However, there's a huge adjustment involved.

Working from home is tough, there are distractions at every turn and finding a balance, as well as motivation, can be difficult.

Here are my top tips to help you find your groove.

- Get dressed up like you're going for work. You achieve more sales in a smart shirt than tracksuit bottoms.
- Have a routine every day like you would in the office. Stick to it.
- If you have work colleagues, check in on them first thing in the morning and at the end of each day. It creates a sense of togetherness.
- If you work for yourself, it's tougher. Some people are happy working alone all day without anybody to bother them. For others, isolation can feel crippling. Getting a pet is wonderful. Video chats with your friends helps maintain a connection and going for a regular walk is proven to help improve mindset.
- Your eyes will hurt staring at a screen all day, especially if you have Zoom or Skype calls. Pick up the phone and call people instead of staring at social media apps, walk around and share what is going on outside your window. It encourages you to look beyond the four walls.

- If you have kids, they will distract you. Be grateful you're lucky enough to have kids. Many people can't have them or they're grown up and don't talk to them. There are times when you will get frustrated but discuss any important times they need to be aware of and let them be part of your release and breaks. My daughter is grown up and I hardly ever see her. I miss the days of hugs, goofy chats and sense of wonderment that children have.
- Do more charity work. Giving to others is a wonderful way to feel good. It fills your soul and gives your life meaning. Don't just give to charity when you have money. Give when you have no money. God is watching and will thank you in various ways.
- Unless you're spending 3-4 hours a day trapped in your car on the road, always choose to work in an office or dedicated work zone and look for interaction to help encourage you. In times of isolation, this may be limited to your household and colleagues you can connect with via technology. You grow faster and perform better around other positive people.

1.4 HAVE A PROPER WORKPLACE

With more people than ever working from home, you need to have a good work environment. Even when some of us go back to the office.

Keep it tidy – if you have mess everywhere your mind gets cluttered. Have everything in drawers or shelves, it will help unclutter your mind.

Be near a window. Light works better than dark. It's also excellent for your mental health and wellbeing. Natural light wards off depression, helps your sleep letter at night and gives you a Vitamin D boost exposure to sunlight. This is thought to increase the brain's release of a hormone called Serotonin which is associated with boosting mood and it also helps regulate the production of cortisol, our main stress hormone. This combination helps us feel calm, focused and in control.

Have a vision board. When you get rejected, it will inspire you. When you have a bad day, it makes you give more. When nobody replies to your messages, this gives you hope. It should consist of the people and things you love in life and the dreams you aspire to have.

My Vision board:

- Quotes by inspirational people like Gandhi. “Be the change you want to see in the world.”
- A letter from the government when my father received his MBE for his charity work.
- Ticket stubs from rock concerts I’m so lucky to attend.
- Pictures of my family who I love
- Reminders of things I must do like eat less sugar and “listen, learn, grow,” which are a vital part of my job and everyday life.

Figure 1 Vision Board.

1.5 OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

When times are tough, clients cancel their advertising and put all spending on hold. Sometimes they postpone it by several months.

In most cases, they cancel.

That’s what fear does, it causes you to often make bad decisions.

So how do you deal with this?

Empathise and ask great questions. Here’s what I teach my clients to say that has helped them save money.

"I understand it must be difficult for you right now. How are you coping?"

It's vital you say this. It shows understanding and doesn't make you a typical salesperson who only cares about protecting their revenue.

"If you cancel your business, how will your audience see you?"

This is such an important question to ask. You're not selling, you're trying to understand things from the client point of you.

The more a client speaks, the more you can help them.

If they want to cancel, think about better ways they can spend their money with you?

For example, if they planned to spend in print and want to cancel, why not suggest going to a digital platform if that has a bigger audience? How about you recommend a case study to showcase what they're good at or a webinar to help them collect new leads.

Will this work every time…? Of course not.

There are times the person you speak to has been ordered by the FD or CEO to do what they're told and nobody wants to argue with their superiors in a crisis. There are times when people won't listen to reason and will do what they want.

That's business.

If you have to cancel, ask the client if you can keep in touch with relevant articles, content and news. You promise not to spam them. Send them a link to your newsletter and make them fill in details for GDPR reasons. If they don't hear from you, they will forget all about you and give their business to somebody else.

1.5.1 I'M NOT THE DECISIONMAKER

The biggest mistake people make here is asking for the decisionmaker's details. Most people won't give that information out. You should have asked early in the buying process who else is involved. If you forget to ask this – which most people do – then it makes things more difficult.

This works well: "From the experience of dealing with companies like yours, there's xxx number of people involved in the buying process." XXX depends on the size of the company you deal with. In small businesses, it's 3-4 people. In large corporates, it's 8-12 people involved in the buying process. In microbusinesses, it's the business owner and usually a family member.

Don't let them pass on details to the decisionmaker, otherwise, you lose control. Nobody can sell your product internally with the same conviction and passion you can. Tell your contact it will save them time and money if we can also speak to the other decisionmakers. That way you're not going above their head. Connect with the other decisionmakers in the company on LinkedIn.

1.5.2 COST OBJECTIONS

This is the most common objection in negotiation. When someone tells you that you're too expensive, what's the most common mistake made?

You start selling again.

Do. Not. Do. This. Under. Any. Circumstance.

It makes you into a terrible cliché. It will also ensure you lose the deal or give up a massive discount. The more discount you give to a client, the less they value you and less they will spend with you.

Every discount is money taken from your pocket in commission.

What are the variables?

a. Referring to the competitor
   Client: "You're too expensive."
   You: "Compared to whom?"
   Client. "Your competitor."

   Do not criticise the competition and don't refer to them, since it gives them extra exposure. Simply talk about the client's needs and how you can help them in ways others can't.

b. Customer service shouldn't be a variable since everyone claims to have better customer service.
c. We're Happy The Way Things Are.

The answer I give here is tough and many people are scared to say it. I can only tell you that it does work!

"I understand you don't want to change. Most people don't like change. Neither did Toys R Us, or Kodak. When companies don't change, they fail and that leads to job losses. To make sure that doesn't happen, it's worth seeing how I can help, even if you don't use my service/product, a brief conversation will still benefit you since I will share insight affecting your industry right now."

1.5.3 WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

Confidence, knowing what your customer is looking for and how you can help solve their problem will get you through the door. The words you use can seriously impact your conversion or close without you realising. Research from Gong.io revealed which words actually decreased your close rates.

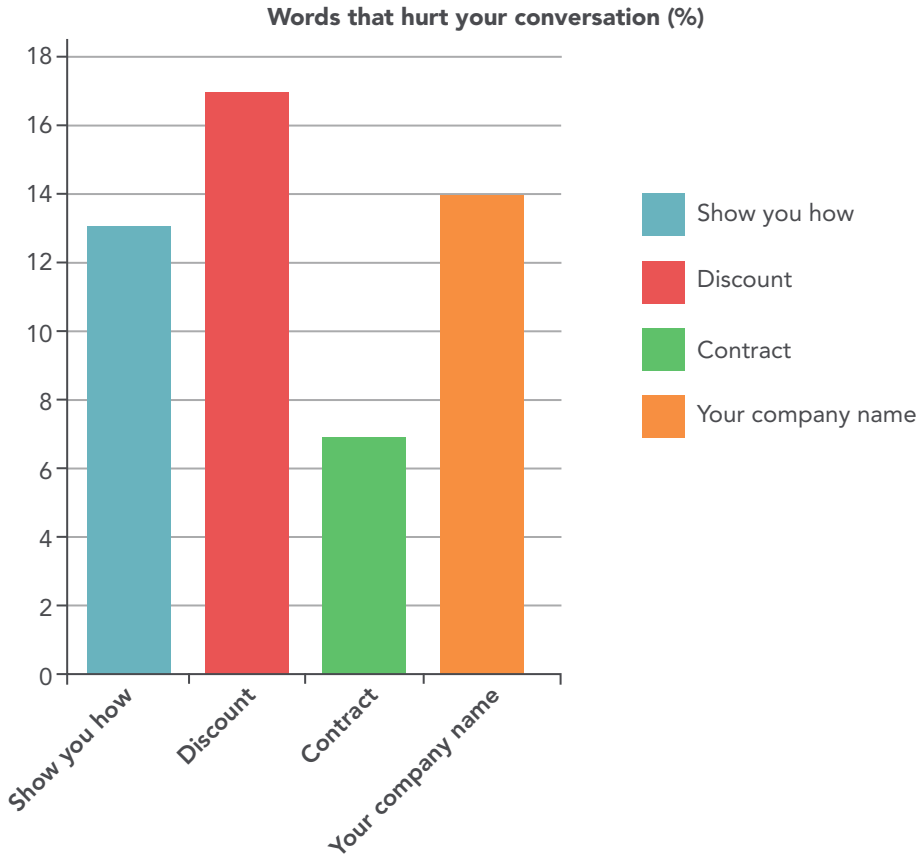


Figure 2 – Words that decrease your close rate.

"Show you how" – 13% drop in close rates when used more than 4 times in a call.
"Discount" – a massive 17% decrease in closing.
"Contract" – a scary word for many and drops the close rate by 7%.
Your company name – of course, you need to use it but do so sparingly, over 4 times in a call and your close rate takes a 14% hit.

When you discuss numbers make sure those numbers are relevant to the person in front of you. There is a compulsion to use large numbers but they become abstract and could harm your close rates.

1.6 MEASURING SUCCESS

This is often missed out when talking to clients.

What does success mean to them?

How do you know that they are happy working with you?

Do they want a certain number of business leads?

Do they need guaranteed revenue?

Will there be an internal survey so you know staff are happy with your product or service?

It's vital to know this, so when we talk to the client about future business, you have something to measure. It also makes you sound professional since most people don't do this.

Always know a client's outcome. Business is a two-way process. It's not about getting a signed contract. Both parties should always benefit.

1.7 CUSTOMERS FIRST / TESTIMONIALS

People buy people.

They always have and they always will. Nobody buys from someone then says, "I hate that person, but I will buy from them because they're excellent at selling." They buy because they trust you and think you're a decent person with a certain skillset.

Some of my clients love me. Some just like me. You don't have to be best friends with your client. They do have to know you're always acting in their best interest.

Don't think of making a sell. Think of building a relationship.

Too many people think short-term so they can earn their commission or bonus and get their target. Don't get me wrong, I've been there. It's so tempting. That extra bit of cash, that recognition, maybe even a pat on the back from your colleagues.

Always think long term and think of how the client will benefit. That's how you become successful. Do right by the client and they often tell their colleagues and clients about you. They will recommend you if you ask them.

Remember when times are tough, people are more scared and need more convincing. This is where the importance of a testimonial*** comes in. You should always be asking for testimonials. They're effective, more so during tough times.

People who say you've done great work make the business process easier and quicker. You're missing out on revenue without several testimonials on your website and LinkedIn recommendations.

Give the name of the person, their job title and what company they work for. Testimonials on your website also help search engines which gives a boost to your SEO. The best time to ask is not when you deliver what you promise – that's your job. It's when you overdeliver for the customer. I ask "What value did you get, what surprised you, what did you learn and would you recommend me?"

Remember, testimonials are part of your prove it documentation and as such, they should be relatable for that client. Don't give a microbusiness testimonial to a large corporate, that doesn't mean anything. Testimonials should go to the appropriate size of the company, ideally within a similar industry or showing how they overcome a similar issue to the client you are prospecting.

Figure 3 - Example of a testimonial if you want to impress a large corporate.

Figure 4 - Example of a testimonial that works for an SME.

Figure 5 - Example of a testimonial that works for microbusinesses.

1.8 PICK UP THE PHONE

Here's a common conversation I have when working in client's offices.

Me: "Why aren't your staff using the phone to call potential customers?"

Client: "That doesn't work."

Me: "How do you know?"

Client: "We tried it a few times one day and it didn't work."

An awkward pause follows.

If a business doesn't work in a day, do you fold? Never. You work out ways to make it better. You refine, polish, and improve.

Another type of conversation I have:

Me: "Why aren't your staff picking up the phone?"

Client: "Young people don't like speaking on the phone."

Me: "So what?"

Awkward pause.

Client: “I don’t want to make them unhappy.”

Me: “If your team want to progress in anything in life, they have to get out of their comfort zone.”

Client: “They will never do it.”

Me: “If it’s done properly they will. First of all, it’s not cold calling, it’s helping people. Second of all, you need to teach them why the phone is important. Finally, they need to have roleplay in a safe environment to make them comfortable.”

After 200 cold calling sessions and roleplays, the phone works. Here’s why:

Nobody says, “I wish I had more emails.”

Most people don’t read all their emails. Sales emails go to junk or a to-do list which usually gets deleted or read in 5 seconds and then deleted.

People stare at their screen all day. The phone is a welcome break.

People have their mobile with them 24/7. They shouldn’t but they do, so they’re more likely to answer a call than an email from someone they don’t know.

You can judge tone and interest quicker than email or social media.

People buy people they like and trust. I will never stop saying this.

The phone is still one of the best ways to communicate yet it is one of the most underutilised by salespeople across any industry. In fact, according to Hubspot Research’s survey of salespeople, salespeople spend just one-third of their time talking to prospects.

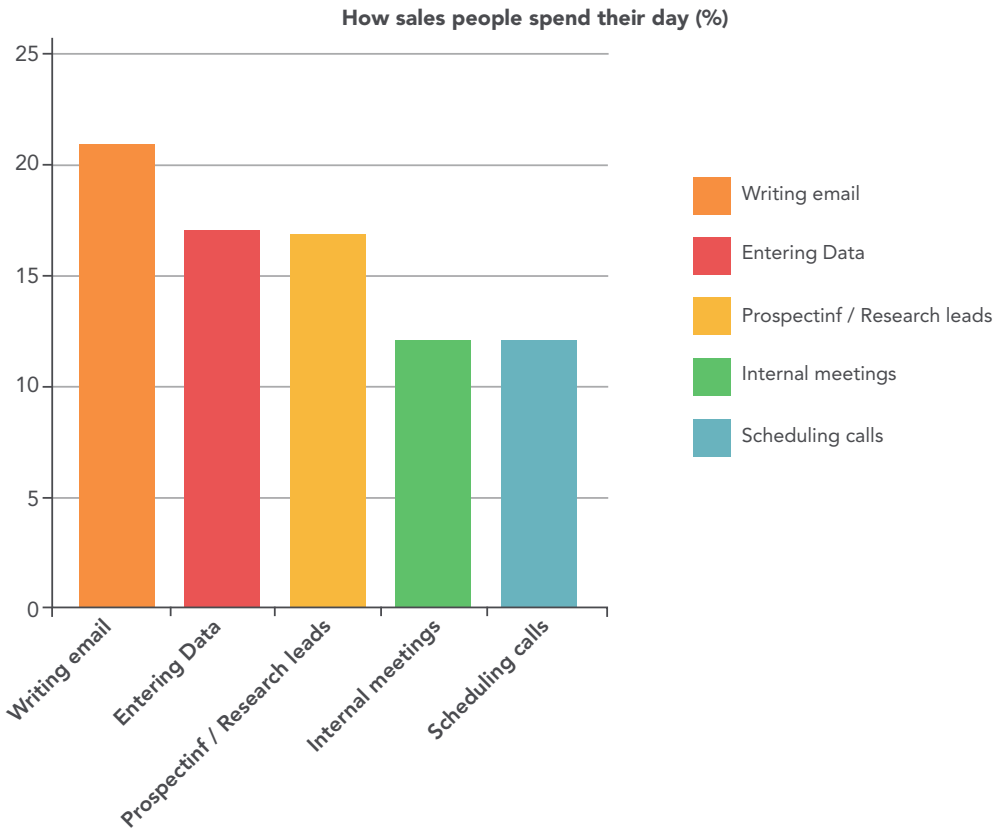


Figure 6 - How salespeople spend their day.

1.9 EMAIL

How To Increase Your Email Open Rates.

The last thing your clients need is more emails.

So make the ones you send count. 29% was my open rate last year on my exclusive Thursday newsletter where I share sales experiences, wins and mistakes.
https://everybodyworksinsales.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7da649148b16f2d6807a24844&id=77d547d47b

Self-improvement is vital so I wanted to get to 40%. Higher open rates equals more business conversations which equals more clients.

Since March 2020 it has been at 50%. What can you do to increase your email open rates?

- Strong Subject Line. This is the first thing people see. Too many subject lines are boring or have too many words. Keep it to 6 words or less. Say something that will benefit the person reading the email.
- No attachments. Never send an attachment unless someone has asked for it.
- 80% of emails are read on Smartphones. Short emails, punchy and to the point.
- Avoid certain words in your subject lines. “Free”, “Money” and “rịfcExclusive” end up in more spam boxes.
- People are busy first thing. Emails sent between 12-1 pm and 5-6 pm get a higher response rate.
- Talk about how you can help them.
- Don’t talk about how long you’ve been around or how many awards you’ve won. Nobody cares.

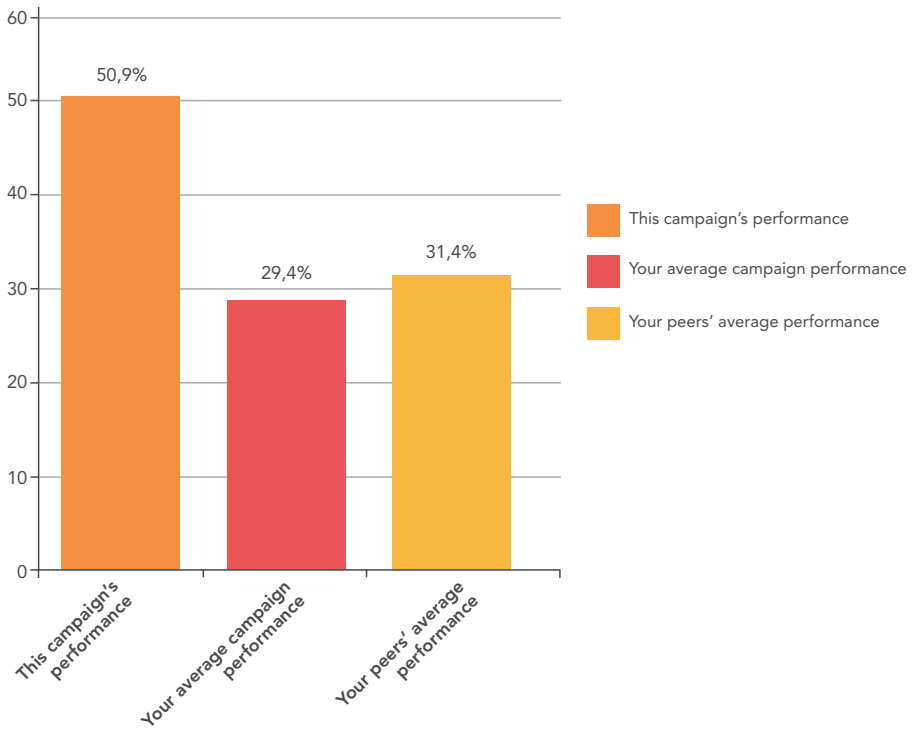


Figure 7 - My email marketing campaign performance.

1.10 THE MEETING

Face to face is the best way to do business. When times are tough, budgets are cut and you need to do this over Webex, Skype or Zoom. During the coronavirus outbreak, Zoom took over the world since we were all restricted to our homes.

Everybody has meetings and very few people know how to sell in meetings.

Usually what happens is this: You arrive at the meeting, have small talk, then sell your product through a series of endless Powerpoint slides and clichéd brochures.

This is not good enough.

When you arrive, you should have questions ready to ask or comments from a blog or news story that you read. Check out the awards in their reception. Don't talk about the weather, it's clichéd and doesn't make you stand out.

If you're home-based, you should still engage in small talk about the client regarding what you read about them. It impresses the client.

Always have a meeting agenda. Remind everyone what that is before you start and ask, "Is there anything else you need to add to that?"

Priorities change in business, so it's important to check the agenda is still relevant. The presenting is where everyone goes wrong.

- Don't start by talking about your business. That's what everybody else does. It's clichéd, unoriginal and boring.
- No ums or ahs or basically, honestly, or to be honest with you.
- People connect with stories, so use as much storytelling as possible.
- Make it funny, dramatic, insightful or shocking – whatever is best for your personality. The first 90 seconds and the last 90 seconds are the most important.
- Cut back on text and add more visuals.
- Most important, arrange a follow-up meeting before you leave the room.
- Allow time to pause every minute. Just for a second. It allows people to think. Barack Obama is a master at this.
- Political and religious beliefs comments are best avoided since it causes unnecessary tension
- Slow your speech down. Speaking too fast gives the impression you're lying or nervous.
- Make eye contact with the client more than the screen
- Every minute you present = 1 hour of practice and preparation.
- When you've written your speech, record it on your mobile and watch it back. It will make you squirm but that's how you improve.

There's a lot of crossover between presenting to a client and sales. That's because presenting is a vital sales skill and the one most people get wrong.

There are some extra points to note when meetings become virtual. Technology such as Zoom and Skype are fantastic and can connect us even when we cannot make a face to face meeting. It allows multiple people on the call and is easy to use.

You can even use it to share your screen and present, as well as allowing others to share hosting responsibility so you can collaborate with members of your team. You do need to be aware that your attendees can see everything that is going on if you are using video so make the background plain, conduct the meeting in a professional setting and avoid distractions.

Figure 8 - Presenting to my client Western Business through Zoom.

1.11 VIRTUAL NETWORKING

When you can't attend events due to budget cutbacks, if the networking is in another country or you're stuck at home due to the virus, you network virtually. Remember, people buy people they like and trust. Tell people how you help them.

You're not an accountant, you help people with their finances and save them money.

You don't sell insurance, you give people peace of mind.

You can now pair people up 1-2-1 on Zoom just like you can at a networking event.

a. Have a Great Opening Question.
   Stop asking, "What do you do?" It's unoriginal and people can get defensive. "What brought you to this event?" is more original.
b. Stop talking about yourself.
c. After a few questions, you can then ask, "So what do you do?"
   Remember, nobody cares about what you do. People only care about how you can help them.
d. Pay Attention.
   Have you ever spoken to someone who is not paying attention? Don't be that person. Show interest in others, it's amazing what can happen.
e. Follow-Up.
   45% of your business is in the follow-up. Always follow-up and don't sell straight away. Send a personalised LinkedIn Connection about how you enjoyed meeting them and mention 1 thing they said. If they're not on LinkedIn, follow-up on email.

Like presentation skills, networking is a great way to sell. In tough times, people will have limited or zero budget. So if you come across as helpful, ask great questions, listen, support, don't talk politics or religion or tell bad jokes, then clients are more likely to remember you when they have budget.

Kieren O'Connor, CEO of Growthstream and a brilliant salesperson, made virtual networking exciting during the COVID-19 pandemic by creating breakout rooms, virtual quizzes and exciting prizes.

Figure 9 - Making Zoom calls exciting.

1.12 LINKEDIN

1.12.1 THE WORLD'S MOST EFFECTIVE BUSINESS TO BUSINESS NETWORK

Microsoft paid $26bn for LinkedIn, that's how valuable it is.

90% of businesses I have worked with have a LinkedIn profile.

Most people have a boring LinkedIn profile and don't understand how to leverage it for sales.

When times are tough, LinkedIn will become even more effective for you. People are looking for content and advice and connections that can help them achieve more – this is where you come in.

1.12.2 THE BEST WAYS YOU CAN LEVERAGE LINKEDIN.

1. Support other clients.
   Every week, I do a post supporting one of my clients. I tag them so they can see it what I've done. Clients appreciate it when you go out of your way to support them.

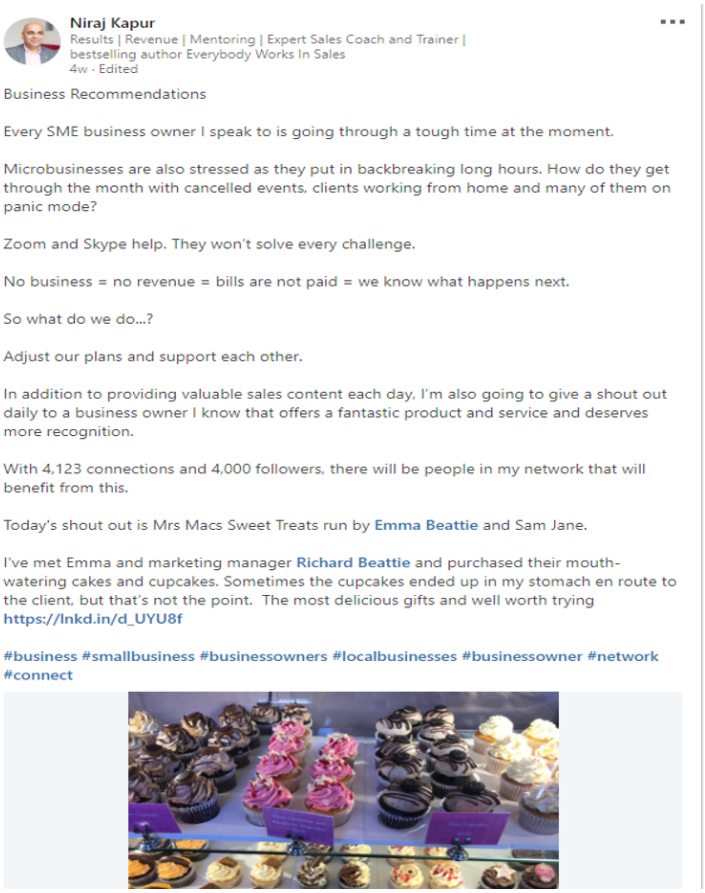


Figure 10 - Use LinkedIn to support your clients.

2. Make Your Stories Personal

   When my daughter went to Australia for 5 months, I was heartbroken. She's the only family I have in England. I wrote a business post about something personal that happened.

   So many people responded and sent me lovely private messages. I had hundreds of new business people connect with me and, to my surprise, I won new business out of it. It became the most popular post I ever did at that point.

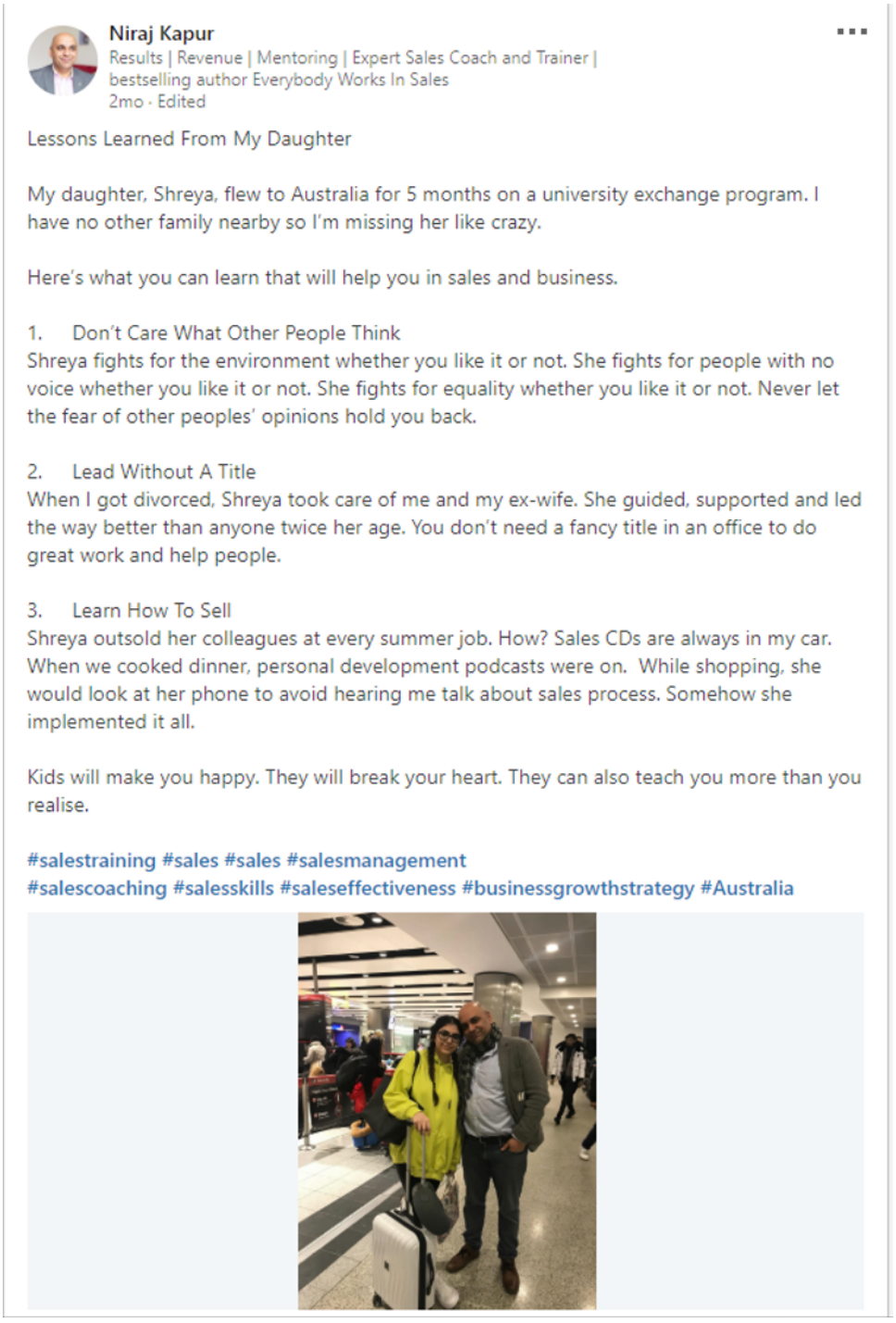


Figure 11 - Show your human side through stories.

3. Give Massive Value

   It's not about you, it's about helping others. What can you talk about that people will benefit from? This is another personal story, however, it gives massive value to people.

   NB People remember stories 10 times more than they remember facts.

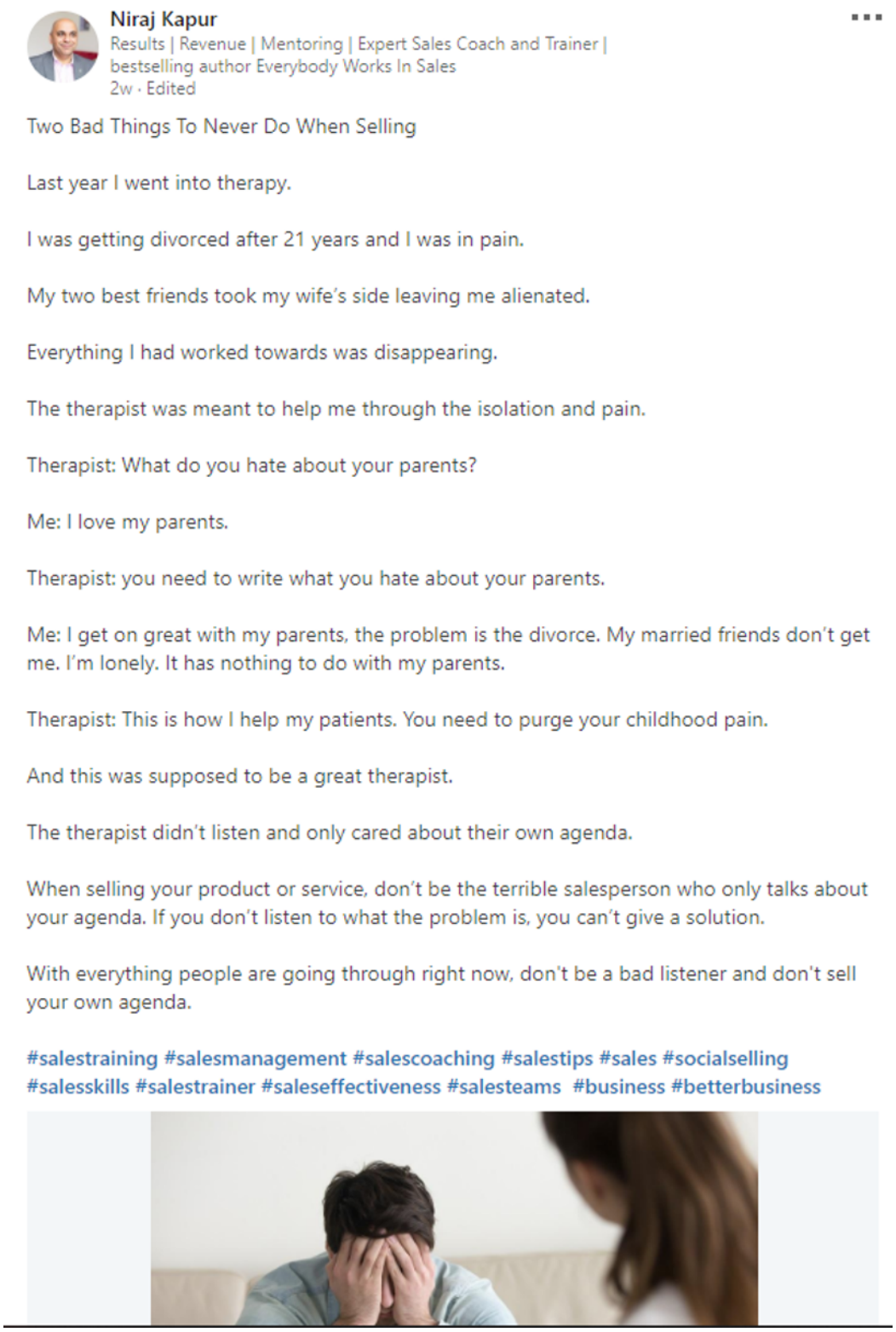


Figure 12 - Give value in your posts and articles.

4. Post or Article?
   Articles used to be a great way to communicate. Now people are so busy, articles are becoming less popular since they take 5-7 minutes to read. You only get 1,300 words for a post and it takes 2-3 minutes to read. You don't need to write 1,300 words. Sometimes less is more. Everything I have shown so far is a post.
5. Send personal connection requests
   When you click on the "connect" button, you have the option of a standard or personal message. Avoid the standard message, it's impersonal "Hi, I'd like to join your LinkedIn network." I ignore many of these messages, especially if they have no photo on their profile.

- Always use someone's name in a connection, just like you would in an email.
- Let them know why you're contacting them – because you like their content, because you admire them, because you work in the same industry, because you have mutual connections, there are so many reasons.
- Stand out from the crowd. Be personal and give reasons.

6. Send professional messages
   I accepted an invite from a CEO. I thanked him and asked why he wanted to connect. Instead of talking about the value of his business or even replying to my question, he went into a sales pitch. It went on and on and didn't seem to end. It was so bad I blocked him.
   Sell like you're interested in the client. Look at the person's LinkedIn profile and find something in common. Study their website, blogs and case studies. That's real selling. Customers first. This has never been more true. Mass-produced messages like this do more damage than good.

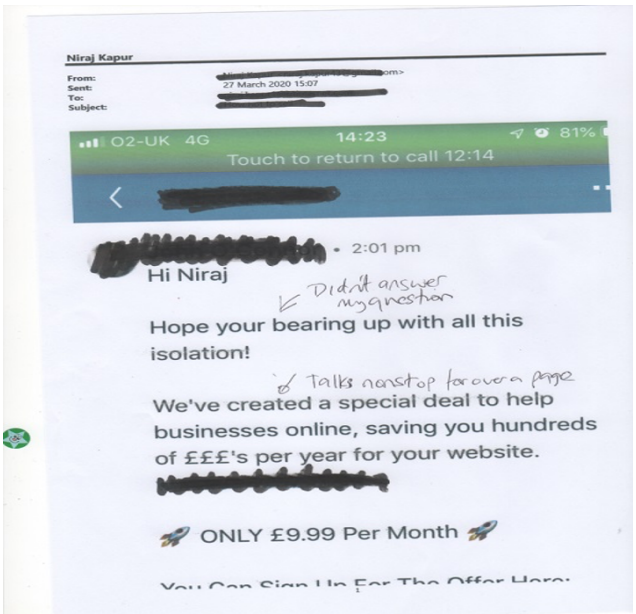


Figure 13 – Be professional in your LinkedIn communications.

7. Have an amazing profile
   A professional photograph wearing business clothes. No selfies, holiday photos or nights out in the pub. Use the rectangular LinkedIn header, it's free.
   Don't just give your job title like most people. Tell people what you do. I help businesses achieve results, revenue and mentoring so these are the first words people see. Then I give my job title.
   Have your mobile number in the Contact info and header if you want people to contact you.

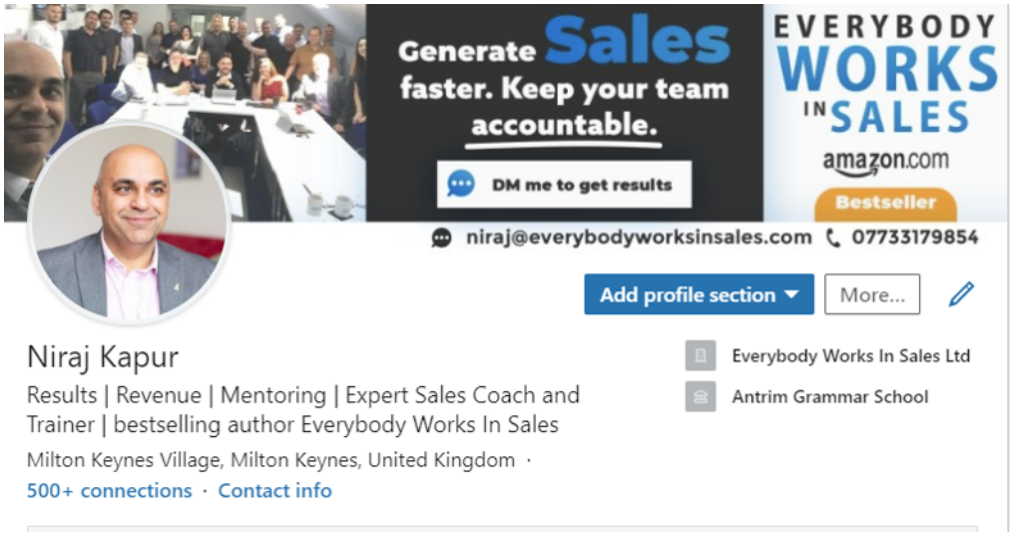


Figure 14 - Make the most of your LinkedIn cover photo.

8. About Me Section
   Think of LinkedIn as your own website. In many cases, people will look at your profile before or instead of your website.
   Write down 3-5 things that you do to help people and use that in your profile
   You can add photos and website url's. I have client testimonials and pictures of me speaking at conferences about sales. You should have pictures of your happy clients, winning awards or your product in action.
9. Testimonials
   I spoke earlier about the importance of testimonials. All the testimonials on the "About Me" section are taken from the recommendation section of my LinkedIn profile. Place this testimonial in a professional image with your company logo.
10. Basic or Premium
    With premium, you can see 30 days' worth of people that have viewed your profile. You can send messages directly. Otherwise, there's not much of a benefit. Sales Navigator gives phone numbers as well and details of certain people at the company. I've invested in premium and Sales Navigator for 12 months each and it didn't make any difference to my success, so I continue to use the free version of LinkedIn.

1.13 SOCIAL SELLING

Many people use social selling to hide behind their desk and avoid important conversations. LinkedIn is part of social selling. In consumer-driven businesses, Instagram and Facebook are more important.

Sales is multi-platform.

You don't listen to one kind of singer your whole life, you will get bored. You have different singers and bands, sometimes different genres.

In sales, you don't just use LinkedIn.

The telephone matters, so you need to pick it up and dial.

So does writing effective punchy emails.

So does face to face meetings or virtual meetings.

Don't forget the importance of a great letter. People get too much junk mail in the post and a beautifully handwritten or typed letter always stands out.

Social Selling is used to compliment normal selling, not replace it.

1.14 CLOSING THE SALE

Avoid these common mistakes people make when finalising a deal.

- Not following up. 45% of your business is in the follow-up. People are busy and won't always get back to you. Take initiative and chase them.
- Discounting. It devalues you and your product. It also attracts the wrong clients.
- Asking, "Are you ready?" Always recap the client's needs and remind them of the benefits of working with you, then ask "Are you ready to work together?"
- Negotiation. When you mention price, stay quiet for 3-5 seconds. The pause is one of the most important negotiation tools and rarely used. It gives the client time to think. It also makes you look smart and calm under pressure.
- Talking too much. Less is more.
- Business doesn't finish when the deal is signed. It's where business starts.

- Delivering what is expected and nothing more. Always give more than what you're paid for in everything you do. Give extra value, more time and remember the client's birthdays. Most people don't do this in business. The ones that do always stand out and win more business.
- Don't communicate one way. If you call and they stop answering, try LinkedIn messenger. If this doesn't work, write a letter. Don't just one form of communication.
- Thinking short term. It's tempting to think short term when you have a monthly target to hit. I've made that mistake many times. Don't do it. Think long term. Think about how the client will get maximum value.

1.15 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The deal doesn't end with the signed contract.

It's where the deal begins.

Most people only call a client when the business is about to end. This is not good enough.

If a deal lasts 12 months, you should contact the client every quarter. How is the product/service working? Any challenges? What do you like best about the product? How can I help you more?

So many people miss out by not taking care of their clients or servicing them. The biggest surprise is car salespeople.

A car is the biggest investment you make outside a house. I've been buying cars for 30 years and for 25 of those years, no car company called me to see if I enjoyed the car.

Was I comfortable?

Did it meet my standards?

Would I be interested in driving the new model for free?

Audi was the first to do this for me and now I not only buy my cars from them, I recommended them to my father and close friends. This has resulted in £100,000 of additional sales for Audi. I've spent another £2,000 on servicing and tyres. I don't mind paying more money to them since they know my name and take great care of me. That's over £100,000 as a direct result of providing excellent customer care.

Now and again, a customer will complain.

How you deal with this matters massively.

What many people do is to default to advising the client to read the standard terms and conditions.

Put these aside for a moment.

Why is the person complaining?

And the big question: Was it your fault?

If so, there are two things you need to do.

1. Sort it out quickly.
2. Learn from the mistake and make sure it never happens again

The longer a complaint drags on, the more irritable the customer gets. In today's social media world, an upset customer will complain on social media and hundreds, often thousands, of people will see it. This is damaging. So limit that by letting them know you are sorry they are complaining, you will make it a priority and will come back to them within 24 hours.

Is the customer always right?

Absolutely not.

I remember when my first client cancelled sales coaching. I asked why and she wouldn't say. I stayed silent for 5 seconds and she admitted she was getting a divorce. Having gone through that myself, I know the pain and expense involved. She hadn't given me 30 days' notice to cancel… yet I still refunded her.

In addition, every month I kept sending her valuable content, useful articles, ways she could keep learning without paying me to coach. It was the right thing to do. 18 months later, her divorce was over and she came back to me as a client because I took care of her. She also told her friends about me and now two of them are clients. Always do the right thing and take care of people

1.16 PIVOT

The last two weeks of March 2020 were a massive change. They were uncomfortable and adapting to a new way of life. It was all about survival and helping others.

After a few weeks of fighting to hold onto your business and dealing with the shock, you need to pivot.

Pivot is changing direction to get to your dreams. This involves building and adapting.

Building

Many of the things we don't pay attention to because of our busy lives, now need massive attention.

Most websites can be improved. Having worked with e-commerce, marketing directors and website designers for over 20 years, here's what your website needs to have more sales success.

a. A welcome video on the homepage. Highly personal. Keep it 60-90 seconds.
b. Testimonials on the home page.
c. Easy to find contact details.
d. How you help people.
e. Case studies.
f. Not too much text.
g. A giveaway. This can be a PDF or video series or case study. By doing this, you capture the client's email address with their permission and you now have a lead you can market to.

That's it. Keep it simple. Websites don't have to be complicated.

Improve your brochures

The rules here are similar to that on your website. Always use high-quality paper if you have a high-quality product.

Shoot video

Video is seen 6 times more than written content. Upload videos to Youtube, LinkedIn and other social media platforms. If you have money, hire a professional cameraperson. If not, spend £200-£300 on Amazon getting good quality lights and a microphone.

Learning more about sales

> Every day spend 30 minutes learning about sales. The more you know, the more you grow. There's a recommended reading list on the homepage of www.everybodyworksinsales.com

Keep helping others

> When your clients are in trouble, don't abandon them. If they can't afford to pay for your services, and they've been a great client before and always paid their bills on time, decide to keep helping them.

Will some clients take advantage of your good nature? Of course, they will.

Other clients will appreciate you, tell their customers about you and hire you when times get better.

The more people you help, the less you have to sell. Surely that's good news for everyone.

Adapting

I lost 80% of my earnings when times got tough – conferences I was due to speak at were cancelled. The head of sales of my biggest client being put on furlough and the sales director I worked with for a year lost his job.

You need to rebalance, reset, grow and improve.

If I can't deliver sales training to companies, how else can I give value?

The great Brian Tracy, one of the founding fathers of personal development, recommends that when you get stuck you should create a top 20 list. This is a great challenge.

Write down 20 solutions to your problem.

The first 5-6 ideas are easy.

After that, it's HARD work. Your best ideas will often appear towards the end. Here's what I did that generated success.

- I've formed a collaboration with a fellow sales leader Keith Rozelle and we're launching a podcast specialising in Sales Training and Wellbeing with special guests each week to talk about wellbeing.
- My second book, The Easy Guide To Sales For Business Owners, was moved forward from June to March so I could earn royalties sooner. It reached number 33 in the Amazon charts and stayed there for 14 days.
- I hired a designer to improve my website; better colours, less text, less mess and more clear.
- I took part in weekly virtual networking events to meet more potential clients.
- It's not the same as being in a client's office, shaking hands and delivering training with a flipchart, however, this is all diverse and a pretty good back-up plan.

I became a sales trainer because I wanted to raise the standards of sales because they're too low. I can still get the chance to educate people through books, eBooks, podcasts and LinkedIn and I'm still able to pay the bills.

What can you do to adapt to your environment?

2 HEALTH

**** It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.

2.1 MENTAL HEALTH

***** 39% of employees have mental health symptoms and the numbers continue to rise. 62% of managers put their organisation above staff wellbeing. 70% of managers said there are barriers to them providing mental health support

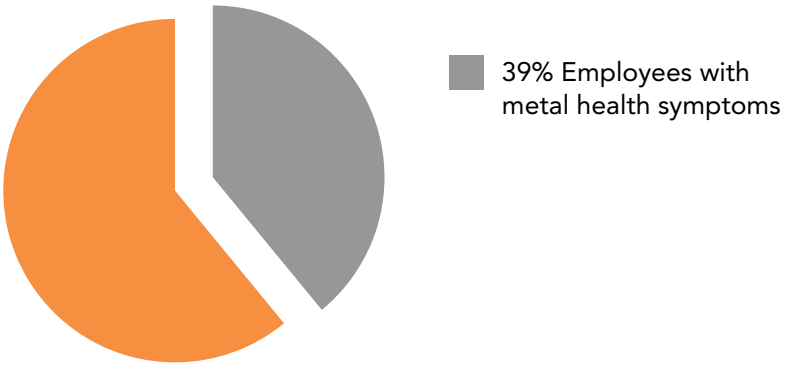


Figure 15 - Mental health in the workplace.

The stats are staggering. So what are the solutions?

2.1.1 TAKE 100% RESPONSIBILITY

If your boss won't help you, take matters into your own hands.

Read the Adapt page again. So much of what we do is based on habits. That's why you need to read and re-read this eBook and ensure you put this into practice.

Don't blame the government for being useless even if you truly 100% believe they are useless.

2.1.2 MEDITATE EVERY DAY

For many, the first thing in the morning is best if you have to travel to work. If you work from home, meditating after lunch or late afternoon for 30 minutes works best.

2.1.3 APPS

Use free apps like Calm or Headspace. They will help you relax and give you more peace of mind.

2.1.4 FLOWERS

****** Those exposed to flowers experienced lower blood pressure and heart rate, lower ratings of pain, anxiety and fatigue, and more positive feelings.

2.1.5 LIGHT

Work near a window – this was a gamechanger for me. I was struggling in a dark office. Once I got a window with light, I performed better. I was less depressed, had more energy, slept better and had a good old boost of Vitamin D in the process.

2.1.6 NO COMPLAINING FOR 30 DAYS

Being positive is vital. Be grateful for everything you have several times day. I rarely start the day in a bad mood. I thank God for a good night's sleep; for my lovely comfortable bed; for hot water when I shower. For the delicious coffee to start my day and all the fruits and local honey in my porridge; for the heating in my house. You start the day in gratitude, it sets you up for a better day with less stress.

2.1.7 UPGRADE YOUR FRIENDS

You can't change your family, you can change your friends and limit your family if they are a negative influence. Avoid complainers and stay away from gossip. It sucks up your positive energy and takes you away from your dreams. And most of all...

2.1.8 AVOID THE NEWS

It was depressing yesterday, it was depressing today and it will be depressing tomorrow. You will save 2-4 hours a week not reading papers or gossip, that's extra time for your work or family.

2.1.9 DISCIPLINE

I've delivered sales training to more than 150 companies. When I walk into their offices, I always arrive 30 minutes early. I have a coffee and observe behaviour.

Those who are unsuccessful and unhappy look at their mobile every 8 minutes, checking texts and social media notifications.

Those who are happy may check their phone quickly on the hour, but usually over lunch. They don't let their phone control them.

Increased mobile use is shown to lead to depression. My advice is to keep it on Airplane mode or turn it off at least twice a day. Your business won't end if you miss a phone call or don't reply immediately to a text.

2.1.10 GOAL SETTING

Every day write down 5 things you want to achieve. Write down your toughest goal first because as the day goes on, your discipline wears off. It's hard to stay motivated. Tick off your goals as you go along, it will give you a sense of progress.

When you're feeling demotivated, take a break and look at your vision board again.

2.1.11 SLEEP

This is boring but highly effective.

- No TV, music or staring at your phone one hour before bed.
- Chamomile tea works better.
- No caffeine after 3pm.
- Before you go to bed write in a gratitude journal about everything wonderful that has happened to you.
- Invest in an expensive mattress. I remember arguing with my wife about spending £2,000 on a mattress. It was the best investment we ever made along with comfortable pillows since I get 8 hours a night sleep and wake up fresh.
- Bad sleep causes mental health problems from depression, eating badly and puts you in a terrible mood all day.

2.2 PHYSICAL HEALTH

There's a lot of crossover between physical and mental health.

2.2.1 EXERCISE EVERY DAY

Weights at the gym is great, however as you hit your late forties, walking, cycling, jogging or swimming for 30 minutes – 60 minutes a day also has massive health benefits. Yoga, Pilates, dance, it all contributes to better physical health and therefore better mental health.

Most of my clients prefer exercising before work. For many people, exercising while the kids are at school is better. For some late at night works better. Although the morning is considered the best time to work out, some exercise is better than no exercise.

2.2.2 NUTRITION

Doctors tell you to eat less red meat and exercise 3 times a day. That's not enough. Bread, carbs and sugar will slow you down.

If food tastes terrible, it's usually good for you like berries, kale, apples and carrots.

If food tastes amazing, it's usually bad for you like fries, cakes, cookies, white bread. Treat yourself now and again. Eat this food every day, it slows you down, makes you lethargic and limits your potential.

Addictions

Excessive smoking, heavy drinking and drug use will mess with your head and body. Do everything in limitation and avoid drugs.

CBD Oil

This is the legal form of marijuana without the high. It's used by patients with arthritis to help them deal with pain. Also ideal for panic attacks. I take this every day to help me stay calm. At £100 a bottle, it's expensive but worth it.

Medicine

Prescription medicine isn't the solution. The diet business is worth billions. Diets don't work, I know because I've tried them all.

Here's something most dietitians and doctors never tell you:

Everybody's body is different and you have to see what works for you.

Find a herbal doctor. Go vegan for a month. Give up carbs. Try Keto. Fast once a week with water only. For years I was ill because I had 3 glasses of milk a day. Now I drink non-diary and have cut back on cheese, my health is so much better.

The best of all is water. It's free. Drink it all day long. Most people don't drink enough water.

2.3 SOUL

The Secret to Living is Giving.

Like most people, my attitude to charity was simple. "I'll give when I have money." If that's your attitude, you will never have money.

When you help others, you feel good inside. It's good for karma, your soul, your spirit, call it what you like.

The Egyptians referred to a process called "tithing" where you give away 10% of everything you have to others. It's a massive amount, so maybe start with 5%. You will feel amazing and happy. Then it becomes 6%. I've been giving away 10% of everything for many years and it's one of the reasons I'm such a happy person.

It's not just money that matters.

Volunteer at your local shelter or hospital. If you have skills such as sales, design, copywriting, marketing or business, charities always appreciate your help.

When you give, it encourages your children to give. Your friends and family can get inspired and they give. It has a beautiful knock-on effect.

For many years my father wasn't happy. Working long hours, not sleeping enough and getting frustrated by the world. Now he's the happiest person I know. When I asked him why he told me, "The day you start living for others, is the day you find happiness." My father has been a full-time philanthropist for 5 years since retiring and spends time helping charities in Northern Ireland, where he lives with mum, and in India where he was born.

******* We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.

Figure 16 - My father receiving an MBE from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace in 2014 for his dedication as a doctor and his charity work.

3 FINAL WRAP UP

3.1 YOUR STAFF

You will always make more sales if you can get your staff to sell effectively.

During tough times, your staff are like your clients. They're scared and need reassurance.

Don't tell them to get on with it.

This is where you must lead from the front, support and educate them.

If it's just you running your own business and you have no staff and you never plan to grow your business, you can skip the next 2 pages.

If you have at least one member of staff who sells, then please read this.

3.1.1 DAILY TEAM MEETINGS

- Have daily team meetings with your staff to see what they achieved yesterday, what challenges they're having and what their plans are today. The group meetings should last 15-30 minutes depending on the size of the team and how big the challenges are.
- Empower your team with sales knowledge. They need to have 15-30 minutes set aside every day for learning more about how to sell.
- Lead by example. Get on the phone and bring revenue in. Don't be one of these bosses who says, "Do as I say, not as I do."
- Take part in staff conference calls and Zoom calls and give coaching feedback afterwards.
- Do not speak nonstop in their calls otherwise they won't learn. Help and give guidance, don't control the process.
- Praise team members who have done numbers.
- Never publicly criticise in front of everyone. Do it privately.
- When criticising, criticise the behaviour, not the person.

3.1.2 HOW TO COACH YOUR STAFF IN PHONE CALLS?

- Every week, you should listen to one of their phone calls.
- Only the first 5 minutes.
- Ask them what went well. Don't ask them how they think it went. As humans, we automatically start criticising ourselves.
- When they feel good about what they've done, ask, "What could you have improved?"
- Make sure they take notes and a week later, when you listen to their next call, see how they have improved.
- If you haven't got time to hear all your staff's calls, then talk to a coach like me who does this every week.
- The most important thing is that they make progress and get better. You will know this from an increased pipeline and more deals won.

3.1.3 HOW TO COACH YOUR STAFF IN 1-2-1 / VIRTUAL MEETINGS?

- Every Monday, you need 30 minutes per person for 1-2-1s.
- Don't start talking business. Spend 5 minutes asking them how they're doing. People will always work harder for bosses who have their best interests at heart.
- Know the names of their family and always celebrate their birthdays with cake.
- This will empower them to do better and achieve more.
- If you haven't got time to join in your staff's meetings, then talk to a coach like me who can help you prioritise what needs working on to ensure you are building a strong and confident team.
- Don't criticise. Ask them, "How can you do 1% more this week?"

Afterthought

Although the salary is important, it's never the most important thing. Staff care more about progress, culture and being appreciated that an extra 3-5% in their salary.

Jack Welch, the legendary boss of General Motors, widely regarded as one of the finest CEOs of all time, got rid of annual appraisals.

Spending time with your staff once a year is ineffective and a waste of time.

You need to work with them every week – or have someone you trust working with them every week.

All the top sales performers have coaches working with them.

They never stop learning.

The best example is the world's top sportspeople. They have nutrition coaches, mindset coaching, physical coaches.

You want your staff to be the best of the best. Not people who come to work to get rent paid and have holidays. Not people who get by. People who can aspire to big things for you.

3.2 YOUR CLIENTS

3.2.1 YOUR EXISTING CLIENTS

This is where your biggest revenue exists. When times are difficult they will make cutbacks on spending and it can affect you. Your competitors will be offering cheaper deals. Your contact may lose their jobs or go and work elsewhere and you have to start over. This can be painful and time-consuming. So when you do business with a client, don't just call them for rebooking.

Remember their birthdays. Share valuable content. Take them out for lunch or dinner every year. Recommend them to other businesses. Share their content on social media.

Always make sure you have more than 1 contact at a business. There are often 3-4 people involved in a decision in small business and 8-12 people in a large business.

I've been buying breakdown cover from the AA for almost 30 years now. They take care of me, are on time and friendly. That's it. It's so simple. As a result, I recommend a lot of my friends to them. Over the years I've also bought home insurance and other products they had to offer. When you take care of a client, you can upsell and build a relationship for life.

3.2.2 YOUR FORMER CLIENTS

There's untapped potential with clients who used to do business with you. People stop doing business for a variety of reasons. They don't feel loved. You didn't take care of them the way they expected. Your customer service was not good enough. The competitor did a better job.

It doesn't mean you never speak to them again.

- People leave businesses.
- You change and grow.
- Businesses evolve.
- Businesses launch new products.
- Businesses need to rebrand.

So when you call a client a year later, asking how you can help them achieve their results, some will hang up immediately. Others will "keep you on their books" which is the same as saying no. Some will engage in a new business discussion. It's a chance to show you're a better company who can offer more value and help them achieve their goals.

If it's been a few years, they may not be there anymore. Their email address may still be active, but it may be that nobody is checking it. That's why you need to pick up the phone. Treat that client like you would any client. Research the website. See their LinkedIn profile. What have they done since you last spoke to them? Use that as a starting point.

******** Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.

3.2.3 YOUR FUTURE CLIENTS

There was a famous saying in sales in the 1980s and 1990s. ABC. Always Be Closing.

Now Always Be Caring is more relevant and should take part in every conversation.

I would also add ABP. Always Be Prospecting. You can't rely on your existing clients to ensure you hit target every year. By nature, you will lose at least 20% every year to restructure, buyouts, change of management, reduced budget, budget invested elsewhere, company change in direction.

Chasing new business is vital to every business. People may not buy from you now. If you do a great job, some of them will consider you when the time is right.

Most people avoid prospecting when times are tough, then complain they don't get what they want. Don't be one of those people. Everyone needs new business.

Remember, sales is the foundation of your business.

Without sales, there is no business.

Don't let fear or shyness or not wanting to be seen as pushy hold you back from generating revenue. I never tell anyone to be forceful or pushy. I do recommend everyone learns how to sell better because there are no limits to what you can achieve.

With sales

- You meet new people you never would normally talk to
- You improve communication skills
- You learn resilience
- You learn to understand people better
- You help businesses grow – your own business, the business you work for
- You help clients grow their business
- You make a difference
- You contribute to the economy

Tenacity

This is so obvious, yet needs to be mentioned. When you're finished work and you want to go home, contact one more client. When you've had a bad day and want to give up, look at your vision board and contact one more. If you have called a client several times and they're not around, give it one more try.

Resilience matters. Business rarely drops in your lap. You have to go out there and fight for it.

3.3 QUESTIONS

These are the questions I asked at the beginning of the book. Many have been answered throughout. Just to recap:

Does anybody really want to hear from a salesperson when times are tough?
Yes.

Is it still ethical to sell if people don't have as much money?
Yes.

Is it still ethical to sell if people have no money?
Yes.

If so, how should I get the attention of a buyer?
See LinkedIn and Telephone section.

So how do I sell when times are tough?
Read the whole ebook.

Should I be lowering targets?
Yes, but don't lower your standards.

How do I keep selling?
Value, value and more value.

Should I be on social media all day?
Don't hide behind social selling.

Is it time to buy more data and GDPR compliant lists?
I've purchased data for years from different companies. I have yet to buy data that is effective. Most companies are sloppy at updating their systems. After all, contacting companies to see who works there costs time and money. The best data to collect is your own. Have a launch. Invite people to your stand at an event. Give away a valuable PDF or gift on your website in exchange for an email address. That is the best data to have. Your data.

What new trends are taking place?
Every talk I give in public, people are concerned about being replaced by robots, AI and Automation. It's been 3 years since this has been raised and I still don't know anyone who has been replaced by a robot or AI. Both are progressing slower than expected, especially AI.

People buy people they like and trust.
As long as you are someone who takes care of your clients, asks great questions, brings in money and works as a team player, your job will be more secure than most people.

What silver bullets do I have for sales?
There are no shortcuts. If something seems too good to be true, it usually it. Like those adverts promising you can lose weight by eating all you want – or making you a millionaire if you attend their course.

Unfortunately, I've been foolish enough in the past to buy these courses and attend events promising me wealth beyond my wildest dreams. It never happened for me or 99% of the delegates.

Integrity

My father always says "there's no such thing as 99% integrity."

When times are hard, it's easy to lie to your client. It's easy to make false promises. What's easy isn't always right.

Treat people with the same respect and the same way you want to be treated.

Treat every client like a relationship, not a transaction.

The great Brian Tracey said, "Imagine everyone has a sign around their neck saying, 'Make Me Feel Important'."

That what sales is all about.

It's not about 10 ways to close a client.

It's not about having an answer to everything.

It's not about 100% win rates because that's impossible and unrealistic.

Always be the first to want to learn more. Be humble in your journey. Treat others with respect. Implement everything you've learned here and you won't go far wrong.

3.4 TAKING ACTION

So now over to you. You have already invested in this book so you should now take control and start implementing the above.

Remember – taking action achieves results.

Make a list of the Top 5 things you will do immediately from reading this ebook.

Stick them on the wall in front of you, recite them in the mirror every morning – whatever works for you.

REFERENCE

*** According to Nielsen, 92% of people will trust a testimonial from a peer and 72% trust a testimonial from a stranger.

**** Mahatma Gandhi

***** Business In The Community

****** The American Society for Horticulture Science

******* Winston Churchill

******** Bill Gates