

## Tilden & Associates

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### Archived Newsletter Articles 1997 - 2011

Shortly after I launched my consulting practice featuring *SST: Successful Selling to Type*, I began writing a newsletter. This would be 1997. The first version was a hard copy that we mailed to clients and prospects and was titled, *SST Newsletter*. The articles principally dealt with applying personality type principles to selling.

The template we used called for a feature article and two smaller ones. Thus, there are more articles during this period. Granted, some are rather brief, not unlike their titles as in “Bob!” and “Duh”.

By 2001, electronic newsletters won favor with both readers and those who prepared them. Digital versions conserved paper, saved postage and were easy to read online. Further, it was simple to refer clients or prospects to the TildenSST web site and a particular newsletter article.

Ten years after our first electronic newsletter, 2011, we made the conversion to a blog. While SST is still a core offering, our practice has become quite diverse with executive coaching, leadership development and selling skills courses that range from prospecting to negotiations. Accordingly, the title of the blog is *Dr. Tilden’s Sales Prescription*.

As the TildenSST web site undergoes its sixth update, we were confronted with the question of what to do with fourteen years of archived newsletters? Our answer is to assemble all of the newsletters in a file with titles and dates itemized in a table of contents that follows.

Unless noted, the articles are authored by me. PfP partner Harry Koolen has contributed several as has Matthijs van der Want, an executive coach in Belgium, and Kestutis Cvetkovas, managing partner of Versse, a firm certified in SST.

Early articles, like the *World Isn’t Flat* (1997) introduced SST as alternative to old school manipulative selling tactics. You will also find some of what NPR’s Car Talk brothers call “shameless self-promotion” represented by *Speaking of Return on Investment* and *Sighted Squirrels Find More Nuts* (1998).

One long time reader has referred to me as a “myth buster”. After all, I am the author of the book *Rainmakers, Closers & Other Sales Myths* (2007). This attitude is reflected in *Silver Bullets* (1998); *Dangling Carrots* (1998); *Introversion & Selling* (2000); *Unmasking the Multi -tasking Myth* (2007); and *Popular Sales Method Gets it Half Right* (2008).

You will find several attempts at humor. They succeeded, at least with me, upon re-reading them. You may find a laugh or two in *Preparing Holiday Turkeys* (1998); *What if Willie Loman, Blake & Lou Gehrig Had Power Point* (1999); *Selling to Santa Claus* (2002); *New Rules* (2005); and *Jack Nicholson Speaks up for Salespeople* (2009).

Several articles apply SST and personality principles to national issues like *Presidential Politics* (2001, 2004 & 2008); *Spy Plane Standoff* (2001); *BATNAs & US Iraq Negotiations* (2004); *Z Problem Solving and the US Financial Crisis* (2008); and *No Drama Obama & SST Balance* (2010).

The remainder of the articles cover topics like stress, the importance of listening, leadership and negotiations. And, there seven book reviews: *Rethinking the Sales Force* (1999); *Lombardi* (2000); *First Break All the Rules* (2004); *Blink* (2005); *Whole New Mind* (2006); *Buy-ology* (2009); and *Outliers* (2009).

The capable Kimbra Shoop provided copy editing for many of the articles as she did for *Rainmakers, Closers & Other Sales Myths*.

As I prepare this overview, I have been assuming my audience is comprised of long time clients, friends and readers. But, with the internet, you never know who will stumble upon what you write. After all, the internet is how I got introduced to European colleagues, Rolf Dackheden in Sweden and Kestutis Cvetkovas in Lithuania. For those of you who don't know me, there is a profile on the very last page.

I am reluctant to call this a body of work. For one, I am still working and, two I'd like to think I have done a bit more than write newsletter articles. But, they would fit nicely in a "portfolio", the case for which I make in the concluding white paper titled *Solving the Mystery: A Two Step solution to Improving sales Performance*.

Finally, I doubt many of you will have the time or appetite to read all of the articles. But, I hope this summary and the table of contents that follows will provide you with tools to pick and choose topics that may be of interest. As always, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you.

*Arnie*

Summer 2015

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# The World Isn't Flat

July 1997

Quietly, there's been a revolution in selling. Like the fall of the Roman Empire, it's hard to pinpoint exactly when it started. Its origins may reach back to mid-century when counselors began to adapt the "client centered" approach ushered in by Carl Rogers. Basically, Rogers found that counselors were more effective when they focused on their clients using skills like "empathic listening". Prior to Rogers, the focus had been on the counselor and the "frame of reference" he or she had honed in graduate school.

While I can't find a precise reference, it's a safe bet that the Rogerian led revolution in counseling influenced the shift to a "consultative" approach in sales which surfaced sometime in the early 70s. Consultative practitioners began to move from a "buyer-seller" approach to building "consultant-client" relationships. Like Rogerian influenced counselors, consultative sellers focused on their clients and understanding their needs, rather than pitching features and benefits honed in product training (grad school for sales reps).

From mid-century to the turn of the century, the quiet revolution in selling has slowly, but steadily made progress. Perhaps it's been quiet and slow because there are many in sales and sales management who haven't bought (pardon the pun) the premise that focusing on the purchaser is a superior way to approach selling. These are the sales reps in the field who can't wait to pitch their products or services and their distinctive features and benefits. Fondly, we refer to them as "show-up and throw-up" practitioners. They are the sales managers who achieved their success through working harder by pouring more prospects into the top of the funnel and memorizing thirty-two Hopkins closing scripts. Now, they write ads for sales talent with catchy headings like, "Only Closers Need Apply."

If it worked for them when they sold why shouldn't it work for those they supervise?

Neil Rackham, author of *SPIN Selling*, *Managing Major Sales* and *Major Account Sales Strategy* holds the answer. Through voluminous (as in studying 35,000 sales calls made by 10,000 sales reps in 27 countries) Rackham has found that there are two different universes of selling: small transactions and major sales. And, while tactics like throwing dirt on a prospect's carpet as a means of gaining "attention" (good old AIDA) may be an effective tactic if you're selling vacuum cleaners, it's hardly advisable to sabotage a hospital's air conditioning system if you represent HVAC systems for the McClure Company.

Hold onto your hats superclosers, the world isn't flat. According to Rackham, "Research shows convincingly that, in larger sales at least, the use of closing techniques is negatively related to success." (Rackham, P. 122). Both SPIN and SST® provide means of understanding "buyer" behaviors, which is the key to success with major account; at least among us revolutionaries.



Indeed, when the needs assessment and SST® presentation stages are done well, the "close" is seamless.

## **Counseling & Selling**

**August 1997**

Recently, I conducted a SST® workshop, and as I often do, I invited the participants to offer word associations for a series of occupations: physician, accountant, engineer, CPA, lawyer, etc. I conclude the exercise by asking for associations to "counselor" and then "sales rep". Invariably, the words elicited for **counselor** are complimentary. "Listener", "helper" and "caring" are common associations. Predictably, the associations for **sales rep** are far more pejorative: "aggressive", "sleazy", and "pushy" top the list. I use this exercise to introduce an important premise upon which SST™ is based: counseling and selling require similar skills. And, when done properly, both counseling and selling follow the same three-step process.

Step One is to ask questions to help you understand the client's problem. In SST™ we teach the art of good questions, heavily influenced by the work of Neil Rackham and his SPIN model. Step Two is to listen to the responses to those questions to understand your client's problem from his or her perspective. Effective listening is essential to learning the preferred communication style of your client.

Step Three is to help the client choose a solution to solve a problem they are experiencing. The reason many in sales are held in contempt and viewed as "aggressive", "sleazy", and "pushy" is that they start at "Step Three", neglecting to ask and listen to good questions enabling them to understand their clients.

How would you feel as a client, if your counselor, fresh back from a professional conference, greeted you this way: " Boy do I have a whiz bang therapy for you. Just rolling her out and we're offering an unbelievable discount for our best customers. Would you like to schedule your sessions for Mondays or Tuesdays?"

Your clients and prospects are like you, and everyone else for that matter. They welcome understanding and genuine help for problems they are encountering. And, they resent being manipulated by a sales rep selling a solution to someone else's problem.

## What Distinguishes SST

October 1997

I'm probably not telling you something you don't already know when I refer to *other* selling models which are designed to help the seller recognize different personalities or styles with their clients. After all, the premise that we are not all alike makes such common sense, someone had to try to develop a system for recognizing those differences to improve sales performance. They have.

They are out there. Perhaps you have heard of DISC, or Drivers, Amiables, Assertives or Actors, Friends, Doers and Thinkers, or VITOS and Seymours. I suspect there are others.

What sets SST® apart? you may ask. **Difference number one** is that SST® is anchored in Carl Jung's theory of personality types. Jung as you likely know, first wrote on personality in the late 1920s and since then his theory has been thoroughly researched and carefully validated. SST® goes beyond opinion and the experiences of one person in sales turned trainer and then author. That's what's wrong with *Selling to VITO*. It's based on the author's experiences and his alone. It falls into the Tom Hopkins, "This worked for me. Therefore, it will work for you." approach. The key question for them is "Where are your data when you claim that I will find a VITO here or a Seymour there?"

Which leads us to **difference number two**: we can give you those data. The SST® model is supported by five decades of research, much of it done with the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, on practical applications of Jung's theory. What this means is that when we assert that 9 of 10 lawyers are **NT** types, or that 9 of 10 bankers are **ST**'s, we can give you the citations for those studies.

**Difference number three** is that SST® is both supported by voluminous academic research *and* it is practically proven. While it's founder, yours truly, holds an academic doctorate, I also have walked in your moccasins for more than a decade. Russ Brooks, who often co-facilitates SST® workshops, has been in sales for thirty years.

And, finally, **difference number four** is that SST® works. We can prove it. AJT

## SST® & SPIN: A Paradox

October 1997

Practitioners of SST™ know that one of the essential tools for understanding the client's business and personality is asking good questions. We have been heavily influenced by the work of Neil Rackham and the SPIN model he has advanced. Fundamentally, he found that the questioning process is an extremely powerful selling behavior. The SPIN acronym is easy to remember: **S**tands for **S**ituation questions, which gather basic

information about the client and his or her business. They ask, "What have you got?" **P** or **Problem** questions probe for dissatisfaction, difficulties and disappointments.

" If you could improve three things about your current service, what would they be?"

**I** or **Implications** questions separate the adults from the children in successful selling by asking about the consequences or implications of a problem. "The last time your network went down, could you tell me the effect it had on productivity? Morale? Overtime? Lost opportunities?" Finally, **N** or **Needs Payoff** Questions ask about the positive value of solving a problem. "What would it mean to your business if your network went down less frequently?"

Fundamentally, that's SPIN. Conceptually it is simple. Ask these questions. You can even write them down before your interview. Indeed, you should write them down. In most interviews it's even O.K. to refer to the questions and to take notes. It's empirically proven that if you ask these questions, especially with major accounts, you will have a greater probability of succeeding.

Yet, we consistently find that asking SPIN questions is difficult. Jeff Frank of Dun & Bradstreet put it this way, "SPIN is easy to say. But, it's hard to do."

Conceptually, the Successful Selling to Type SST® model is far more challenging. It's anchored in Carl Jung's theory of personality types. And, while we emphasize the four communication styles of ST (Stabilizers), SF (Communicators), NF (Catalysts) & NT (Visionaries) there are as many as sixteen personality types.

While Rackham and his colleagues have followed *SPIN Selling with Major Account Sales Strategy*, *Managing Major Sales* and *Getting Partnering Right* (all published by McGraw Hill) there are hundreds of publications on Jung's work and its applications to counseling, team building and education. Successful Selling to Type: SST® is unique in applying Jung's model to selling.

And herein lies an interesting paradox. SST®, although more difficult intellectually, is easier to learn and to implement. In a recent follow-up assessment with a client we asked, along with nine other questions, "Have you found any parts of SST® difficult to apply? Which ones?" Head-and-shoulders, the SPIN component of SST® stood out as the most difficult one to use in the field. Here are some representative comments:

*"Sometimes the interview just takes off and I don't get to ask the questions I planned."*

*"The SPIN process doesn't always flow the way you want it to."*

*"SPIN doesn't always apply."*

Okay, you ask, " So what does it mean?" It could simply be that asking questions, of any nature, is more difficult than offering our views. In school, and probably most homes, we

are rewarded for the answers we give rather than the questions we ask or the understanding we achieve. Thus, when we get into sales where, instead of letter grades and gold stars, we are seeking commissions and compensation, we tend to give answers. After all, that's what we have been taught.

New age Guru Steven Covey addresses this issue in his *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*. Seek first to understand, he asserts. Then, seek to be understood. In the SST® model, Rackham's SPIN is essential to thorough understanding of the client's business problems and his or her preferred communications style. In SST®, we employ SPIN when we are seeking to understand.

Then, when we are seeking to be understood, we communicate in the preferred language of our client. SPIN may be easy to say but hard to do. But, it's clearly worth learning.

## **What About Retail Sales?**

**December 1997**

Recently, I had a conversation with Al Murray of the J.C. Ehrlich company. As you likely know, Ehrlich is one of the major players in pest control and lawn and tree care. Like many businesses, they have both residential and business customers. If you guessed that the nature of our conversation had something to do with SST®, you would be correct.

Predictably, our discussion turned to the emphasis SST® places on business-to-business selling in general, and to major account selling in particular. I cited Neil Rackham's research showing that major account selling requires a different skill set than what is typically taught by sales trainers. The "puppy dog close" might be cute, and actually effective, when the customer drives the new car home to show the family. However, sophisticated buyers see through those manipulative tactics. Research indicates that they actually have an inverse impact on selling success with sophisticated buyers and major accounts.

Consistently, I encounter people in sales management who relate tales of upper end buyers who have completely lost their tolerance for those "seller centered" tactics which are still being taught by many organizations and their sales trainers. It is increasingly common for buyers to interrupt when they detect a closing script, sometimes identifying it by name, and threaten to end the interview if they hear a second.

It's clear that business-to-business selling success requires processes that promote active listening and understanding of, both the buyer, and his or her business problems. Moreover, our experience, supported by empirical research, demonstrates that SST® provides an easy to master system to enhance the consultative approach and build lasting business partnerships.

Acknowledging the case that old school manipulative techniques do not work with major accounts, the conversation with Al Murray focused on the converse. Does SST® work as effectively in retail markets as it does in business-to-business selling? Intuitively (and Al and I are both Intuitive types) one would believe that it must. Major account purchasers certainly do not have the market cornered on wanting to be understood. And, there's plenty of evidence from research on psychological type indicating that people have preferred ways of communicating and react more favorably when their "language is spoken".

Anecdotally, we know that SST® makes a positive difference in fields like real estate, higher education and investment management. What we really need, however, is a carefully constructed study to research the question. Anyone interested?

I'll throw in the study for any client who schedules SST with a residential or retail application. Now, would you like to schedule that for February or March? (Just kidding about that alternate close.)

## **SST® & Four Buyer Influences**

**December 1997**

In what feels like a lifetime ago, I was team teaching a college course on Counseling Theories. After studying the likes of Ellis, Freud, Jung, Perls and Rogers we observed that, in practice, many counselors drew from the different models. They might shift from being very Rogerian and long term with one client while being quite directive and Ellis like with another. We referred to this practice as being "eclectic".

The final evaluation had both a written component and an interview with a member of the teaching team. Just by the luck of the draw, I got to do the oral exam with one of our "favorite" students. I asked him, if he were to enter the counseling field that very day, what would his approach be? He responded, "Well, Dr. Tilden, I guess you could call my counseling style epileptic."

As I choked back the coffee I made the mistake of sipping, I thought to myself, "He's probably right".

This anecdote about counseling theories is apropos, because the central premise of SST® is that the processes of counseling and selling are fundamentally alike. Moreover, SST® is "eclectic" in scope. We build on Neil Rackham's SPIN to assess, not only business problems and their implications, but to learn the personality types of our clients and prospects in the context of Carl Jung's theory. Once we have "sought to understand", ala Stephen Covey, we "seek to be understood" by communicating in the preferred Jungian language of the buyer.

In each of the previous three SST® Newsletters we have referenced Rackham's SPIN. There is yet another important work that SST® draws upon which, heretofore, has gone

unmentioned: Strategic Selling. First published in 1985, the 1998 version, The New Strategic Selling by Heiman et al. is just out.

Veterans of SST® may not remember the citation, but will certainly recall the *Four Buyers: Economic, User, Technical & Coach*. The *Economic Buyer* controls the purse strings of an organization and gives final approval. Increasingly, *Economic Buyers* are consulting with *User and Technical Buyers* before signing off. *User Buyers* are the people who will actually be using your product or service. They (and there's usually more than one) will assess its impact on how it will help them do their jobs. *Technical Buyers* cannot say "yes" to a purchase. But, they can say "no" if it doesn't satisfy the technical specifications of which they are custodians. Finally, Heiman's model preaches the virtues of having a "*Coach*" who wants to see you succeed and often provides an insider's perspective to essential buying dynamics of the client organization.

SST® steps and tools are not just applied to a single buyer. Influenced by Heiman et al. and Strategic Selling, we apply it to all four buying influences. The Four-Buyer model is consistent with SST® because it emphasizes planning an "account centered" strategy for every client rather than using the same "seller centered" tactics on every call. We have fondly referred to the latter as the "show-up and throw-up" school of selling.

If you pick up The New Strategic Selling (\$15 from Warner Books), I suggest that you go directly to chapter ten where the major revision appears: "Win-Results". This concept is also complementary to SST. In fact, we have incorporated similar principles into SST® for some time.

Fundamentally, "Win-Results" differentiates between a business *Result* (greater productivity, improved efficiencies more profit, etc.) and a *Win* which is personal (positive recognition from superiors, more leisure, less stress, improved status with staff etc.). Heiman et al. (p.198) now assert that, "It's never enough to sell Results alone."

SST® provides the key to unlocking the understanding of what will be a "Win" for different buyers. They are as varied as the different personality type comprising the SST® model.

## **Speaking of Return on Investment**

**April 1998**

We have known for some time that SST® works. Post workshop evaluations glow. Success stories from users abound. Moreover, we use it nearly every day ourselves and experience its power first-hand.

Still, skeptics out there might dismiss these accounts as soft and qualitative at best. They will ask, "Do you have any hard proof that SST works?" Others will query, "What can I expect as a Return on Investment (ROI)?"

Well, we are delighted to report hard empirical results documenting remarkable ROI for a client, Penn State Geisinger Health Plan. *The number of new organizations signing medical insurance contracts following SST® went up 288%. New members covered by PSGHP under those contracts were roughly five times higher.* For those of you who remember your Stats course, those differences are statistically significant at the .01 level of confidence. In other words, the probability is 99 out of 100 that these differences were due to SST® and not to chance.

Still, a healthy skeptic might suggest that these changes were caused by any number of extraneous variables at play. (SST® being the independent variable and new sales being the dependent variable) The economy is healthy and consumers are buying more of everything. Or, Geisinger's merger with Penn State brought over the "Blue & White" fanatics indigenous to this part of the country. Heck, it could be yet another El Niño effect.

In response to those challenges, we are able to point to comparisons with a control group of sales people at PSGHP who did not participate in SST. Their performance over the same periods measured, subject to all the same extraneous variables as those learning SST®, went down.

We often use the three legged stool image to describe what it takes to improve sales: skills that work; sales people to learn and apply them; and managers to reinforce them. Absent one leg, the stool eventually falls.

Kudos to the sales team and their managers at PSGHP for a great job. Also, congratulations to Russ Brooks for co-facilitating the delivery of SST.

## **Sighted Squirrels Find More Nuts**

**April 1998**

*"Are you telling us everything we have been taught is wrong?"* This is not an unfamiliar refrain when doing an SST® workshop. Sometimes we're tempted to respond, "Well, yes." However, that wouldn't be perfectly accurate. While there are some necessary and important traditional selling techniques, there are others that should be discarded from modern major account selling.

Old school selling went something like this: *Prospect, Qualify, Demonstrate, Trial Close, Handle Objections, Close.* The process starts with the essential sales behaviors known as "Prospecting" and "Qualifying". They are 95% will and 5% skill. Both are absolutely essential selling behaviors. After all, if you don't have a qualified prospect, you can't make a sale.

It is once we get in front of a prospect, however, that differences between "Old School" and "SST" selling surface. The old school emphasizes a demonstration that wows the

prospect with the latest and greatest FAB (Features, Advantages and Benefits). It is followed by the infamous *trial close*. "Would you like your first order, Monday or Friday?"

If they say neither, the old school seller is driven by the single phrase that has done more to produce obnoxious sales behavior than any other, "The sale doesn't begin until your prospect says 'no'". Undaunted by the first "no", the old school seller *handles the objection* with something like, "I can appreciate that sentiment, however if you will sign today, we can save you considerable money on the cost of shipping."

If a skillful *handling of objections* doesn't work, the poor prospect is in for an endless series of *closes*. Students of Tom Hopkins memorize thirty plus closing scripts. If the Ben Franklin doesn't work, hit them with the Puppy Dog. Ad nauseam.

**SST** is based on the premise that effective sales people have much in common with good counselors. Both ask good questions. Then, they listen attentively to responses. Once they understand the problem from the perspective of the client, they help him or her choose a solution. They take care to communicate in the preferred style of the client. In other words, they don't walk in pitching what they happen to have in the trunk of the car.

Step one *Preliminaries* should be brief. It's important to warm the call up. But be ready to get down to business, early. Step two, the *Investigation* is crucial and modeled after Neil Rackham's SPIN system. With SST®, we not only uncover business problems and their implications, we also learn the preferred way the client would like to see *Capability* demonstrated, which is step three.

When the *Investigation* and *Demonstration of Capability* are done well, the "close" is seamless. It doesn't require tricks and manipulation. *Obtaining Commitment* flows naturally when the client is understood and communication is in his or her preferred style.

But, in order for SST® to payoff you still need qualified prospects to interview. And, this is what Old School" selling and SST® have in common. The world's greatest SST® practitioner will not make sales without prospects to interview. Conversely, an annoying schlepper using manipulative techniques will still make sales if he or she has lots of prospects to interview. Blind squirrels find nuts.

Prospecting and qualifying are matters of "will". If your sales team has the "will" to prospect and you give them the "skill" of SST® your sales will increase; perhaps as dramatically as Penn State Geisinger Health Plan's. After all, sighted squirrels find more nuts. AJT



## College Admissions: Is it Counseling or Selling?

### June 1998

We call them counselors but quickly acknowledge that they perform the sales function of the organization. Admissions staff are rewarded or punished for performance that is measured in terms of the numbers and types of new students enrolled. Fundamentally, they are expected to deliver a new class at least meeting enrollment projections presenting necessary standardized test scores and class ranks. The class should also have the right mix of ethnic diversity, more students for a threatened academic department and a quarterback.

The people who do this work are called counselors. Yet, they are assigned geographic territories and are taught prospect management skills. Which model is the better fit? Counseling? Or, selling?

The perspective I bring to the question is that of a professional counselor, who today teaches sales skills to businesses. When I was in higher education wrestling with enrollment shortfalls, I was interested in how a "hard core" sales approach would work in college admissions. Wouldn't we have better numbers if our "counselors" knew how to close a deal?

As I moved from higher education to sales education, I made an ironic discovery. Traditional selling tactics do not work. First, let me offer an insider's view of what most sales people practice.

### The Traditional Selling Model

First, traditional sellers *prospect* for potential customers using techniques like cold calling or telemarketing. Then they *qualify* the prospect to determine if they have the authority to buy what is being sold.

Once in front of a qualified prospect, most sales people are conditioned to pitch a *FAB*. They differentiate their product or service from the competition by describing its *features, advantages and benefits*. Often, they deliver their FABs from memorized scripts.

FABs are followed by a *trial close*. "*Would you like the Super Z with the five-speed transmission or automatic?*" If the initial trial close does not seal the deal, traditional sellers will *handle objections*. "*I understand that the Super Z is a little more than you thought. If I were able to get you a monthly payment of \$xxxxx, would you want to drive her home today?*"

There are at least thirty-two closing tactics being taught by traditional sales trainers. After all, they preach the key to selling is as simple as ABC: Always Be Closing.

## **Rackham's Research**

Neil Rackham supervised a twelve year, one million dollar project studying the question of what works in selling. His team analyzed more than 35,000 sales calls that were conducted in twenty -three countries. Based on this exhaustive research, Rackham concluded that closing tactics do not work. He found this particularly true in larger sales.

What distinguished successful sellers, he discovered, was their ability to ask questions. Rackham and his team have developed a model for asking questions called SPIN. Not to be confused with the popular Washington D.C. process, Rackham's SPIN stands for the kinds of questions effective sellers ask: Situation, Problem, Implication and Need Payoff.

## **Selling by Counseling**

Rackham's research provides empirical support for our sales education model. Our premise is that successful counselors and sellers use the same three-step process: (1) Ask good questions (2) Listen from the perspective of the client (3) Help the client choose a solution.

Generally, counselors are better at asking questions and listening than their counterparts in sales. Can you imagine a counselor starting an interview like this: *"Boy do I have a whiz bang therapy for you. It has more features than last year's model but we are offering it to our preferred clients at last year's price. Would you like to schedule appointments for Monday afternoons or Wednesday mornings?"* Did you catch the alternate choice close?

## **Successful Selling to Type: SST®**

If we visited the counseling centers on your campuses, we would likely find that many are having success by "counseling to type". They have learned that they are more effective when they relate to their clients in their preferred communication styles (Yeakley, 1983).

Successful Selling to Type also improves communication effectiveness and is anchored in the same personality theory used by those counseling to type: Carl Jung's . Many in higher education have become familiar with Jung's theory through the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). SST® focuses on the mental functions of the model: perceiving (Sensing or Intuition) and judging (Thinking or Feeling).

Although there have been crazier ideas, we don't ask prospects to volunteer thirty minutes to complete the MBTI in order that we can relate to them in their preferred communication style. SST® overcomes this apparent handicap by using other steps and tools to identify preferences.

We begin with what we call Industry Profiles which draws upon the rich occupational research performed with the MBTI. It establishes what most have always suspected, "Birds of a feather flock together". That is to say, people of similar personalities are drawn to similar occupational and major fields. For example, Sensing types are heavily represented in fields emphasizing accuracy, detail and practicality. Their Intuitive counterparts prefer fields more theoretical in character that allow them to be "big picture" oriented and innovative.

Admission counselors can use a student's intended major as a working hypothesis of their type. Influenced by Rackham, interview questions like, "What are your favorite high school courses?" take on new meaning and help verify preferences.

Counselors can then communicate in the preferred language of the client. Sensors like facts and figures like placement successes, student faculty ratios and hands on tours. Intuitive types will be attentive to the vision of the college, opportunities for self-designed majors and preparing for a changing world.

## **Summary**

Is it counseling or selling? It is selling, but not through the traditional ABC model, but with counseling like skills.

## **Kirkpatrick's Model**

**July 1998**

We have an interesting mix of clients using SST® ranging from Fortune 100 firms to small professional practices with one or two partners focusing on business development. For those of you in training departments with large organizations, reference to the Kirkpatrick model for evaluation is as elementary as ABC (I don't mean always be closing). However, for readers in firms too small for a dedicated training department, Kirkpatrick's model is one you should know about.

Kirkpatrick is one of those enviable guys who has parlayed his dissertation into a career. He introduced his model in the late 50s and today it is the standard by which organizations evaluate training. What I like about the Kirkpatrick model is the utter common sense that it makes.

Level one is "Reaction". This is where most training evaluations start and end. How did the participants react to the training? Did they like it? By themselves, favorable reactions and smiling faces are not enough. Kirkpatrick's level two examines "Learning" new skills or acquiring new knowledge.

Rackham has observed that the requisite question in evaluating a sales training program is "Do people use it?" Pardon the pun, but this is a different SPIN, on Kirkpatrick's level three where changes in "Behavior" are assessed. It is not sufficient for

a training participants to have liked the program and to have learned something. They need to behave differently.

Finally, level four, looks at results. Did the training deliver EVA, or add economic value to the organization.

For some kinds of training, like team building, gathering quantifiable data at level four is difficult. That's not the case for sales training. Here the acid test should be improved sales performance, quantifiable in the number of new accounts as well as in dollars.

SST® has built in assessment mechanisms at all four levels. We would be delighted to work with you to construct a four level assessment. It is the only way to know that the training you are providing is delivering the results you want and need.

## **Avoiding the FAB Trap**

**August 1998**

Practitioners of SST® know the steps well. The acronym is PIDO, which stands for Preliminaries, Investigating, Demonstrating Capability and Obtaining Commitment. While PIDO corresponds to Rackham's SPIN selling, it is completely compatible with other models emphasizing a needs assessment, seeking first to understand (Covey) or "opening" the sale (Gerber).

At the core are the middle two steps of Investigating and Demonstrating Capability. Step One, Preliminaries should be kept brief. Step Four, Obtaining Commitment is the ultimate reason for the call and where the financial incentives lie. When Steps Two and Three are done well, Obtaining Commitment is seamless and natural.

Steps Two and Three are the skill steps. It is where we focus when we teach SST. The Investigation is modeled after Rackham's SPIN. SST®, however, not only uncovers business problems and their implications, but also identifies communication preferences of prospects. When we Demonstrate Capability, Step Three, we propose solutions in the preferred language of the prospect or client.

Whenever I describe SST®, I feel that Step Three sounds more difficult than Step Two. Repeatedly, however, our evaluations show that people have more difficulty with Step Two, the SPIN Investigation.

As someone who not only teaches SST®, but who uses it, I think I have an insight to offer. Perhaps you are falling prey to the FAB Trap. If you have had an experience like the one I am about to describe, you have.

Preparing for an important call, you dutifully prepare your SPIN questions on your SST® Account Worksheet. Preliminaries are completed and you begin with your

Situation questions. Your prospects look uncomfortable. When you move to Problem questions they start fidgeting.

Finally, one of your prospects interrupts the SPIN by saying something like, "We know our problems. That is why we are here. We would like to hear what you and XYZ, Inc. can do to help us solve them."

Boom. SPIN is over. You move into pitching FABs (Features, Advantages and Benefits) which is probably a more comfortable zone for both you and your client.

Sound familiar? It sometimes happens to me. It is the FAB Trap. If you fall for it, you can look worse than the guys who have Bitter Beer Face.

Here is a solution I propose. Sometimes it is necessary to do a "Mini Demonstration of Competency". The purpose is to gain permission to conduct the full SPIN. Give them some FAB and make the transition back to SPIN by saying something like, "XYZ has been able to help many firms like yours. Our solutions, however, look different because while similar, no two firms are exactly alike. It would help me if I could understand your firm more fully. Then, we can help you customize a solution." If you can, restart your SPIN with an issue or problem they volunteered. "Can you walk me through what happened the last time you had that problem?"

The FAB Trap is quite enticing. It feels comfortable. Most of us would rather talk than listen. However, listening is essential to understanding your prospect. The better you understand your prospects, the more sales successes you will enjoy. AJT

**Bob!**

**August 1998**

Recently, I was standing in line to pick up some SST® materials I had printed at the State College Kinko's. The place was jammed. Cars were in a holding pattern to get a space in the parking lot. It was reminiscent of the hustle and bustle I experienced growing up on Long Island.

A frenzied Kinko's worker approached me thrusting a completed print job in my direction and said, "*Bob.*"

It was more of an assertion than a question. Impatient with my slow response, she turned up the volume the second time, "***Bob!***"

Finally, I responded by indicating that, no matter how many times she called me "Bob", or how loud she said it, I wasn't going to become a "Bob".

This brief encounter captures how many of us behave when we become harried during a sales call:

- We don't ask questions
- We don't listen
- We push our agenda
- We repeat the same message, a little louder each time

If you practice SST®, you will do the opposite.

## **Sales Management Diagnosis**

### **September 1998**

One of the consulting services we provide is a diagnosis of broken or under-performing sales organizations. We employ a rather eclectic model that we have developed to guide our investigation. It is one that sales managers can use anytime they are scratching their heads and wondering, "Now, why isn't this sales team delivering like it should?" We organize our approach around the following six management considerations: Expectations, Rewards, Consequences, Tools, Skills & Knowledge, & Assignment.

1) Expectations The sales manager was wondering why his team was not making the expected number of weekly sales calls. We asked the sales reps. Their answer: *"Nobody told us how many calls we were supposed to make. Yeah, we can do that."*

We always start our investigation of what's broke by checking to see if expectations are clear. Often, they are not. Step One in effective sales force management is to be absolutely clear on what you expect. This is an instance where both oral and written communications are appropriate. It is Step One because it should start as early as recruitment and selection.

2) Rewards She was a young star. Six figure income performer. Despite her success, she left her organization. "I almost begged them for recognition. They thought dollars did everything. It didn't."

SST® Seller Profiles will guide you in how to deliver those crucial rewards when expectations are met, and especially when they are exceeded. Recognizing that the "Feelings" preferred star described above wanted recognition would have saved her, and all the costs associated with replacing her. Retaining talent is always cheaper than recruiting it.

Incidentally, I agree with Steven Covey on the damaging effects of ranking members of a sales team. Research reported in The Hay Group's People, Pay & Performance (see P.3 "Dangling Carrots") shows that these contests actually have an adverse impact on performance. As Covey points out, we want more than one winner on a sales team.

3) Consequences The son of the owner, who made it clear that he didn't like sales anyway, routinely arrived at the weekly sales meeting late and unprepared. Predictably, others began to show-up late and under prepared for the meeting as well.

Rendering consequences for failing to meet expectations can be tricky. Human nature is such that we postpone unpleasant tasks. However, if you don't confront a team member who falls short on expectations others are satisfying, your consequence will be an under-performing team. If it goes unchecked, undesirable behavior will spread like a virus.

Nobody likes being reprimanded in public, even when they deserve it. Always praise in public and criticize in private.

4) Tools We differentiate between "*Tools*" and "*Skills*". A carpenter applies his "*skills*" when using the "*tools*" in his box: hammers, saws, screwdrivers, squares, etc.

What we sometimes find is that management invests heavily in the latest selling "tool" but neglects to provide selling "skills". The biggest culprits of this phenomenon have been brought to us by the marvels of technology.

*"Let's get everyone a neat new notebook computer, load it with the latest whiz bang contact management system, sit back and watch sales zoom."*

While we have never seen this approach work, we have seen clients and potential clients pour princely sums into technology tools. By the time they have determined that their tools have not delivered the desired results, something new is on the market with shinier bells and louder whistles. Like to guess what happens next? Sadly, you are right.

I am not suggesting that tools are unimportant. They are, however, never a substitute for skills and knowledge.

5) Skills Some will break this category into "product knowledge" and "selling skills". Many who are under performing provide only the former. It is neat, clean and nearly every manufacturer offers training for its resellers, sometimes free.

Many managers cling to anachronistic views of selling believing balderdash like good sales people are born and not made. Others blindly trust numbers believing that, no matter what happens with those soft skills like consultative or relationship selling, making the requisite numbers of calls and reciting prepared scripts will produce the desired results. Even more devastating are organizations trusting that all experienced sales people already know how to sell.

Every time a sales person gets in front of a prospective or current client and does the wrong things an opportunity is lost. A common list of "wrong things" includes: a superficial investigation, prolonged preliminaries, handling objections, memorized closing scripts or asking questions that can only be answered "yes".

Investment in developing selling skills and knowledge will show returns many times over. Not only has SST® demonstrated bottom line impact from a 500% increase with one client or a 200% jump with another, it plays a meaningful role in retention of sales talent. Helping those you manage learn and grow professionally are the surest ways to improve performance and to reduce attrition of high performers.

6) Assignment This is more than a euphemism for termination. Understanding personality types can be an essential management tool for arranging team selling. For example, "Thinkers" and "Feelers" have different natural antennae that can complement one another in team selling. Another application is to assign people to industry fields where their natural communication style is prevalent.

Summary You don't have to wait to get sick to benefit from this model. It can be helpful to stay well by performing regular assessments of how effective your management is in each of the six categories.

## **Silver Bullets**

**September 1998**

Return with me to the days of yesteryear when a brave man of justice fought to right the wrongs in a land known as Texas. He wore a mask to disguise his identity from the bad guys who believed they had killed him in a cowardly ambush. Accompanied by his faithful Indian companion, Tonto, the Lone Ranger chose as his signature... the Silver Bullet.

"Silver Bullet" has become a management metaphor for correcting a problem with a single, expensive shot. Often they miss the target. Such is the case with sales organizations relying on psychological tests in screening for selection.

I know of what I speak. My doctoral dissertation included a cross validation of a psychological test and "Tests and Measurement" is a course I taught at the college level.

If you are using a test for selection purposes, you should become familiar with a document titled, "Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Procedures" It was developed jointly by the friendly folks at the Departments of Justice and Labor, the Civil Service Commission and the Equal Opportunity Commission.

Fundamentally, you will need to ensure that the instrument is valid and that it does not exert an adverse impact on women and minorities. This kind of validity is the predictive variety which can only be reported in empirical terms. The following are not acceptable as validity indicators: *"all forms of promotional literature; data bearing on the frequency of a procedure's usage; testimonial statements and credentials of sellers, users, or consultants; and other non-empirical or anecdotal accounts of selection practices or selection outcomes."*



While there are instruments available that satisfy federal guidelines for employee selection, many I have come across don't even come close. So, Ke-mo sah-bee, if you are afraid you might fire a "Silver Bullet" right into your foot, give me a call and I will provide you with a free assessment of your current assessment. Hi-Yo, Silver, Away!

## **Dangling Carrots**

**September 1998**

From time-to-time we assist client organizations in designing and implementing pay for performance incentive programs. Generally, it is upon discovering problems with "Rewards" when we conduct an assessment as described in the lead article.

Whenever I undertake a project of this nature I team-up with Dr. James Lakso who is an expert in such matters. Jim's day job is Provost at Juniata College.

Recently, Jim referred me to an excellent resource: *People, Pay & Performance* by Flannery et. al., Free Press, 1996.

A central tenet of this work is the importance of aligning pay incentive strategies with the unique needs of the organization: if you will, its culture. Put another way, an effective incentive program for one organization can fail miserably with another.

We help clients gain a comprehensive understanding of rewards. We look at both extrinsic (salary, cash bonuses, "set of steak knives") and intrinsic rewards. The latter are less tangible, but often more powerful. They include personal and professional growth, belonging, recognition and satisfaction from a job well done. To motivate people you need to do more than dangle carrots.

## **Preparing Holiday Turkeys**

**November 1998**

### **Sensing Instructions**

#### *Ingredients:*

One 16 lb. turkey ¼ cup of celery

¼ cup of butter 1 teaspoon of basil

2 tablespoons chopped onions ¾ cup of salt

4 cups of crustless day-old bread ½ teaspoon of paprika

¼ cup of parsley 2 eggs

Set out all the necessary equipment: measuring cups, sharpened knives, calipers, thermometer, oven rack, and assorted pots and pans.

Go down the list of ingredients placing a check mark next to each item.

Preheat oven to precisely 450° Fahrenheit.

While preheating oven, use a carpenters level to double check your measuring surface. Shim leveling surfaces as required.

Follow step-by-step instructions in Joy of Cooking (1984, p. 352) to prepare dressing.

Place the stuffing into the turkey's cavity.

Place the turkey on a rack, uncovered.

Put bird in oven and immediately reduce heat to 350° Fahrenheit.

Baste every fifteen minutes.

Cover turkey after 30 minutes.

Cook for 6 hours and 36 minutes.

Serve

### **Intuitive Instructions**

Although obviously North American in its origins, the turkey has become a global bird with many rich traditions for preparation. Possibilities for how you prepare this year's turkey are endless. Let your imagination guide you to an exciting new holiday tradition that will be the envy of family and neighbors.

When you begin to shop for your turkey, allow yourself to contemplate the implications of electronic commerce on this holiday tradition. Don't miss the entrepreneurial opportunity you have been seeking. Why not become [www.turkey.com](http://www.turkey.com) providing this healthy white meat year round to cost conscious consumers? Allow time now to do an internet search because this is a far more exciting idea than preparing one measly bird.

Now that you are back from your search and resigned to the kitchen, we need to prepare the turkey. Stuffing is an excellent time to empty the refrigerator and cabinets. While preheating the oven (or starting the barbecue fire) hunt for onions, sausage, celery, stale bread, rice, ham, nuts, potatoes, apples, oranges etc.

Substitutions for this list are encouraged. Your creativity may be enhanced by a glass of white wine (or a nice Merlot for that matter). Now go to your spice rack, pick out your favorites and sprinkle liberally over the stuffing.

Cook until golden brown and serve. NB. Whenever your guests ask if they can "bring something", answer "yes". Have them serve the other courses. Enjoy.

### **Thinking Instructions**

An organized approach to the preparation of the turkey always pays dividends. Prepare a list of the desired outcomes in advance of the celebration and then plan the best way to accomplish them. Be analytical in your approach. For example, if one of the desired outcomes is seeing family and another is not making a mess of the house, consider going out to dinner. If you are going to celebrate at home, can you leave relatives with kids off the guest list? If you have to invite kids, can you serve them in the garage? Consider costs and benefits of all of the angles.

Let's face it. Lions, Cowboys, Packers and Vikings have become as much a part of holidays as, say, the Pilgrims. Plan the meal accordingly. Pick the games that are "must see" and be certain to have the meal completed in advance.

Look for efficiencies both in purchasing and preparing the bird. Turkey is hard to beat on price so resist suggestions about expensive seafood as an alternative.

Store brand products work as well as expensive name brands in the stuffing. Leftovers are great, but even turkey gets old after a week. Know how many people you will be serving before you make purchases. Why not get a caterer to bid the job and then prorate the fee over all the guests? This could be the way to go, even if you may have to make allowances for kids who don't eat much.

### **Feeling Instructions**

The principal focus in preparing a holiday turkey is, of course, your guests. In addition to family, why not invite someone less fortunate to your table this year?

If you don't know any unfortunate souls first-hand, another humane way to celebrate the holiday is to volunteer the entire family to work a shift at your nearest soup kitchen. Ask Uncle Al to have his limousine service pick everyone up, wait while you work your shift, and then drive you back to your home.

Turkey, at least, is a white meat. However, many are raised and eventually slaughtered under inhumane conditions. Knowing the history of your turkey is as important today as it was to know about California grapes in the 60s.

Finally, you will need to be sensitive to both the tastes and the values of your guests. A good way to be sure you are not serving anything offensive is to circulate a "Prohibited Foods" list before the holiday. Consider a vegetarian celebration this year. Whatever you serve, make sure everyone feels welcome and warm. That, after all, is what holidays are about.

**Duh**

### **November 1998**

Robert Eaton, CEO of Chrysler is quoted in a "rare" September 28 interview with USA TODAY, *"Something on the order of 65% of customers don't like the car buying process... If they don't like it we better change."*

His interpretation is that today's car shoppers are smarter technically because they search the internet prior to visiting a car lot.

The solution says Jack Smith, CEO of GM, is to bring the sales organization *"to a higher level of technical expertise."*

If I were still teaching research methods, I would use this as a classic example of misinterpreting data. The reason customers don't like the car buying process is not because the sales force lacks product knowledge. **It is because of how they are treated when they shop for cars.**

Duh.

Pardon me, Robert and Jack, but you are barking up the wrong tree. Have your sales force ask good questions. Emphasize listening instead of pitching features like rack and pinion steering (anybody know what it is?) Then teach them to communicate in the preferred style of the client.

Finally, terminate the first sales person who refers to a client as "Pal", "Buddy" or "Hon".

## **Paradox II: Soft Skills Make a Hard Difference**

**February 1999**

"The good news", the CEO tells her new VP for sales and marketing, "is that you have 150 people working for you. The bad news is none of them know it."

Does this sound funny but true? Charles Handy (1995) suggests in The Age of Paradox that seemingly contradictory concepts guide modern management practices. Among them are the one faced by the new VP for sales: encourage autonomy in the work force while being accountable for their performance. Others include: act globally and locally at the same time; be planned yet flexible; cater to niches while being a mass marketer; and emphasize both teamwork and independent thinking. Successful modern businesses, he asserts, reconcile the contradictions rather than choose between them.

*Contradictory concepts guide modern management.*

In an earlier newsletter (November, 1997), I wrote about "SST® & SPIN: A Paradox". On the surface it seems that SPIN should be easier than SST. Paradoxically, however, our field research consistently shows that the steps and tools comprising SST® are easier to master and use than SPIN. Asking good questions simply requires more practice and discipline than relating to clients in their preferred communication style.

This article treats yet another business paradox we have discovered: **Soft skills make a hard difference.** The formulation of this paradox is based on our experiences helping clients in diverse industries: from information technology, to windows and doors, to prescription benefit managers to kosher poultry to higher education.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the issues our clients confront are more similar than they are different. They all want to sell on value rather than compete in the market as a commodity.

Most seek to distinguish their products or services with so called hard differentiators. One will go to market with a shinier bell. Meanwhile, the competition has researched and developed a louder whistle.

Then, it is left to the poor sales staff to position themselves with prospective clients on the relative features, advantages and benefits of shinier bells or louder whistles. While the research and development guys think it is the breakthrough of the century, prospective clients respond with dreaded "MEGO". (This is the acronym for "My Eyes Glaze Over")

The crucial element that is often left out of the "hard differentiators" approach to sales and marketing is the client. Mike Morucci, sales director of Penn State Geisinger Health Plan, summed up what he called the central tenet of SST®, "It is

not about *you*. It is about *them*." Once we are able to translate Mike's contribution to Latin, we will use it as the official SST motto.

*"It is not about you. It is about them." Mike Morucci, PSGHP*

Rackham's (1988) research shows that the introduction of hard differentiators is typically met with a decline in sales performance. This is because most sales people pitch them more and seek to understand less. Pitching hard differentiators actually drives clients further away.

We have learned that the best way to sell value is through so called "soft skills". It begins with a focus, not on "hard differentiators" but on "them", the clients. Excellent questions, asked the right way, are soft skills that are essential to understanding the client. The second essential SST® skill is planning and implementing strategies for multiple buying influences in the account. Miller & Heiman (1998) have called them economic, user and technical buyers. Last, but definitely not least, selling on value requires communicating effectively with the buyers in their (not your) preferred style.

Hard differentiators like shinier bells and louder whistles fail to produce hard results. Pitching them puts the focus on "you" and not on "them". The soft differentiators of "asking the right question right", listening, and communicating in the preferred style of your client puts the focus where it belongs: on the client.

Paradoxically, soft differentiators, and not hard ones, produce hard results.

## What's Wrong with One Guy's Opinion?

March 1999

Selling has been in the news. The Sunday New York Times (February 7, 1999) feature article in "Money & Business" addressed the issue of how the field has changed. The article "Salesmanship Without the Punch" features the work of James Werth and what he calls "High Probability Selling"; which by no great coincidence is the title of his book. As best I can tell, "High Probability Selling" advocates focussing your attention on probable buyers and kicking the others out of your funnel quickly.

My issue with Werth and the Times is not over the utter common sense of his approach. What prompted my letter, which they elected to publish (NYT, Money & Business, 2/28/99), is that they chose a guy like Werth for the centerpiece of the article and not Neil Rackham. What sets Rackham apart is the scientific nature of his model supported by mountains of research. SST® is heavily influenced by Rackham's work with our emphasis on questioning and listening skills.

As my undergraduate adviser (Dr. John Ross) at St. Lawrence used to exhort: "If you want social opinion go down to the Tick Tock (a popular watering hole). There will be plenty of it. The later the hour the more of it. But this is about social science."

I never recall Professor Ross raising his voice, but clearly, his emphasis was on "science" and what sets it apart from one guy's opinion. And, that is what the likes Werth and Hopkins give us: one guy's opinion.

What is wrong with one guy's opinion? Nothing when the topic is something harmless like sports. But when the business is as important as selling, relying one guy's opinion can be dangerous. After all, the guy could be wrong.

The field of selling has been rife with wrong opinions: Here's a short list:

Close early and close often.

The sale doesn't start until the buyer says 'no'

Clever trial closes make a difference

People who talk a lot excel in selling

Handling objections makes a difference

Any approach that treats buyers as adversaries to be manipulated into something they don't want or need

Old friend Tom Hopkins is also cited in the article which adds insult to the injury of missing Rackham. Here's what Mr. Hopkins (The Times would never use a first name) has to say: *"I couldn't wait on my butt until people came to me; I had to knock on doors."*

Pardon me Mr. Hopkins, but this isn't about working hard. The issue at hand has to do with what you do when someone answers the door. Rackham's research shows that the more sales people do what you advocate (clever closing scripts and manipulating affirmative responses to questions) the less likely they will succeed.

Relying on one guy's opinion has led to a generation of sales people doing the wrong things. From the New York Times we come to expect the very best in journalism. Where else would use a word like "verisimilitude" in a business article?

We should get more than one guy's opinion from the New York Times. There are plenty of those at the local pub. However, quality research on selling is as rare as bad syntax in a William Safire column.

## **Selling Malpractice**

**March 1999**

Late last summer we began incorporating an exercise into SST® called, "You are the counselor". Simply, we pair people up to respond to this circumstance: *"You are a counselor on a college campus. A faculty acquaintance calls to inform you that she has asked a student to make an appointment with you. It has been arranged for tomorrow at 2. The background is that the new semester has brought with it a sharp change in behavior with the student you will be seeing. Last semester, he made every class, contributed actively and earned a respectable grade. This semester his attendance is spotty, his appearance disheveled and he failed the first hourly exam. How you would prepare for tomorrow's appointment?"*

Uniformly, the groups report planning questions to try to pinpoint the problem. Playing the role of counselor, they recognize that problems could reside in one or more arenas. There could be health problems. Or, the student may be having problems at home. Could it be a broken romance or a roommate rift? Another common suggestion is to talk with other professors to see if this represents a pattern or an isolated circumstance.

Notably, no one suggests proposing a solution, or planning a pitch, until the problem has been thoroughly investigated and understood. It would be unthinkable to meet the client and begin by outlining the features, advantages and benefits of a new girlfriend. How would a counselor be received who met this hypothetical appointment by proposing a little Ritalin from the friendly campus health center? Or, how about a good old "shape up kid or you'll flunk out" lecture. These practices would clearly be grounds for counseling malpractice.

Yet, many trainees will acknowledge that they have conducted their pre-SST selling in an analogous way. Planning for a call has meant polishing a presentation. Investigations are often truncated and predetermined to uncover a problem your product or service could solve.

The moral is to plan your sales calls just the way you would plan to meet a counseling client. Learn as much as you possibly can before the call. Plan questions to help you and your client pinpoint problem areas. Listen carefully. Then help the client choose a solution communicated in his or her preferred style. Anything else is grounds for malpractice.

## What if Willie Loman, Blake & Lou Gehrig Had Power Point?

May 1999

"Death of a Salesman" is back on Broadway starring Brian Dennehey as Willie Loman. Ever wonder what poor Willie's selling techniques would be like today, roughly a half-century after Arthur Miller wrote the famous play? He'd certainly be armed with more than the product samples he lugged around in his tired old brief case. Today's Willie would carry a lap top computer. And, you guessed it, that lap top would be programmed with a Microsoft Power Point presentation promoting his product line.

Indeed, all an Information Age Willie would need to do is click on the "Wizard" in Power Point and choose "Presenting a Product or Service". Then, step-by-step, Microsoft partner Dale Carnegie will lead him through one of their "High Impact" presentations.

In order, Willie's slides would be titled: Product Name, Overview, Features & Benefits, Applications, Specifications, Pricing & Availability. Each slide appears on Willie's choice of a richly hued background with the main point supported by just the right number of bullets appearing in the recommended font and style. Willie can switch his brain off and let Microsoft and Dale Carnegie do his thinking for him.

The less famous, but to me even more compelling theatrical figure of sales, is Blake of David Mamet's Glengarry Glen Ross. Immortalized by Alec Baldwin on screen. I wonder how Blake would incorporate technology into his motivational talks?

*"Put that coffee down! Coffee is for closers.*

*Mitch & Murray sent me here because you guys aren't using your Power Points.*

*(Answering Ed Harris) Why me? Because my Power Point presentations helped me make \$950,000 last year. How much did you make?*

*I could go out tonight with the Power Point presentation you got and make \$15,000! (To Alan Arkin) Could you?*



*A guy don't let you open your lap top lest he wants to buy. (To Lemmon) Are you man enough to make him sit through the slides?*

*Now, let me show you tonight's Power Point on:*

*Slide One: "This Month's Sales Contest"*

*Slide Two: "First place is a Cadillac"*

*Slide Three: "Second prize... a set of steak knives"*

*Slide Four: "Third prize.... You're fired"*

*Oh, did my Power Point get your attention .....*

Oh yes, the ubiquitous Power Point. Hasn't it done for presentations what word processing did for written communication? That is, make them easy to prepare in a professional looking fashion.

Applying a SST® lens helps us see the limitations of Power Point presentations. While they appeal to Sensors of the population they can be a bad fit for those of who prefer Intuition for taking in information. Sensors like information that is presented in a step-by-step fashion loaded with specific facts and figures. Knowing that they will get to pricing in slide six, will put them at ease.

On the other hand, Intuitive types like to be free to make associations, or Intuitive leaps. During slide four's "Applications", they may want to explore novel ways of using your product and not want to go immediately to "Specifications" in slide five.

Power Point presentations not only numb the creativity characteristic of Intuitives, but they are also devoid of the emotional connection important to Feeling preferred decision makers. Can you imagine if New York Yankee immortal Lou Gehrig had used Power Point for his famous farewell?

For those of you who aren't baseball fans, Gehrig batted clean-up behind Babe Ruth on what most consider the greatest team of all time. Nicknamed the "Iron Horse", Gehrig contracted what is now commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. With Yankee Stadium awash in tears the stricken Gehrig told his adoring fans, *"Today, I am the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I may have been given a bad break. But, I have an awful lot to live for. Thank you"*

A 90's Gehrig, assisted by Power Point, would use the electronic scoreboard to flash a series of slides listing his career .340 batting average, his fielding statistics, and his record for 2130 consecutive games played. The "Pride of the Yankees" would never be a movie and Gary Cooper would be denied his greatest part.

While Thinking preferred decision makers will zero in on itemized "Benefits", dimming the lights for a Power Point shuts down the opportunity to build a personal connection important to many who prefer "Feelings" for their decision making. While you may never approach the emotion of Gehrig's farewell, Power Point presentations do limit your opportunity to stir the heart.

At the risk of being misunderstood, I am not contending that Power Point should never be used. In fact, it is a good fit with the ST "Stabilizer" types who are heavily represented in traditional management positions. SST® facilitator Russ Brooks has good success, for example, using Power Point with bankers. "Banking is an ST environment. Power Point works well there but I use other SST® methods in other settings."

The premise of SST® is that communication effectiveness is the key to selling. Power Point can be a good tool if your target consists of people preferring the ST language. Successful Selling to Type suggests more effective communication styles for the other three languages: SF, NF and NT. AJT

### **Review - Rethinking the Sales Force** by Neil Rackham & John DeVincentis **May 1999**

Neil Rackham brings to selling what Galileo brought to exploration: a little science. More than a decade ago, Rackham and his research team conducted a monumental study by investigating 35,000 sales calls to identify successful selling behaviors. The findings he reported in *SPIN Selling* (McGraw Hill, 1988). were considered as heretical as early assertions that the world is not flat.

Hold on to your hats if you still believe that slick closing techniques and handling objections make the difference in major account selling. Not only is the world round, but thanks to Rackham's research we have learned that the more of those tactics you exhibit the less likely it is that you will succeed. Instead, he discovered that the most compelling selling behavior is the question.

The formulation of a method for investigating client needs is the central contribution of Rackham's landmark *SPIN Selling*. Since then, Rackham has been the principal author for these other helpful contributions to the field of sales: *Major Account Sales Strategy* (McGraw Hill, 1989), *Managing Major Sales* (Harper, 1991) and *Getting Partnering Right* (McGraw Hill, 1996).

In a Sunday edition of "Money & Business" *The New York Times* featured an article called, "Breaking the Mold: Salesmanship Without the Sucker Punch" (2/7/99). Disappointed that they did not give Rackham credit for his pioneering work, I sent a letter off to their editor which they chopped in half and then published (2/28/99). In appreciation, Rackham sent me a gracious reply and a complimentary copy of his just published, *Rethinking the Sales Force* (McGraw-Hill, 1999).

If, like many of our clients, you are trying to figure out how to sell value when your buyers are shopping for commodity like prices, *Rethinking the Sales Force* is a must read. Helpfully, Rackham provides insights from the buyer's perspective which, after all, is the only way we can learn how to *add* value. Simply *communicating* value, he correctly asserts, is no longer enough.

From *Rethinking the Sales Force* we learn that buyers are embracing a model called "strategic buying programs". Herein they weigh two variables: strategic importance and difficulty of substitution for the supplier's product or service. If your product or service is perceived as offering low strategic importance and competes against easy to find alternatives, be prepared for a commodity mentality.

Thankfully, Rackham does more than explain how we can fall in to a commodity trap. He also helps us sellers plan our most effective strategy to get out. The one size fits all approach won't cut it in today's market place. Multiple selling strategies offer the key to success.

## **Lombardi on Leadership**

**February 2000**

Since "coaching" is a model that we use for developing sales leadership skills, we are always interested in learning more about great coaches. When David Maraniss' *When Pride Still Mattered* appeared on the *New York Times* best seller list, it immediately registered as a must read. Maraniss is a Pulitzer Prize winning writer for The Washington Post. His subject is the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers.

What we can learn about leadership from the coach who guided his team to victory in the first Super Bowl, not only transcends sports, but is still relevant as the countdown to Super Bowl thirty-four is underway.

Know your players "There are other coaches who know more about X's and O's," Lombardi once remarked. "But I've got an edge. I know more about football players than they do."

Use different motivational strategies for different Guard Jerry Kramer once joked, "*Lombardi treated us all the same, like dogs.*" It's a funny line that wasn't true. The part about being treated the same, anyway. He knew that players like Paul Hornung didn't mind being taken to task during practice. Others like Willie Davis and Fuzzy Thurston couldn't stand being singled out. Accordingly, he would blast Hornung anytime he screwed-up (usually for being late for curfews) and talk privately with Davis and Thurston.

Quarterback Bart Starr was one of those who preferred private conversations. He approached Lombardi and told him he felt his leadership effectiveness was undermined whenever he got his butt chewed at practice. From then on, Lombardi held his tongue

and reserved all of his concerns for quarterback to coach talks. Starr's performance took off and the Packers started to win.

Lombardi had an uncanny knack for "reading" people. SST® provides a model for all leaders to improve their understanding of their "players". There are also "tools" for customizing communication and reward strategies.

Use rewards that fit the culture Selling and football have a lot in common. In fact, Lombardi once appeared in a film on that subject. One of the big differences, however, is that game day performance on the football field is recorded on film. Lombardi and his staff would break down the performance of every player on every play and grade it as a zero, one or two.

Lombardi then conducted an "Awards Ceremony" and called the names of the players with the highest ratings and most improvement to the front of the room. There he would pull crisp bills from his wallet and pass them out to the honorees. The amount of the bills? First five and eventually ten dollars.

What mattered was what the ceremony represented in the culture: being recognized for doing an excellent job by your boss in front of your peers. The money was secondary. Tight end Gary Knafelc said, *"It was amazing how prideful you would become. It could have been five thousand dollars it meant so much."*

Consequences as well as rewards Every client we know has a rewards system. Yet, more than you would imagine have no system of consequences for team members not meeting expectations. Lombardi's players receiving the crisp bills for consistent level "two" performance and improvement felt prideful and honored. However, those with zeros on their report card knew there would be consequences.

Winning through preparation We break down sales leadership into two fundamental components: skills and strategy. Lombardi's emphasis on grading film performance is an illustration of his emphasis on skills. He personally rode the blocking sled during practice.

He also thoroughly researched his opponent during the week. He would then involve his staff in developing the game plan, or strategy.

With the skills honed through repetition and with the strategy set and communicated, there was little to do on the actual game day. In fact his players joked that, once the game started, he was the most useless guy on the sideline. On game day, It was up to them and they knew it.

Don't forget the basics Lombardi once opened pre-season camp by holding up a ball and saying, "Gentleman, this is a football." To which team cut up Max McGee replied, "Can you slow down coach. You are going a little fast."

Never take yourself too seriously Even Lombardi laughed at McGee's remark.

Your team will respect you for the stands you take Lombardi was a native New Yorker. Born near Brooklyn, he went to college at Fordham where he was one of the legendary "Seven Blocks of Granite". He first coached at an area high school and then was an assistant at West Point. Lombardi broke in with the pros as an assistant with the New York Giants before taking over the reins at Green Bay.

On one of his first road trips with the Packers he encountered segregated housing and feeding arrangements for his players. When he returned to Green Bay, he personally visited every restaurant and tavern that had a reputation for segregation. His message was clear. Discriminate against any Packer and the place would be off limits to all Packers. On the next southern road trip he used his West Point connections to make arrangements for the entire team to stay at a local army base.

Know when to change the plays When Lombardi came to the New York Giants he introduced an offense that had been successful at West Point. Old pros like Charlie Connerly and gifted new ones like Frank Gifford could not hide their skepticism. Rather than jamming it down their throats, he visited with them in their pre-season residence hall rooms and asked for their help. He earned their respect and loyalty and the Giant's offense became one of the best in the league.

Know when to make personnel changes Packer center Jim Ringo brought an agent with him to his annual contract conference with Lombardi. The agent pushed Lombardi for a raise for his client. Lombardi excused himself from his office. When he returned a few minutes later he said, "Take it up with the Eagles. I just traded Mr. Ringo to them."

Teamwork Following a rare loss, Lombardi gathered his team around him and said, *"Let it be an example to all of us. The Green Bay Packers are no better than anyone else when they aren't ready, when they play as individuals and not as one ... Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."*

Winning Selling and football are two fields where there are winners and losers. Perhaps the most famous saying attributed to Lombardi is, *"Winning isn't everything. It is the only thing."* Maraniss provides a fairly extensive treatment of the origin of that quote. It was actually uttered by a young actress playing a football coach's daughter. Lombardi saw the movie and, sure it hung on the locker room walls of the Packers. But, the saying appeared at other NFL camps as well.

What about this emphasis on winning? Critics have said it has been over emphasized. My take on Lombardi and winning is that his real emphasis was on "playing to win." There is a subtle but important difference. Lombardi wasn't the kind of coach who berated his team after they lost. He would, in fact be a consoling influence. Before long, he would be looking ahead to prepare for the next game, or even season. He surprised his players by how quickly he tried to lighten the mood after a loss.

Ever catch yourself or your team going through the motions instead of playing to win? Playing to win means recognizing that your objective is to win the game, or the account, by executing the best skills and strategy each and every time.

Perhaps Paul Hornung put it best in a letter he wrote to his coach once his playing days had ended. *"I believe the greatest thing I learned from your Football has not only been the idea of winning but WHY you want to win."*

And, the WHY is winning instills pride. *"Everybody has ability, but pride in performance is what makes the difference. Now, how do you develop pride. Pride is developed from a winning tradition."*

When Pride Still Mattered by David Maraniss. Does pride still matter in your team?

Summary Are there any leaders among us who couldn't improve their performance by:

- • Knowing your players
- • Using different motivational strategies for different players
- • Using rewards that fit the culture
- • Rendering consequences as well as rewards
- • Preparing strategy and emphasizing skills
- • Emphasizing the basics
- • Remembering not to take yourself too seriously
- • Taking important stands
- • Knowing when to change the plays
- • Knowing when to change the players
- • Promoting teamwork
- • And, playing to win

## **Balance & Shade**

**May 2000**

Each time we teach SST®, an astute observer will raise the question of the difficulty of "typing" a prospect accurately. They say something like:

*"My God, I wasn't even sure of my own type after going through SST® and having taken the MBTI. How in the world can I type someone else accurately? Especially in the context of a sales call, when I'm trying to remember to ask good questions and listen. Let alone all of the technical expertise I need to bring to the table."*

SST® is one of those programs where the process is as important as the outcome. That is to say, the mere process of using the SST® tools to identify preferences of a

client is valuable all by itself. They discipline us to put the focus of the process where it should be: on the buyer. And, if you can't type someone, it doesn't matter.

Doesn't matter? Yes, it doesn't matter because ensuring that your messages, stories and value propositions are balanced will enhance your communication effectiveness. When you are unsure of a client's preferences, your communication effectiveness can still be significantly increased by "balancing" your communication.

### Balance

Balance simply requires understanding your own preferences and natural tendency to emphasize them in communication. To be balanced means making certain that you are sending Intuitive as well as Sensing messages and Feeling as well as Thinking messages.

Having provided the assurance that SST® is really goof-proof, we would like to add that our experience shows that most times prospects and clients will "scream" their preferences. Roughly, this is what we find 8 times out of 10.

Even when someone shouts, "I am a Sensing Thinker", we don't advise sending exclusive "Sensing-Thinking" kinds of messages. One reason is that intellectually capable people like the buyers and buyer influences you encounter require information that appeals to all four of the mental functions.

Therefore, even when someone's preferences are crystal clear, we advise that you "shade" your communication.

Shade means giving information that appeals to the client's preferences first, and following with the other function. In other words, if you are certain you have a Sensor, start with the facts and details before describing the big picture and future benefits. If you are with a "Thinker", give her the "logic to buy" first. Then, make your "Feeling" oriented points about the positive impact on people.

### Don't Type During the Call

Finally, to those of you alarmed about having too much to do during a sales call, we hope to comfort you with the observation that we don't recommend that you "type" during the call. Recall that our objective is to conduct a dialogue with the client and not appear like we are doing a psychological profile.

What we do advise, is that as soon after the call as possible, run through the Behavioral Cues Worksheets found in the SST® Binder. Or, you can use a SST® Planning Folder to record your impressions. Ask yourself, "What did I see?". Place a check mark next to each phrase that fits. This discipline will be rewarded many times over.

## **My Mentor & Friend, Ron Cherry**

**May 2000**

My mentor and friend Ron Cherry died this week. Over the years, most of you have heard me refer to "My Mentor", although rarely by name. In the introduction to SST®, I tell the story about how I was introduced to consulting by a faculty colleague who invited me to apply the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to help his client improve teamwork. That introduction was the impetus to my consulting career and eventually the development of SST®, a selling relative to the MBTI.

Others have heard me reference Ron when a tough organizational question came my way. I'd say something like, "Let me check with Ron Cherry who has been my mentor over the years. He is just the brightest guy I know on matters like this."

With an exchange of e-mails followed by an early lunch at Topps Diner, (*"Brand loyalty, you know"*) Ron would offer insights that were just brilliant. Before "thinking outside the box" became a buzz word, Ron had it down to an art form. Before "client centered" thinking or "Customer Relationship Management" became trends, Ron was demonstrating those principles. He was consistently years ahead of the management curve.

Perhaps you recall my reference to Ron when I have encouraged your team to challenge creeping "group think". *"Being a team does not mean agreeing all the time."*

Once, I backed down from a position because Ron made a more compelling case. To which he responded, *"If we agree, one of us is redundant."*

Another time, I recited the famous Thorndike quote to Ron. "If it exists", I said "it can be measured." Ron replied, *"If you can measure it, it probably doesn't matter."*

Simply, Ron was the best teacher I ever saw and the brightest guy I ever met. He saw things no one else could. I will always be indebted to him and aspire to the standards he set.

## **Introversion and Selling**

**November 2000**

Selling is a field predominated by those with an Extraverted orientation. *The Atlas of Type Tables* (MacDaid & others, 1994) reports roughly a 70 percent representation of Extraverts in the field of sales, to just 30 percent for Introverts. There are three main reasons for this. One is the conventional view that "selling is telling." Two, sales selection surveys used by many organizations in recruiting consider behaviors and characteristics associated with Extraversion as assets for sales success. Finally, there is a self-selection phenomenon in sales management, whereby Extraverted sales



managers (who dominate the field statistically) tend to recruit and promote individuals with style preferences similar to their own.

Contrary to the view that Introversion is a handicap in selling, our work at PfP Consulting suggests that Introverts have a natural gift that contributes to their sales effectiveness: they tend to be excellent listeners. This is particularly important in complex and major account settings, where successful selling always begins with good questioning and effective listening.

## **Selling is Telling**

Selling is a field that is viewed by many as a competition between the sales person and the prospective customer. Prospects are considered adversaries, or game, and words become the ammunition a sales person is trained to use in shooting the game. Indeed, “hunters” and “farmers” are metaphors commonly used to distinguish sales people who are good at bagging new prey from those who are more skilled at cultivating existing crops in the customer service function.

Old School selling promoted bromides like clever closing scripts and masterful objection handling. Even those organizations embracing a more contemporary consultative approach to selling, still focus most of their training resources on the words sales people will say in their presentations.

Whether Old School or Consultative, the underlying assumption in both approaches is that “selling is telling”. To succeed, the “hunter” needs to spot the prospect in the pipeline, line it up in the cross hairs, and then fire a sales pitch (read “value proposition”) with its supporting slides and marketing pieces.

In *Successful Selling to Type SST*® ([www.tildensst.com](http://www.tildensst.com)), our sales model that applies Jungian principles to the selling process, “telling” is closely associated with the Extraverted orientation. This is one reason why Extraverts are attracted to (or recruited into) the field.

## **Selection Instruments**

The bias toward choosing Extraverts for sales positions is clearly evident in so-called sales aptitude tests. Along with factors like “Motivation”, “Goal Orientation”, “Planning” and “Team Player”, *#1 Sales Aptitude Test* ([salestesting.com](http://salestesting.com)) actually assesses “Extroversion” as a scale to determine whether or not a candidate can sell. According to them, the lower your “Extroversion” the lower your sales aptitude.

In its *Sales Aptitude Test*, Pegasus International includes what it calls an “Involving” scale. The language used to describe this scale sounds much like an Introversion-Extraversion description: *“The Involving scale is associated with social energy, social*

*activity, and willingness to interact with a wide variety of people.*” If an applicant scores low on Involvement he or she may not naturally be cut out for sales.

To put it another way, according to #1 Sales Test and Pegasus, being an Introvert is as undesirable as having low motivation, lacking a goal orientation, not having a plan or being a bad team player. For reasons we outline below, we seriously question the predictive validity of these instruments and doubt that they satisfy American Psychological Association standards for educational and psychological tests.

### **Self Selection**

The third reason Extraverts are heavily represented in selling is that Extraverted sales leaders recruit and select them. Whether conscious or not, sales managers tend to make comparisons to people who have succeeded in the past; including themselves. It is not uncommon for us to hear a selection explained by a sales leader observing that a successful candidate reminded him or her of himself or herself.

From the candidate’s side, they are assessing comfort level of the work environment and fit with the team. As countless studies with the MBTI and Strong have shown, “Birds of a feather flock together”. As a field, selling attracts, recruits and selects lots of Extraverted birds.

### **Selling is More than Telling**

The problem with this state of affairs is that selling is a lot more than telling. Especially at the major and complex account level, the twin investigation skills of asking good questions and listening are indispensable. Neil Rackham’s (1988) research should set the record straight here. His monumental study of 35,000 sales calls found no statistical correlation between success and skills we associate with Extraversion and “telling”. In fact, he found the more a sales person attempted to close the sale, the less likely he or she was to succeed.

What he did find was that the exemplary performers in major and complex sales actually demonstrated skills more closely associated with Introversion. They asked good questions and they listened to understand the needs and challenges of the prospect or client.

### **Introverts Are Often Exemplary Sales Performers**

In our work as consultants to organizations seeking to improve sales performance, we frequently conduct “Exemplary Performer Analyses”. In these studies we analyze and compare practices and characteristics of exemplary performers to average performers. Often, we find that the stars are not the otherwise highly visible Extraverts. Rather, many of the exemplary performers are the quieter Introverts who have naturally

developed superior listening skills. After all, when the Extraverts are talking, Introverts get a lot of practice at it.

In sum, those who subscribe to the conventional wisdom that “selling is telling” do a real disservice to Introverts when they discourage them from pursuing sales careers. Often, Introverts are more naturally gifted at the twin skills of questioning and listening than their Extravert counterparts. How can you tell? Do as we do. Look at the sales performance results, and ask their customers.

## **Presidential Politics & Personality Type**

### **January 2001**

Those of you familiar with SST® know that we apply Carl Jung’s theory of personality types to the selling process. Rule #1 of SST® is that you don’t need to determine the personality type of your prospect or client in order improve your communication effectiveness. You do, however, need to understand one personality type very well: your own.

With improved self-understanding we then apply the SST® model to *Balance* our messages to be certain they appeal to all types and not just our own. We apply *Balance* whenever we are communicating to a group or when we don’t know the message receiver’s preferences.

Often, however, people provide huge clues making it quite simple to read their preferences. When we know the other party’s type we can *Shade* our communication in that direction. Incidentally, the word “Shade” was chosen with care to indicate that we never advocate sending messages exclusively to one preference over another.

This **Celebrity Profiling** column is for the SST® practitioner who would like to continue to develop his or her SST® skills at reading personality clues by practicing on celebrities. It models one we use in SST® clinics. Sharper people reading skills will enable you to identify the communication style of others.

With the appropriate qualifiers in place for the inaugural **Celebrity Profiling** column, let’s get started.

### **Type and Politics**

The biggest story of 2000, and perhaps the biggest US political story ever, was the election of George W. Bush. Recognizing the hazards of politicizing this newsletter, I need to indicate that anyone named Tilden has to sympathize with the candidate who wins the popular vote. Former Democratic Governor of my home state of New York Samuel J. Tilden did in 1876. But, like Al Gore he lost the Electoral College with votes being contested in four southern states, including Florida of all places. Republican winner Rutherford B. Hayes went on to be one of the worst presidents in history. I just

hope the analogy will end there. But, this is about personality and not political preferences.

Back in 1996, Russ Brooks and I were delivering a SST® workshop on a day that happened to coincide with the last of the Clinton-Dole debates. When we asked for suggestions for the **Celebrity Profiling** exercise Clinton and Dole were naturals. It should surprise no one that two were as different as possible on all four of the SST® scales. We typed Clinton as the comfortable and charismatic Extraverted candidate who appeared to gain energy by interacting with the crowd assembled for the town meeting format. Bob Dole, on the other hand, appeared stiffer and awkward with the format that did not allow him private time to think. Both are characteristics consistent with the Introverted orientation.

Fast forwarding to election 2000, Extraversion and Introversion again played prominent roles in how the candidates behaved and were perceived by the voters. Only this time, it was the Republican Bush who was the Extraverted candidate and Democrat Gore who was Introverted.

In fact, post-election analysis by political pundits suggests that it was Bush's capacity to appear comfortable and at ease with crowd and Gore's "wooden" appearance that made the biggest difference in the election outcome.

Gore's attempts at being more affable and outgoing appeared forced and unnatural. Indeed, they were. Only when Gore had the opportunity to think through the content of his gracious concession speech did he really score with public opinion.

What is sad about all of this is being an Introverted or Extraverted candidate has nothing to do with capabilities or performance as a president. Nor do they as a sales person as PfP partner, Harry Koolen and I addressed in the last SST® newsletter (see "Introversion and Selling" in archived articles section of [www.tildensst.com](http://www.tildensst.com)).

Doesn't it make you curious about how often Introverted candidates have beaten their Extraverted rivals? Or, how often we confuse Extraverted qualities for competency? Is it because most of us are Extraverted and we are more comfortable with people with like qualities? I just wonder if old Sam Tilden was the Introverted candidate. AJT

### **Dr. J on Leadership** **March – April 2001**

My younger daughter Rachael and I were big Sixer fans in the mid 1980s. Her hero was Maurice Cheeks their excellent point guard while I marveled at the gravity defying moves of Julius "Dr. J" Erving. To commemorate Martin Luther King's birthday and to support their Gifted Minority Scholarship program, Shippensburg University recently invited Dr. J as their honored guest and speaker. In recent years they have hosted the

likes of Yolanda King (Martin's daughter), Jesse Jackson, Harry Belafonte and Danny Glover.

Today, Rachael is finishing a graduate degree at Ship and she invited me to be her guest at the event. Dr.J, although mostly gray, is still a pretty elegant guy. His talk was loaded with leadership and teamwork pearls some of which I have tried to capture below.

#### Don't thump your chest

*"When you do something good act like you know how, that you expected to do it, and that you plan to do it again."*

#### On winning & Losing

*"When you win don't boast. When you lose try not to cry."*

#### Fundamentals

*"Never forget the fundamentals. In basketball they involve boxing out, looking up the court, squaring –up. What are the fundamentals of your work? If you have forgotten the fundamentals you are headed for a slump."*

**The Doc said his heroes include Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Bill Cosby and Bill Russell. *"They are my starting team of heroes. Everybody should have their own starting five. Who are you going to put on the floor? I told you why I chose my team. What criteria do you use for choosing heroes? If you are the guy across the dinner table from your kids, would they want to choose you?"***

#### Leadership

*"Leaders are decisive. Martin Luther King said, 'I have dream!' He didn't say, 'I've been working on this idea about how character is more important than color. I may have something. Now I want to set up a committee to study this character and color thing."*

#### Leaders Make it Easy to Follow

*"When Lewis and Clark explored the Northwest they didn't have a map. But, they brought one back."*

## Sharing the Ball

Kobe Bryant and Shaq O'Neal are feuding over who takes more shots with the Lakers. Eighteen years ago there was another combination of all star small forward and center who had to share one ball. Their names were Moses Malone and Dr. J. When asked if they ever feuded the Doc replied, *"We respected one another. He did things I couldn't do and I made contributions to the team he couldn't make. No, we never feuded. We worked as a team and brought home the prize."*

## Another Standing Ovation

During his playing days standing ovations were common for Dr. J. At age 50 he just received another one. This one wasn't for a thundering slam -dunk but for his inspirational words delivered at Shippensburg University on February 15, 2001. When they announce my starting team of heroes I will be sure to hear the Spectrum's legendary PA announcer Dave Zinkhoff call out:

*"annnnnd....."*

*The Doctor  
Number Six  
Julius  
Errrrrrrrrrving!*

## Custom Tailored Suits March – April 2001

Partner Harry Koolen and I were conducting an Exemplary Performer Analysis for a Wall Street investment bank. In these studies we look to identify and then bottle the "Best Practices" of star performers. This research becomes a centerpiece of our training as we enable more "Typical" performers to employ the methods of their high achieving counterparts.

One of the Exemplary Performers we interviewed proposed that each one of his successes was a "custom tailored suit". We found the image compelling. Your clients are not buying an inexpensive off the rack solution. They are paying more to have the solution you represent customized just for them.

In preparing a custom tailored suit, we need to question and listen to learn as much as possible about our client and his or her sartorial needs and preferences. Extreme care must be exercised in measuring to ensure that the suit fits and the drape is just right.

When will the suit be worn? Will it be a one or multi-season option? For business

purposes? Will it be packed frequently for travel? Will a double breasted jacket be a complimentary style? Cuffs? Where would you like the break to fall? Pleated pants?

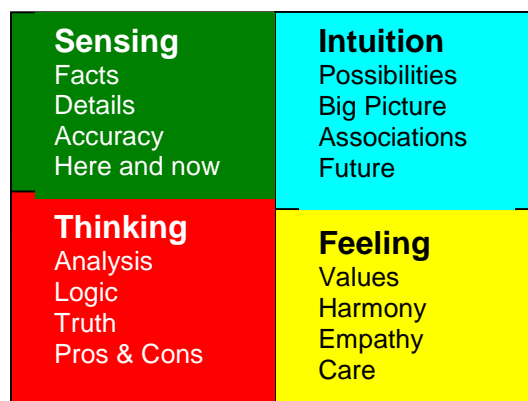
The good tailor understands that the lady or gentleman investing in a suit is buying more than cloth. They are most interested in what the suit will help them accomplish. Do they want to fit in better with their firm's culture? Look the part of a banker or lawyer? Convey success, maturity and or authority? Is it an aspiring young professional pursuing the wisdom of dressing for the job they want rather than the one they have?

Similarly, successful selling requires learning the end objective of the client or prospect. Recall the sage observation that when someone shops for a drill bit, they are buying more than a hole. Are they hanging pictures? Changing locks? Toward what end? Successful selling requires the deepest understanding of client objectives.

During the early stages of the relationship, both suit shoppers and clients will want more questions and less advice. However, once the relationship matures and they are confident that you both understand them and have the expertise to help them achieve their objectives, they will readily seek your advice and will require less time.

### **Spy Plane Standoff – A Lesson in Balanced Communication June 2001**

Balance is a core SST concept. It refers to sending messages that appeal to all communication preferences (Sensing, Intuition, Thinking & Feeling) rather than our tendencies to communicate in the two that we naturally prefer. The four quadrants of the SST logo represent a handy illustration of what we mean by Balance.



**“It’s not about us. It’s about them.”**

We don’t need to know the receiving party’s communication preferences to *Balance* our messages. We just need to know our own and our natural tendencies to send messages the way *we*, but not necessarily *they* would like to receive them. The SST

motto is: “*Non de nobis agitur. Sed de istis.*” Translation: “It’s not about us. It’s about them.”

Negotiation requires a kindred set of skills to selling. It is a process that requires first seeking to understand through effective questioning and listening. Then, we seek to be understood, taking care that we have a Balanced message.

In instances when we are able to read the preferences of our clients and prospects we *Shade* messages accordingly. For example, if it is clear that we have a Sensor, we start with all of the facts and figures and proceed in a sequential fashion before entertaining any “Big Picture” or Intuitive considerations.

### **Balanced Spy Plane Negotiations**

During the recent spy plane standoff between the United States and China I was reminded of the power of *Balancing* messages when the *New York Times* applauded the Bush administration for its “balanced approach”. In case you have been in a cave without newspapers, television or radio for the last month, an American surveillance plane was forced to land in Chinese territory on Hainan island on April 1. The plane is still there and the 24 -member crew was “detained” for 11 days.

The analysis that follows is intended to be instructive in using the principles of SST in negotiating effectively in business-to-business selling and not a political commentary. With that as a qualifier, here goes.

In the earliest stages of the crisis, it appeared that both sides were seeking to be understood before they had a full understanding of the other side. A National Security Council spokeswoman characterized it this way: “We present our case. The Chinese present their case. No new ground gets covered. It isn’t very productive.”

Remind you of any business negotiations you have witnessed lately? Does me.

### **Sensing – Thinking Stalemate**

Both sides were initially operating in the Sensing modes giving conflicting facts. China claimed that the US plane rammed the Chinese fighter pilot. The United States contended that the nimbler Chinese fighter plane was buzzing the big lumbering US plane and accidentally hit it.

The logic of the Thinking mode followed. Based on the conflicting facts each side made different demands. From the US perspective the initial position was to insist that the plane was sovereign territory and to immediately release the detainees. In turn, China demanded that reconnaissance flights be terminated. According to news accounts the United States at least (and probably China) began weighing the pros and cons of different options like military action and restricting trade. Communication driven by the Sensing and Thinking modes led to a stalemate.



## Intuitive – Feeling Breakthrough

It wasn't until the communication was *Balanced* from the Intuitive and Feeling perspectives that there were signs of a breakthrough. From the Intuitive point of view, the question of future diplomatic and trade issues surfaced. President Bush read a carefully worded statement indicating that, "The longer this goes, the more likely it could – *could*, jeopardize relations and we don't want that to happen."

Other Intuitive issues related to China's bid for the Olympics and the US sale of advanced arms to Taiwan. The early hard line demands began to soften.

The real breakthrough, however, seems to have been catalyzed by attention to the Feeling mode of communication. As in typical business - to - business negotiations, this mode is the one most likely to be neglected and the one where the biggest negotiation and relationship building gains can be earned.

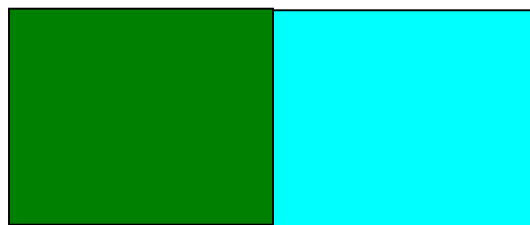
Seeking to understand from the perspective of the other side, Secretary of State Colin Powell began to express "sorrow" for the accident and the lost life of the Chinese fighter pilot. The Chinese encouraged Powell indicating that he was moving in the right direction. Eventually, a carefully phrased formal letter with the words "sorrow" and "real sorrow" won the release of the American crew.

Further to the significance of Feeling oriented communication plays in high level dialogue, I need to add that the leaders of these two super powers, George W. Bush and Jiang Zemin, have never met. I can't help but think that had some form of personal relationship been established before the accident that there would have been a prompt resolution.

## Sensing – Thinking Dominates Military & Business Communication

Research clearly shows that people with the Sensing and Thinking preferences dominate the military. It is no surprise that these are the two communication styles that prevailed in the early stages of the negotiation process. They are also the two styles that are most common in business communication. It was not until those natural orientations were *Balanced* by Intuitive and Feeling messages that the stalemate was broken and the detainees released. We see analogous dynamics in business negotiations every day.

A good and easy to use tool for *Balancing* your communication is to recreate the SST logo and then complete all four quadrants with themes that fit. Chances are that communication themes will come quickly and naturally to the two quadrants consistent with your own preferences and that you will have to work harder for the other two. Had the Bush administration applied SST to the Spy Plane Negotiations it would have looked like this:



<b>Sensing</b> Your fault Details Air space Law	<b>Intuition</b> Future trade Taiwan Olympics Global impact
<b>Thinking</b> Alternatives Military Embargos Pros - Cons	<b>Feeling</b> Save face Their values Relationships Harmony

Balance is a key to communication effectiveness and winning negotiations in any arena.

### Value Propositions for Baby Boomers Summer 2002

This isn't a personality type specific article, but one on buying behavior in general. After all, our readers are both sellers *and* buyers. And, I imagine that like me, when you are on the buying end of the process, you are thinking about lessons that might be applied to where we make our livings: selling.

In *The Next Economy*, author Elliot Ettenberg proposes that we are already through the Information Economy and into the next one. Along the way, he draws out differences in buying behaviors across generations.

The Baby Boomers of my generation have always known that our depression-era parents were shaped by those tough times. Prudence and frugality are deeply engrained in their economic behaviors. For example, my Dad, with whom I have enjoyed golf for five decades, cannot tolerate losing a golf ball. His golf buddies are the same way. It is as though the metrics of the game have shifted for them, from strokes per hole to the net number of balls gained or lost during the course of play. Admittedly, there are some days I would prefer this scoring.

When I or one of my golf buddies hit an errant shot, we give no more than a cursory look, fault the lost ball for its bad behavior and quickly smack another. After all, our problem with golf is not a short supply of golf balls but a short supply of time to play.

Where my parents generation, what Tom Brokaw rightly termed *The Greatest Generation*, is frugal and prudent, my generation has this crazy expectation that what we buy will work. And, if it is working, we don't have a buying drive to run out and get the latest version.

This distinguishes us from the X Generation of my children. For example, my young technology friends who translate these words to web speak, where you are now able to read them, are astonished that they were generated by a computer that is three years

old! Listening to them, you would think I had produced the letters with a hammer and chisel.

All of this has to do with what should be a simple but fundamental selling concept that we should all hold near and dear: value proposition. If your product or service does not create value for the buyer, you shouldn't be selling it. If you are selling to gray-haired Baby Boomers, we are likely to have an expectation that what you are selling will work. Even if it has the latest whiz bang technology, it still needs to work for us to add value.

Let me recount three recent buying experiences where technology-enhanced value proposition fell short. I'll begin with my Amazon experience, when partner Harry Koolen encouraged me to get an e-book there. I quickly ordered the book as background for our presentation skills course. Amazon confirmed within hours that my e-book had been sent. Fast is good.

Once I tried to open my new e-book, however, I got a mind-boggling series of error messages. Amazon encouraged me to download a new version of Adobe Reader. This was free from their site, but it took almost two hours. The result with my new reader was the same set of error messages. I asked my more computer literate project manager to troubleshoot and even the even-tempered Kim grew frustrated.

Next, we tried a Pitney Bowes product that alleges to print postage from your computer. They have a great value proposition for the small office — saving time running to and standing in line at the post office. This product also took a good chunk of time to download. It offered the same result: it did not work.

After going through a painful set of e-mail exchanges with warnings from Pitney Bowes such as, *"Do not reply to this e-mail,"* I got to talk to a live person. He explained that they had never tested the printer I was using. When I inquired about another printer in the office, he advised me that it too had not been tested. Lest you think these are some off-price unusual brands, one is a Hewlett Packard and the other a Xerox. Incredibly, the Gen Xer from Pitney Bowes expected us to resolve the problem by running out and acquiring a printer compatible with their software.

Just to complete the E-Purchase Trifecta, I went shopping for health insurance at an e-store. Mid-way through completing an application, a required step before you can access any pertinent information, the page expired. My e-mail request for help was never answered. I called and, after a serenade of annoying elevator music, got to a live customer service specialist. While I held, she went online and cheerily explained that the system worked for her. Biting my tongue, I asked how that helped me. I guess that stumped the band because she referred me to a sales guy who, guess what, will send hard copies of information. By the way, I use one of those odd computers made by Compaq equipped with software from some company named Microsoft.

In each of the three instances, a great value proposition fell short. I bought a book from Amazon and postage from Pitney Bowes and, in exchange, have received nothing. Their agents confused the ability of the technology to work for them or someone else,

for the value it created for this buyer. Amazon wins points for being fast, but ultimately loses because I don't have a book I can read.

The lesson, I hope, is pretty clear. It is not enough to communicate value to a Baby Boom buyer. You must actually create it. We old-timers still subscribe to the notion that what you sell and what we buy will work. The SST motto informs all sellers of all generations:

*Non de nobis agitur. Sed de istis.*

It is not about us. It is about them

## **Sales Teams & User Manuals Summer 2002**

So, you are a sales leader. Like every modern executive you have a full complement of resources to help you get your job done. With one notable exception, a user manual accompanies each piece of equipment in your office.

You have user manuals for: computers, software, printers, copiers, fax machines, cell phones and of course the cars your team takes onto the road. Whether the medium is print or electronic, the table of contents for your equipment is basically the same:

- ❑ Getting it started
- ❑ Getting it to do what you want it to do
- ❑ Getting it to work with other equipment
- ❑ Special functions
- ❑ Routine Maintenance
- ❑ What to do when it doesn't work
- ❑ Who to call in case of emergency

The one exception for getting a user manual is for the most important resource available to a sales leader: the human ones. Unlike every other resource at your disposal, the members of the sales team you lead do not come with user manuals.

To make things even more complicated, everyone on your team is different. Just when you think you have figured out how to get one team member started, you try the same approach with another one and miss the mark completely. Often we make the mistake of believing the people we lead are like us. What we would require as "routine maintenance" should work for them. But, it doesn't.

While we have no user manuals for the human resources we lead, Carl Jung's theory, applied to selling in the SST® model, is an extremely helpful contribution for understanding what makes individual members of a sales team tick. In fact the Seller Profiles for the sixteen types comes as close as you can get to a Sales Team User

Manual. Of course, we'd be happy to provide you with more information on this valuable resource.

## **The Art of Listening Fall 2002**

Often during a training session we will cite research performed by Neil Rackham and his team that sought to identify the behaviors of top performing sales people in major and complex settings. We'll go on to add that it wasn't "closing", which actually was found to have an inverse relationship to success (the more you do it, the less you succeed). Nor was it traditional sales training pabulum like "handling objections" or "asking for the order".

What then, we will ask, did Rackham find when he and his team investigated 35,000 sales calls searching for common denominators in successful selling?

Although we accept two answers, Rackham's fundamental finding was that the best sales people ask the best questions. The trick to interpreting Rackham's work is appreciating that it was indeed *research*, much needed for a field rife with unsubstantiated opinions and polemics. As such, Rackham's researchers were restricted to what they could actually observe and then quantify for further analysis.

While you can hear a sales person ask a question, even count and classify the kinds of questions she asks, the other requisite investigation skill is hidden to a researcher's eyes and ears. That skill of course is listening.

A carefully planned and well - delivered question is a wasted gem if it goes unaccompanied with careful listening. Yet it is the neglected skill in most sales skill development programs.

We have always contended that successful selling is a mix of science and art. Rackham provided the science with his research pinpointing good questions as the skill that sets top performers apart. Effective listening is the art.

The art of effective listening begins with focusing on the client. Counselors would call it being "client centered". When doing the investigation, check all of your product's features-advantages& benefits, and particularly all of your pitch books, at the door. Immerse yourself in listening fully and empathically to your client or prospect. Place yourself in the client's chair and seek to understand issues and problems from his perspective.

Too often we observe sales people plan good questioners, then during the actual interview, get wrapped-up in themselves and neglect to listen. Instead, they begin to prepare the phrasing of their next question and never fully hear what their prospect or client has to say. We need to resist a natural tendency to prematurely label a problem,

which leads to focusing on the product or service we represent rather than conducting a full diagnosis.

Listening goes beyond words. It requires that you establish a rapport with your prospect or client so that they feel comfortable enough with you to divulge everything about their problem. Kathy Taylor of Barclays Global Investors encourages sales people to pay attention to the *“little things that are not so little”* in conducting an investigation. *“Pay attention to your body language”*, she encourages. *“Convey that you are open and listening, not closed and distracted.”*

One of the listening exercises we like is called the Three Stage Rocket. We put the class in groups of three with the following rotating roles: a message sender (A), a message receiver (B) and a referee (C). As and Bs are assigned opposing sides of a controversy to argue: speed limits, school uniforms, euthanasia and the like. Before the receiver (B) can send a message back to A, he or she is required to reflect back to A's satisfaction what A just said. Sound easy? Try it.

The beauty of the exercise is that you can't do it without listening. What participants find themselves doing is focusing on what they are going to say next, rather than on what is being said. Indeed, this violates the core principle of SST, reflected in the Latin motto: *No de nobis agitur. Sed de istis. It is not about us. It is about them.*

The Three Stage Rocket teaches the skill of summarizing: reflecting back to someone what they said to verify that you understand. It is an excellent communication skill which can be initiated by saying something like, *“Let me make sure I understand. Your concern is that ...”*. You can practice summarizing anytime and with anyone.

It might seem paradoxical, but the most compelling behaviors are the ones that focus, not on what we have to say, but on understanding what others are saying. This requires both questioning and listening. The best sales people excel at it.

## **Selling to Santa Claus December 2002**

Ever wonder about Santa Claus' personality type? Me either, until I was scratching around for a newsletter topic that would be both holiday cheery and instructive.

Let's say you have reflected on the year 2002 and nothing in your behavior stands out as being particularly “nice”. What if all the “naughty” things you have done have actually been recorded through improved technology and reported to the North Pole? Naturally, you are concerned with how this will factor into gifts left under the tree, year-end bonuses or the like.

Fearing the humiliation of charcoal, you realize that you have to set upon an urgent SST strategy to persuade the jolly old one to come through for you. We begin with the Behavioral Cues exercise on page 29 in the SST Book. (It immediately occurs to you

that the SST book would make a marvelous Christmas gift, only \$17.84 with the holiday 15% discount. )

### **Extraversion – Introversion**

Is Santa an Extravert or Introvert? While our first image may be of kids sitting on his lap during the Christmas season, we cannot lose sight of how he spends most of his time and where he spends it. Nor can we ignore the rumors that many of the department store Santa's are actually stand-ins for the real thing.

But for most of the year, could this guy be any further removed from other people than the North Pole? His work setting speaks loudly of one preferred by those with an Introverted orientation. Interruptions are controlled and he works closely with a small team of elves and reindeer. On balance, our SST hypothesis is that the rotund one is an Introvert who has become skilled at appealing jolly when he need to be.

### **Sensing – Intuition**

Determining Santa's type on this scale is a SST no – brainer. It is clear that anybody who works with his hands all day long, and has remained jolly for so many years, has to have a Sensing preference. This kind of daily regimen would drive an Intuitive type to talking with the reindeer about ways to perform Christmas tasks in a more contemporary fashion.

For example, an Intuitive type would never tolerate an arcane channel of distribution like a reindeer drawn sleigh in this age of electronic commerce. Claus has been doing things the same way for so long that it makes you wonder if he even has a strategic plan. No, this guy Santa Claus is a Sensor with a capital S.

### **Thinking – Feeling**

Again, Santa's preferences are abundantly clear here. His rewards are more psychic than tangible. They have to do with making children happy and not bottom line profit. Remember how he intervened in the Rudolph crisis and created harmony among the team? This is definitely Feeling oriented behavior.

A Thinking type, on the other hand, would apply cold logical analysis to the North Pole operation looking to itemize costs & benefits at every turn. Why elves? Are they as productive as non-elves? Are they a protected class, or could we open up the search and hire people who have the native talents to fit our performance criteria? Are these guys even evaluated?

It wouldn't stop there. Logical performance driven questions would be raised about organizational structure (Who reports to whom here? Where does Mrs. Claus fit in?); the eight reindeer (What do they do the *other* 364 days of the year?); and the North Pole location (Wouldn't another location be more economical and allow us to recruit staff other than elves and reindeer?).

## Judging – Perceiving

Santa's preference on this scale is very easy to read. He's a Judger. After all, can you name a deadline bigger than December 25? No one with the Perceiving, "deadlines are made to be extended" orientation, would survive in Santa's workshop. It is clear that Claus is comfortable in a work environment characterized by an emphasis on task management and timely delivery.

## Verification

Let's dial over to the ISFJ Buyer Profile on pages 62 & 63 in the SST book available at Amazon

Our first clue that we have accurately typed Mr. Claus is that SFs are represented in the red quadrant of the SST logo, symbolic of their warm personalities. If Santa is not a SF, why does he wear a red suit?

As we read the full profile to plan our selling strategy, language like the following stands out:

*"ISFJs are at their best when they are able to help others by providing practical forms of assistance. They tend to be sympathetic and kind. ISFJs are always meticulously organized and strong with details."*

Merry Christmas and, as my daughters would affirm, Santa actually prefers a cold beer on Christmas Eve rather than milk and cookies.

## Five Rules of Relationships Summer 2003

Often at the completion of a SST verification exercise, participants will approach me and observe that they were actually going through the process with two people in mind: themselves and their significant others. In fact, this is such a common occurrence that we use it as the foundation for one of the first SST skill building applications which we call "Type Anyone You Know". Almost invariably, people will apply the SST tool kit to typing their significant others.

When we go around the room and process the exercise, there is always a healthy sampling of humorous anecdotes punctuated with new insights as to why relationships are working or not working. If we were to offer awards for funniest stories they would definitely fall into the "X Husband" category. Of course, I say this being one myself. Here's a sampling:

*"Now I understand that I am a "neat" Judging type and he's a Perceiver. But, does that give him license to leave a pile of dirty clothes too big for the garage?"*



*"OK, so I'm a Sensor who is good with numbers and he's a big picture Intuitive type. Does that excuse him for saying things like, 'How can our account be overdrawn when there are still checks in my register?'"*

*"My X husband is a logical Thinking type. I'm a Feeler. He was out of town on a business trip when we got hit with a big snow- storm. I know he was sincere, but it just wasn't very romantic when he gave me a snow blower for Valentines Day."*

*"As everyone knows, I'm one of those effervescent Extraverted types. My X must be Introverted because when we would go to parties, he would just hang out in the room with the coats."*

There's always room for humor in a workshop. But, the purpose of this article is to explore similarities between romantic and business relationships.

## **Relationship Counseling**

As most of you know, Jung's theory of personality types has also been explicated in a paper and pencil form called the *Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*. There have been many applications of Jung's model to improving communication and advancing understanding of similarities and differences we routinely encounter in all arenas of our lives. For example, the MBTI community provides training and supporting materials for settings like career counseling, team building, management development and yes, relationship counseling. While SST is our proprietary focus of Jung's theory to selling, we can learn from the work of those who specialize in "relationship" counseling.

## **Relationship Selling**

Indeed, every successful person in sales would acknowledge that the "relationship" is the key to success. Some industries even use the word in job titles for selling like "Relationship Manager". In looking to clarify a strategy, we've heard managers ask, *"Let's start with question one: who owns the relationship with this account?"* Finally, Client Relationship Management, or CRM, is the technology rage these days with outfits from Siebel to Microsoft boasting how their software will enable sales and customer service people to customize their relationships and offer "1 to 1 attention". (Not necessarily, but that's another article)

With this being Valentines season, we have summarized the **Five Rules** we can apply from romantic relationships to managing account relationships:

### **Rule Number One: It is not about you.**

Or, while you might like a snow blower, it is a disastrous gift for your wife. Always think about the solution you can provide for your client rather than the product you would like to push. Both romantic and business relationships are more about the art of pulling than the brute force of pushing. Nothing will extinguish a relationship faster than incessant talk about yourself, your product or your firm.

### **Rule Number Two: It is about them.**

Both romantic and business relationships want to know that, at this moment, they are the only thing in the world that matters. Always ask about them first. Plan your questions. Get them to talk about themselves and then listen with undivided attention

*Non de nobis agitur. Sed de istis* is not the Latin motto for SST for nothing. Translation: It is not about us. It is about them.

### **Rule Number Three: To get attention, give it**

Or, when they look great tell them. Everyone, romantic partner and corporate client alike wants to be noticed and appreciates sincere compliments and recognition. The operative word here is sincere. While generic compliments are OK, specific ones are better. For example, "*Great dress*" or "*Nice tie*" are better than "*You look nice*". Similarly, complimenting a client on a recent innovation, a new product line or an industry award shows that you are paying attention to what's important to them.

### **Rule Number Four: Customize, customize, customize**

Would you pick a gift off the rack without knowing the size or preferences of the person receiving it? Not unless you were trying to live out a current movie title and end a relationship. Yet, we consistently see sales people pushing products without knowing how they will fit their clients or prospects. The results are the same: short or one-off relationships.

In both romantic and business relationships, you need to customize, customize, customize. And, there's only way to customize: know your partner or prospect. How do you get to know your prospect or customer? *Refrain: plan your questions and then listen.*

### **Rule Number Five: The package matters**

Ever buy an expensive gift and deliver it in a plain paper bag? Wouldn't have the desired impact would it. Packaging is important. It shows that this gift matters, that you have taken the time to wrap it in an appealing and attractive fashion. Sometimes, the package can be as important as the content.

Lesson five applies to business communication as well. The content is the solution. The package is how you deliver it, including how the language fits the prospect or client. In SST we refer to it as *Balance and Shade*. The former is ensuring that the language you choose appeals to all communication preferences (Sensing, Intuition, Thinking & Feeling) and not just your own. We apply the latter, *Shade*, when we are confident of a prospect's preferences. For example, we'll give a Sensor plenty of facts and figures up front before we address big picture considerations of our solution.

There you have it. The Five Rules of Relationships:

1. It's not about you
2. It's about them
3. To get attention, give it
4. Customize, customize, customize
5. The package matters

Use them well.

### **Tell Me What It Means to the Customer Spring 2003**

A number of our clients are wrestling with the monumental challenge of turning their cultures from an inward product centric focus to an outward, "client centered" orientation. Lou Gerstner, former CEO of IBM and author of the bestselling *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance*, put it this way in describing troubles IBM had when he took the reins in 1994:

*"It was clear to me that IBM had a storehouse of outstanding technology. They simply had done a terrible job of bringing that technology to the marketplace. It had become a closed inward looking culture."*

Gerstner led IBM's turnaround by refocusing the culture on the customer. Rather than facing inward toward its products, he insisted that IBM face outward and be client centered. Culture change always comes from the top, and IBM's new CEO, Samuel Palmisano, recalled how his mentor set the tone at executive meetings:

"Lou would say, tell me what it means to the customer...Don't talk to me about bandwidth or browsers or that sort of stuff."

Tell me what it means to the customer.

If you are a leader serious about refocusing your culture on the client, this should become your mantra. Have everyone who presents at a strategy, product development, or marketing sessions, begin by answering this:

*Tell me what it means to the customer.*

Many of the readers of this newsletter are sales people, not policy setting executives who feel, I'm sure, like I am preaching to the choir. I have been there with you when product people have shown their dismissive attitude with behaviors like interrupting training sessions. They then proceed to advance their fiefs by pitching a few more product features.

Their attitude is clear: What ever you are doing in improving selling skills is fluff and cannot be as important as what we are doing in product development.

Civility restrains the first response that comes to mind. Use this one instead:

Gerstner's client centered strategy produced the following bottom line results:

- IBM's share price increased 800%
- Its stock market value went up \$180 billion
- Revenue went up from \$64 to \$84 billion

Then, forget civility and tell them their children are ugly.

### **“Client Centered” Comes From Counseling Spring 2003**

Whenever I hear the phrase “client-centered” it reminds me that it has its origins in counseling, a field that has helped shape consultative selling. It used to be that all counseling was driven by the frame of reference of the therapist or counselor. It was if, you will, counselor centered.

The most famous instance, of course, is Freud's psychoanalytic approach where the underlying premise is that the causes of behavior are rooted in our sub-conscious. In other words, we don't know why we behave the way we do. Freudians believe that our behavior today has to do with our psychohistories- how we were potty trained and the like. Therapy requires a skilled psychoanalyst trolling the subconscious searching for repressed troubles with techniques like dream interpretation and ink blot tests. Once a problem is identified, something like an unresolved Oedipus Complex, it is projected on to a screen that only the therapist can see and interpret.

This school of thought is analogous to a business operating on the premise that its customers are not smarter enough to know what they need. Like the skilled psychoanalyst, these experts believe “the answers” are in their superior products. They equip their sales people with product knowledge and then march them into the market place to hammer away on the old saw of Features Advantages and Benefits.

The early 1950s saw a revolution in counseling ushered in by psychologist Carl Rogers. Basically, Rogers found that clients responded better to a counseling approach that, rather than focusing inwardly on experts, was instead “client centered”. The Rogerian approach emphasizes being “facilitative” by asking good questions and what Rogers called “empathic listening”; or seeking to understand from the perspective of the client.

It is not coincidental that the first references to consultative selling followed the Rogerian revolution in counseling. After all, when done well both counseling and selling

require the same skills of asking good questions; listening and helping clients choose solutions.

What Successful Selling to Type: SST™ brings to the party is packaging those solutions to appeal to the natural communication preferences of the client. And like consultative selling, SST was influenced by the counseling field and the well documented successes of an approach known as “Counseling to Type”. Research consistently shows that the package that accompanies a solution can be as important as the solution itself.

### **“I Know It When I see It”.... Pornography Perhaps, but Not Sales Talent Fall 2003**

Amidst much hoopla by cable all sports stations, the NBA recently held its annual draft lottery. Much of the hype was over where high school sensation LeBron James would wind up. (Cleveland?) Being an extremely busy person who only concerns himself with serious matters (like what it would feel like to have thirteen year old Michelle Wie drive her tee shot 100 yards past mine ) it started me thinking about parallels to how our clients go about choosing sales talent.

My curiosity was further piqued by learning that author Michael Lewis (*Liars Poker* and *The New New Thing*) had just published a book, *Moneyball*, that focuses on the system Oakland Athletics general manager Billy Beane employees to choose talent for his team. I had once been on a dais with Lewis who was keynote speaker for a Wall Street investment bank’s annual meeting. He’s a terrific story teller and I would commend any and all of his books to you as great summer reading.

Lewis’ premise this time is that, under Beane, the A’s have achieved one of the best records in baseball (second only to the Yankees) while spending a small fraction of what the Yankees or Red Sox pay. The key is following his systematic approach to choosing talent. Beane often moves against conventional baseball wisdom by doing careful research on behaviors that will predict future performance and winning. His view is that to do the latter, win that is, you need to have better talent than the other guys.

While few would argue with the wisdom of recruiting talent, my observation is that our clients are more like conventional baseball executives than they are like Beane. By that, I mean that the selection of sales talent tends to be an ad hoc event guided by intuition more than research and a pre-established system.

Fundamentally, there are four steps to choosing sales talent:

1. Determining the qualities that are required for success
2. Distinguishing between those qualities that are *talents* and those that are *skills*
  - a. Talents are traits with which we are born.
  - b. Skills are abilities that we can learn
3. Developing two systems

- a. Recruit for talents using objective measures like tests and behavioral interviews
  - b. Train for skills
4. Consistently using and reinforcing the system

## **Talents & Skills**

For Beane's Oakland Athletics *talents* consist of those accidents of birth like speed and arm strength. Even the best baseball instructors in the world can do little to nothing to enable players to run faster or throw harder. Similarly, there are natural sales talents that candidates either have or don't have. For example, prospecting for new business requires persistence and tenacity. Sales leaders and trainers can teach it until they are hoarse, but some people will approach a new contact with optimism that it will result in more business and others will do anything they can to avoid calling on a new prospect. Persistence and tenacity are talents because fundamentally, you can't teach them.

Sales *skills* on the other hand, are teachable and learnable. Representative ones include asking good questions, listening and customizing communication in the SST model. Both *Balance* (packaging messages to appeal to all types) and *Shade* (tailoring messages to match the communication preferences of the buyer) are easy to learn. While you recruit for talent, you train for skills. The requisite skills to succeed in your sale determine your training agenda.

## **I Know it When I see It**

While Beane's Oakland Athletics use hard objective data, most of our clients rely on their gut feelings formed during an interview. Most often they will describe their approach as what we call the "*I know it when I see it*" method. I'll be the first to confess that I once relied on that approach in selecting sales talent. Suffice it to say that if the game had been baseball instead of sales, Billy Beane's team would have kicked our keisters. While I thought I knew it when I saw it, I hired some real clunkers. Every sales leader I know who uses the "*I Know It When I See It*" approach will confess to the same.

While we don't have the luxury of using hard data that is meticulously maintained and publicly available to baseball executives, we should nonetheless, be as objective as possible in our selection system. Principally, there are two objective measures for recruiting sales talent:

1. Standardized Tests
2. Behavioral Interviews

There's quite an industry out there for Standardized Tests in selecting sales talent. Most organizations are frustrated by what they consider lackluster sales performance and see a test as a silver bullet solution. If you are not careful, however, you could shoot yourself in the corporate foot. Tests need to satisfy certain technical standards for validity, for example.

The best practice in choosing a test is to know what it is you are looking for before you go looking. What is it that sets apart your top performers from your typical ones? What is it that distinguishes sales people who persist from those who jump ship after three months?

Once you have whittled down your list of traits, do a search of the thousands of instruments out there to identify the ones that best measure the traits that define performance in your sale. For example, if tenacity and persistence are must have qualities for top performers find instruments that measure those “constructs”. Don’t get caught up in marketing hype or choose a test that assess “agreeableness” which may be nice in customer service but not be central to sales success.

**“If you can measure it, it probably doesn’t matter.”**

There’s a famous quote attributable to Edward Thorndike, one of the fathers of psychological testing: *“If it exists, you can measure it.”* When I cited Thorndike one day to my friend and mentor Ron Cherry, he responded with: *“Yes, but If you can measure it, it probably doesn’t matter.”*

What Ron meant, of course, was that if we restricted ourselves to established measurements, we would have a very limited number of traits we would assess. Let’s say that you have determined that your top performers have a quality of being able to quickly adapt to different kinds of customers and manage more than one dialogue at the same time. I promise you that the most exhaustive search of the voluminous *Mental Measurements Yearbook* would not turn up standardized measures of *“adapt on the spot”* and *“manage multiple dialogues”* during a sales call.

For these kinds of traits, those that are important but have no corresponding test, the Behavioral Interview is the best course to pursue. The scope of this newsletter does not permit a full treatment of Behavioral Interviews. Suffice it to say, that as much as possible, Behavioral Interviews remove the subjectivity of the *“I know it when I see it”* method by focusing on specific past behaviors.

If all of this sounds both intriguing but a little daunting, rest assured that there are consultants (like us of course) who can help you with the four steps repeated below for emphasis:

1. Determining the qualities that are required for success
2. Distinguishing between those qualities that are *talents* and those that are *skills*
  - a. Talents are traits with which we are born.
  - b. Skills are abilities that we can learn
3. Developing two systems
  - a. Recruit for talents using objective measures like tests and behavioral interviews
  - b. Train for skills

#### 4. Consistently using and reinforcing the system

Choosing sales talent is just too important to leave it to the *"I know it when I see it"* method. Neither winning baseball teams nor winning sales teams are assembled that way. While the Supreme Court ruled that we may know pornography when we see it, we can't identify sales talent without a system.

### **Stress Fall 2003**

This has been a period of transition for me. While waiting for a new place in State College, I am bivouacked at my Ocean City, Maryland condo. What it lacks in space, it makes up for with the sounds and sights of the Atlantic Ocean. I also lost my Dad to a long term illness about a month ago.

I have had a lot of time for beach walking reflection enhanced by the companionship of my nine year old Sheltie, Rosey O'Grady. One of the topics I have been contemplating, obviously I guess, is stress. I suspect you know that there is a stress assessment that assigns different weights to life experiences. Moving and loss of a loved one are near the top of the list. According to that assessment at least, I have had a lot of stress recently.

Here are my meager musings on stress:

- We can only manage it. We cannot extinguish it.
- We have little control over when some stress causing events are going to happen. When we can control them, however, we should
- Balance is important.
  - Jungian theory holds that there are four mental functions as illustrated in the SST logo (Sensing, Intuition, Thinking & Feeling)
  - In times of stress, we tend to over use our most natural or strongest mental function making it important to remind ourselves to use the others
  - The short hand on this is that your two stronger functions are the ones appearing in your four letter code: ISTJ
  - Get the facts right (Sensing); consider the Big Picture (Intuition); apply logical criteria (Thinking); and don't forget the impact on people (Feeling)
  - You may recognize this as the Z Problem Approach we teach
- Exercise is great for stress management.
  - Years ago a team of researchers sought to compare the impact of different counseling approaches on several small groups
  - As I recall, one received a directive and rational approach ( Ellis); another got client centered counseling ( Rogers); and a third received Gestalt counseling (Perls)
  - A fourth didn't get any counseling; just regular exercise
  - You guessed it; the fourth group made the greatest progress



- One stress management technique is to conjure up an image of the worst case scenario and to think through what you would do if it happened
  - Usually, we find that we can manage even the worst case
  - And, the worst case rarely happens
- Personally, I found watching excessive amounts of baseball to be good.
- My own bias is that treating stress with drugs is bad
  - I'm using the word "drug" broadly, but correctly, to include alcohol as well as prescription drugs
  - If we become dependent on drugs, which I believe is inevitable, the only solution is more drugs
- It is always better to give stress than to get it
  - This is only half in jest
  - We find many a leader who is all stressed out over certain members of his or her team
  - Be careful of the old "reverse delegation trick" and send the stress back down
- If you want more of what you got, keep doing what you are doing. (I don't know the source of that saying but I like it a lot.)
  - Often we get comfortable with a routine and friendly with the devil we know
  - Usually, we are the ones managing our lives. If we are not, we should be
  - Sometimes we need to make big changes as Michael Dell did as described in the following article.

Some people have observed that, as a group, those of us in sales like stress more than those attracted to other occupational fields. Perhaps that is true. Here's hoping you don't get more stress than you want and that if you do, that you are able to manage it.

## **Michael Dell & Adaptable Leadership**

### **Fall 2003**

This week's cover story (November 3) of *Business Week* caught my eye. Once I opened the cover and found, "*What You Don't Know About Dell: The management secrets of the best run company in technology*" I was even more intrigued because the leadership growth of Michael Dell it chronicles sounds remarkably similar to the work Harry Koolen and I are doing with our Adaptable Leader program.

In case you have been living in a cave, Dell was the boy wonder who began selling computers from his college residence hall room employing a direct mail model for distribution and beating up on the likes of IBM. According to BW, nineteen years later Michael is worth \$17 billion and his company is about to top \$40 billion in sales. Who says it doesn't pay to cut class now and then?

The focus of the BW article however, is on recent history and how Dell transformed his leadership style which was characterized by staff as “impersonal” and “emotionally detached”. A “personality test”, the MBTI<sup>1</sup> to be sure, showed that Dell was an “off the charts Introvert”.

What Dell did next is the heart of the story. He did something about it.

Rather than taking the easy course of, “I am the leader so you adapt to me”, Dell changed his style. He made a commitment to his team to overcome the negative perceptions of his leadership style and “vowed to forge tighter bonds with his team”

To be fair, one of the principal reasons why leaders don’t make changes in their styles is they don’t know how. It is one thing to field 360 degree feed- back or read a personality profile, but quite another to make changes in how you lead.

This is where the **Adaptable Leader** program can help. Drawing upon two rock solid theories (the MBTI and Schutz’s FIRO<sup>2</sup>), we can quickly surmise what it is that those we lead “want” and put customized leadership strategies in place. Recently, Paul Gennart of Fortis Bank in Brussels made this estimation of our approach:

*“I got so much in such a short period. We intend to extend the process to the whole management team of Global Markets”.*

The great news in this approach is that we can learn to be better leaders. The BW article on Dell points out that he is hardly a “natural leader” possessing neither Jack Welch’s “tough-guy charisma” nor Sam Walton’s “folksy charm”.

But, he understood that his success required more than the brilliance of his direct sell distribution system. It needed to be complemented with the softer skills of leadership. BW concludes that it is how Michael Dell “manages the company” that has led to Dell’s (both Michael’s and the business’) amazing success.

<sup>1</sup>The MBTI is the world’s leading personality inventory and, for first time readers of this newsletter, is based on the same Jungian personality model as SST®. The key differences are that SST® focuses on the selling process and employs no paper and pencil forms while the MBTI is an inventory with multiple applications.

<sup>2</sup>FIRO stands for Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation which, like the MBTI, has been around since World War II. It helps us understand our own interpersonal needs and how to adapt to those of others.

# Breaking the Rules of Management

Spring 2004

Much management literature is gimmicky, based on one guy's opinion, or written by a winning coach appealing to a prominent male fantasy that winning at work is just like winning on the field. *First Break All the Rules* is not about gimmicks, is anchored in tons of data and is written by two researchers from the Gallup Organization, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. Buckingham was the leader of a twenty-five year Gallup Organization study that sought to identify the common practices of effective managers. The **Four Keys** to effective management that summarize their work are derived from surveys of millions of workers. They complemented their research on the workplace with a follow-up study with eighty thousand managers representing a cross-section of industries and sizes.

The title is not only catchy, it also speaks to the central message of the book: the conventional rules of management don't work. For example, Buckingham and Coffman found that great managers don't focus on helping staff overcome weaknesses. Instead, they focus on strengths. Even more heretical, they don't follow the Golden Rule. Instead, they lead people the way they like to be led.

The **Four Keys** are:

1. Select talent
2. Define the right outcomes
3. Focus on strengths
4. Find the right fit

## Select Talent

On the face of it, selecting talent doesn't sound like a rule breaking concept. It is Buckingham and Coffman's definition of talent where the envelope gets pushed. In hiring, conventional wisdom emphasizes "experience", "academic performance" and "motivation". The research supporting *First Break All the Rules* found that great managers always put "talent" over "experience", "academic performance" and "motivation".

They go on to offer this simple yet elegant definition of talent:

*"Talent is any recurring patterns of behavior that can be productively applied."*

Now, what's significant about this definition is that it's different than the common association we make with the word talent. Typically, we associate "talent" with athletes and celebrities. We think of Tiger Woods as a talented golfer, Meryl Streep as a talented actress and George Benson as a talented jazz guitarist.

As managers of profit driven businesses, we need to identify those behaviors that need to be demonstrated on a recurring basis for profitability. Buckingham and Coffman take the definition down to ground level where every job is characterized by distinctive “talents”.

Talents are different than skills because they are accidents of birth. They cannot be learned any more than a basketball player can learn to be taller. Skills on the other hand can be learned. With enough practice anyone can learn basketball skills like shooting and dribbling.

The take-away from *First Break All the Rules*, is that “talent” is one of the keys to effective leadership. Further, every position has patterns of behaviors that need to recur for profitability. Key number one from *First Break All the Rules* is to determine what those behaviors are then choose people who have the “talent” to do them.

Legendary basketball coach John Wooden put it this way:

*“Although not every coach can win consistently with talent, no coach can win without it.”*

### **Define the Right Outcomes**

Like “Choose Talent”, “Define the Right Outcomes” seems straightforward and even consistent with conventional rules. Yet, when we at PfP (Harry Koolen and Arnie Tilden) conduct Exemplary Performer research we often find people who are unclear on what is expected of them. Further to the point, it is not unusual to find a sizable gap between management’s expectations and what the staff will indicate they think management expects of them.

Not surprisingly, our experience in doing Exemplary Performer analyses parallels what Buckingham and Coffman found in their mammoth study. It is key number two:

*“Effective managers define the right outcomes and then let each person employ his or her own style in reaching them.”*

This is another way of saying that sales leaders need to lay out a common selling method that identifies each important milestone along the way to the win. However, leaders need to recognize that styles vary by individual and an effective performer may reach a milestone in a way different from the manager’s own.

Some sales people like to send a carefully crafted letter and follow it with a call when prospecting for new business. Others just like to pick up the phone and call. Still others like to call for an appointment when they know they will be visiting the city or region of a key prospect.

The takeaway is that the *right outcome* is getting in front of the right prospects in an efficient manner. Whether it is accomplished by letter, phone or personal visit is a matter of personal style and that does not matter.

## **Focus on Strengths**

Key three is management practice heresy. Common practice is to latch onto data, perhaps gathered by the in vogue 360 process, to isolate the low scores and to embark on a course of improving weaknesses. Months later the worker is evaluated and rewarded on the progress he or she has made in overcoming weaknesses. Sound familiar? We see it every day.

Here's what Buckingham and Coffman found in their research with effective managers: they don't buy it. Rather, effective managers acknowledge that, fundamentally, *people don't change*. What you see is basically what you are going to get. If you see strengths capitalize on them. Everyone has weaknesses. If they are not too severe, manage around them. If you can't, make a change because what you see is what you are going to have. Fundamentally, people don't change.

Bitter sounding? We thought so on the first read. Then, reflecting back on the reclamation projects we have led as managers, after focusing on weaknesses and investing time and resources to change people, we always wound up with what we had. Along the way, we weren't capitalizing on strengths and were less effective than we should have been.

If you are still managing by focusing on weaknesses, you are certainly not alone. Most managers still seek out the weak points and invest resources to change them. Buckingham and Coffman, not only assert, but they back it up with solid and extensive research, that this conventional and common approach is not a management best practice.

Instead, choose talent, set clear expectations and focus on strengths. Manage around weaknesses.

Key number three: Focus on strengths and manage around weaknesses.

## **Find the Right Fit**

Key number four flows from the first three. Once we have selected talent, defined outcomes and leveraged strengths, we need to continue to help those we lead to find the right fit. For some, that means doing more of what they are doing and finding rewards to maintain people in their current roles. Not every high performing banker is cut out to be a sales person. Yet, some are.

Our ongoing role as leaders is to help people find the right fit, and once they are in it, to find ways to reward them. Law and higher education, two fields that are rarely cutting

edge at anything, seem to have this right. In both fields people are encouraged to do what they are good at while being recognized with successive titles that hold increasing levels of prestige and financial reward.

But, good lawyers who become senior partners still practice law. Similarly, good college professors who become full professors, still teach.

If you have someone who is in a good fit role, help them see it and do all you can to reward them both extrinsically (money) and intrinsically (recognition). Avoid the common mistake of helping a star sales person become a mediocre manager.

Of course, there is the flip side of sustaining a good fit and that has to do with managing a bad one. Any seasoned manager will tell you that bad fits are something they face. They will also acknowledge that they are among their hardest challenges.

The wisdom from *First Break All the Rules* is to manage both the good and bad fit team member from the same perspective. Help the good fit stay and help the bad fit move to a good one.

It is easier said than done. But, *First Break All the Rules*, and the research behind it, should help provide the confidence that you are doing the right thing when you help a person in a bad fit find a good one.

### **“Voters Don’t Like Bush’s Iraq War or Kerry’s Personality”. Summer 2004**

Whenever I see the word “personality” in a newspaper or magazine, I am immediately drawn to the article, paying particular attention to references to Carl Jung’s personality theory (upon which SST® is based). While the article following this headline (Knight Ridder Newspapers, August 29, 04) was more casual in the use of the word “personality”, it got me thinking about the last two presidential elections (1996 Clinton v. Dole & 2000 Bush v. Gore).

Back in 1996, Russ Brooks and I were teaching a SST class on the eve of the third presidential debate between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. One of the training exercises we do is called “Celebrity Type Watching” where we develop hypotheses about type preferences for a celebrity or two.

Clinton and Dole turned out to be both obvious and fascinating choices that day. The Celebrity Type Watching exercise suggested they were perfect opposites: Clinton (ENFP) to Dole (ISTJ).

During the debate itself, they both behaved in fashions quite consistent with their hypothetical profiles. Clinton said things like: “*I want to build a bridge to next century*” (Big Picture and Future orientation of an Intuitive preference) while Dole cited

the specific details of legislation (Facts and Details consistent with a Sensing preference). Famously, Clinton said to the audience *"I feel your pain"* (Feeling) while Dole sought to persuade by logic (Thinking).

We typed Clinton as the comfortable and charismatic Extraverted candidate who appeared to gain energy by interacting with the crowd assembled for the town meeting format. Bob Dole, on the other hand, appeared stiffer and more awkward with the format that did not allow him private time to think. Both are characteristics consistent with the Introverted orientation.

In the 2000 election, pitting Al Gore versus George Bush, Extraversion and Introversion again seemed to play a prominent role in how the candidates behaved and were perceived by the voters. Only this time, it was the Republican Bush who was the Extraverted candidate and Democrat Gore who was Introverted. While Bush seems comfortable and energized by people, you may recall that Gore was described as being "wooden".

In both 1996 and 2000, the more Extraverted candidate won. What is worrisome about this is that Extraversion and Introversion, as Jung intended the terms, have nothing to do with competency as a president. Nor, we contend, do they relate to performance as a sales person (see *"Introversion and Selling"*, co-authored with partner Harry Koolen. But, Introversion and Extraversion may have to do with what the newspaper article calls "likeability".

As we all know, 2004 is another presidential election year, this time with Bush squaring off against John Kerry. If you are a fan of politics and interested in personality type, it should be an interesting dynamic to observe as the campaign wears (and wars) on. We would be interested in hearing your observations and thoughts on the following questions.

Considering the following Behavioral Cues, what would your hypothesis be on whether they are Extraverted or Introverted?

EXTRAVERSION	INTROVERSION
Often enjoy meeting people.	Cautious about meeting new people.
Speak freely and comfortably	Choose words carefully.
"Do-Think-Do"	"Think-Do-Think"
Tend to think out loud	Tend to be reflective
Act quickly.	Act deliberately

**Bush: (Extraverted or Introverted)**

**Kerry: (Extraverted or Introverted)**

Do you think the electorate favors Extraverted candidates?

Yes                      No

Given that most of us are Extraverted (70%), do you think we have a bias against Introverted people in selling?

Yes                      No

Representative responses to the survey will appear in the follow-up Newsletter:

### **I Told You So Winter 2004**

It was the best of falls. It was the worst of falls.

Let's start with why fall 2004 was the worst. What could be more dreadful for a lifetime Yankee fan than losing to Boston after compiling a three game lead in a seven game series? Watching those same Red Sox go on to win the World Series?

Painful as those experiences were, there was even more pain on Election Day for this Kerry-Edwards supporter. Finally recovering from the election loss, I am able to find one bright spot to write about: **I told you so.**

In the summer SST Newsletter, I observed that the more Extraverted candidate had won the two prior presidential elections. In 1996, we had developed type hypotheses in an SST class suggesting that Dole was Introverted while Clinton was the comfortable Extraverted campaigner gaining energy from the crowds. In 2000, it was the GOP candidate George W. Bush who appeared to be the natural campaigner who was relaxed and natural in front of people. Conversely, it was Al Gore who showed more Introverted tendencies.

In this year's August newsletter, I invited readers to advance their hypotheses on the Extraversion – Introversion orientations of the two 2004 presidential candidates.

The responses were unanimous. Here's a sampling:

*"Kerry seems to like solitude, even in his recreational activities like wind surfing and skiing."*

*"The media keeps describing Kerry as a loner and even introspective. I hope you are wrong, but if the Extraverted candidate is going to win, it's Bush."*

*"Bush seems like the Extravert. But, my favorite Extraverted president was Ronald Reagan."*



*"Now that I think about it, Kerry seems to be the deeper more introspective thinker. He probably builds those excessive nuances on his positions when he isn't allowed private time to think it through."*

Whenever we write about Extraversion and Introversion, it is important to reinforce two points:

1. Introversion, as Jung intended to word, has nothing to do with social skills. Being Extraverted is not better than being than being Introverted. The difference merely points to where we do our best thinking: Extraverts in conversation and Introverts in private reflection.
2. While many assume that Extraverts would outperform Introverts at selling, that has not been our experience. When PfP partner Harry Koolen and I do Exemplary Performer analyses (comparing characteristics and disciplines of top performers to more typical ones) we consistently find a disproportionately high representation of Introverts. They tend to be effective listeners, an essential skill in high value selling. After all, while we Extraverts are filling the air with whatever crosses our minds (I'm one of them), Introverts (like Harry) are getting valuable practice in listening.

It was the best of falls. It was the worst of falls.

It was the best of falls because my wonderful daughter Kelly, aka "The Queen of Torts", and her husband Tom brought a beautiful son into the world. Born on September 23, Finnian Kane Hanrahan is surely destined to some day be President of the United States.

## **The S Word Winter 2004**

It is hard to believe, but we have been doing the *SST Newsletter* for nearly seven years now. In that period we have written more than eighty articles (you can tell I am an Intuitive by the preference for approximations) on topics ranging from *The Art of Listening*, to *Typing Santa Claus*, to *the Top Ten Reasons Why Sex and Selling are Alike*<sup>1</sup>. Never have we had the response to an article like we did to the last newsletter's article on "*Stress*".

Many of the responses were humorous like:

*"I never met stress I couldn't manage with three martinis"*

*"I like to exercise in a gym populated by young (members of the opposite sex, sic) wearing spandex. It makes me feel younger and the stress starts to go away. Then I try to stamp it out with cold beer."*

Putting good humor aside just for a moment (after-all, in and of itself humor is a terrific stress antidote) stress seems to be a dominant theme in the modern work place. I believe the following are among the contributing factors:

**Change** is stressful and there is a lot of it these days. We are changing jobs at an unprecedented rate. Gone are the days of climbing the pyramid with one employer and retiring with a gold watch. Instead, workers are in turmoil as their employers merge, acquire, downsize or simply shutter their doors. Rather than the stability of a work environment populated by the familiar faces, people are changing all of the time. Being an “Old Timer” is now measured in months rather than years. The trend in office space is away from stable environments decorated with family photos to “Hoteling” where workers sign up for a work space by the day, much like renting a hotel room.

**Volume** of work for the survivors has increased as their peers have been downsized. Simply, we have more to do with less support. Remember the days when “secretaries” helped place and screen phone calls? Today it is rare that I receive a call scheduled or placed by an executive’s administrative assistant. Fifteen years ago it was routine.

**Pace** of work has increased. Everyone seems to need more and to want it faster.

**Depersonalization** of the work environment is a side effect of technology. Rather than walking down the hall and reviewing a request with a co-worker, we shoot it off via e-mail. Gone is the face-to-face conversation about the nature of the request, how important it might be and when it is needed. Rather than hanging out by the water cooler and exchanging stories and jokes, we now do it by e-mail.

In summary, things are continuously changing, we have more to do in less time and there is less interpersonal contact. All of this spells: **STRESS**.

Stress is a fact of life. We can’t make it go away. But, we can manage it. In our work as executive coaches, we have found that effective salespeople and their leaders have some form of stress management plan in place.

If you don’t, we would encourage you to be intentional about establishing one. The University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, long a leader in the wellness field, has a nice on line resource where you can do a quick assessment of Stress Sources, Distress Symptoms and Stress Balancing Strategies.  
([http://wellness.uwsp.edu/Health\\_Service/services/stress.htm](http://wellness.uwsp.edu/Health_Service/services/stress.htm))

We, of course, offer a one-day Stress Management Workshop, the product of which is an individualized Stress Management Plan. Happy to provide more detail if you are interested.

## **Blink**

### **When Your Clients Are Thinking Without Thinking**

#### **Spring 2005**

Were you ever in a tense driving situation when you executed a quick maneuver to avoid a collision? You may have felt like time moved in slow motion and your senses were heightened. Perhaps you paused afterward and asked yourself, how did I do that? I didn't think about it. It wasn't planned. I never practiced it. Nor did I ever study how to do it. I just did it.

That phenomenon, the snap judgment, is the subject of best seller *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (Little Brown, 2005) by Malcolm Gladwell. It is also the cover story of the February 28, 2005 *US News and World Report*. We commend both the book and the article to anyone interested in learning more about the Adaptive Unconscious, this fascinating part of our minds that has to do with snap decisions, those that are made in a *blink* of the eye.

We have always known that there are reflexive kinds of behaviors that are made in an instant. That is not new. What is new and exciting, however, is the growing scientific research that supports the legitimacy of decisions guided by the Adaptive Unconscious. While no one is proposing that we disregard systematic and careful thinking, we should also trust what our *blink* of the eye assessments tell us. In other words, there are two, not one, ways in which we process information and think. We have not one mind, but two and appealing to both can improve our selling effectiveness.

We see three powerful implications for applying what we are learning about the Adaptive Unconscious to improving sales effectiveness: 1. The Two Pronged Attack; 2.) Product and Package Are One 3. KISS (Keep It Short Stupid)

### **Two Pronged Attack**

Decisions get made at two levels: the conscious and Adaptive Unconscious. Accordingly, we should plan and execute sales strategies for both. For the former, we want to build the rational case for our solution. This part is old hat. Those of us in sales are well accustomed to outlining the benefits of our products emphasizing Return on Investment and the like. We enumerate facts like past successes with similar clients and seek to persuade with logic.

For the latter, appealing to the Adaptive Unconscious, sales people are far less systematic, disciplined or skilled. That is not to say that those of us in sales don't *know* the second level is important. Indeed, we do as evidenced in titles like "Relationship Manager" and rhetoric like becoming a "Trusted Adviser". The problem we have is that we are not sure what to *do* to build relationships and earn trust. And, this is where we can take important lessons from *Blink*.

Gladwell offers a fascinating chapter which illuminates, the importance of appealing to the Adaptive Unconscious.: *Listening to Doctors* (pages 39-44). Therein we learn that, while some doctors are sued for malpractice, others are not. Thinking analytically, most of us would assume that doctors who are sued are those whose actions result in injury or harm to their patients. Wouldn't you?

Guess what. That assumption is wrong. Doctors who are sued aren't actually the ones who commit malpractice. They are the ones patients don't like. Prominent malpractice attorney, Alice Burkin, puts it this way: *"People just don't sue doctors they like."*

What do doctors who are not sued, presumably those liked by their patients, do differently? For one, they spend more time with their patients: 18.3 minutes compared to 15 minutes. For another, they practice "active listening" saying things like, "Tell me more about that?"

If patients don't sue doctors they like because they take more time with them and listen actively, it doesn't seem like a terrible stretch to assert that those kinds of behaviors can help us in selling. Former colleague Russ Brooks is fond of saying,

*"All things being equal, people do business with people they know and like. And, all things being unequal, people do business with people they know and like."*

Selling, like medicine, involves more than just diagnosing. Medical doctors prescribe treatments and sales people propose solutions to business problems. While skills like active listening certainly serve us well during the investigation step, we can turn to the SST® model for specific concepts and tools for becoming more effective when making proposals and presentations. Minimally, we need to take care to *balance* our messages to ensure that they appeal to all four preferences (Sensing, Intuition, Thinking & Feeling). When we know the client well, we can *shade* our messages so they appeal to that particular client and make that relationship "click" or "connect", terms we hear about so often in SST® workshops.

What do active listening and SST® have in common? They both put the focus where it should be: on the client.

### **KISS: Keep it Short Stupid**

Recently, I was driving to a business appointment while trying to follow on line directions I had printed out. Finally, I had to pull over and convert the twenty-four steps the on-line site provided to four that I could manage while simultaneously driving my car. The on-line directions gave me too much information to process. They violated the KISS rule.

Many of us in sales have the same tendency when preparing business presentations. We behave as though the more information and detail we provide, the more persuasive our proposal will be.

*Blink* helps us realize that there is a hazard in the “persuade by the pound” approach. This is an instance where less is truly more.

This point was driven (no pun intended) home not too long ago when I attended a meeting hosted by a Fortune 100 company. They had invited a select group of firms to their headquarters to review their criteria for a major sales training RFP. The point they emphasized more than any other was: Don’t bother submitting the proposal without an Executive Summary. They went on to explain that some of the key decision makers in their loop would restrict their reading to just the Executive Summary. Others would use it as a guide to the rest of the proposal to determine where they wanted to drill down for more information.

It is good advice because decision makers, whether consciously or not, often base their decisions on two ways of thinking: the deliberate (Conscious) and the instinctive (Adaptive Unconscious). Keep It Short Stupid and don’t overwhelm their Adaptive Unconscious with too much information because, as Gladwell (p. 142) writes:

*“Overloading the decision maker with too much information makes picking up the signature harder, not easier.”*

### **Product and Package Become One**

Have you ever chosen a bottle of wine because you liked the bottle? If you have you, are not alone.

Gladwell (P. 160) cites a number of marketing cases from margarine to wine making the point that,

*“The product is the package and the product combined.”*

They couldn’t sell margarine when it was first developed until they made it the same color as butter and wrapped it in aluminum foil, just as butter was presented. Once it was in the right package, one people associated with quality, margarine started to sell.

Christian Brothers Brandy was losing market share to a competitor who consistently finished behind them in taste tests. But, the competitor’s bottle was more elegant, decanter shaped, with smoked glass and foil. Christian Brothers put their product in a better package, and they began to regain market share. The same brandy in a different package regained its market share.

How about your product? Is it packaged in a way that it will appeal to the instincts that reside in the Adaptive Unconscious? Or, are you making the mistake that a better mouse trap will sell on its own merits. It won’t.

## Summary

Decisions, including buying ones, get made on two levels: 1.) the conscious, characterized by analysis and deliberation and 2.) The Adaptive Unconscious which is more instinctual. Both are legitimate. We can improve our sales effectiveness by appealing, not only to the conscious mind of the buyer, but also to his or her Adaptive Unconscious. Those strategies include:

1. Practicing active listening
2. Balancing messages to appeal to all communication styles
3. Shading messages to the preferences of clients when you know them
4. Practicing the principles of KISS when presenting
5. Using Executive Summaries
6. Taking care to package products in attractive wrappers

## **The One Thing You Need to Know Spring 2005**

Do you remember the scene in “City Slickers” when Jack Palance, playing tough old Cowboy Curly, turns to city bred Billy Crystal, raises a single finger and pronounces:

“I’ll tell you the secret to life. This one thing. Just this one thing. You stick to this and everything else don’t mean s-----!”

Crystal’s character begs, “What is the one thing?”

Curly, pauses for affect and replies,

“That’s what you’ve got to figure out.”

In the movie, Curly dies before revealing the one thing.

Fortunately, Marcus Buckingham is still alive and gives those of us interested in better managing, leading or sustained individual success a big assist in figuring it out in *The One Thing You Need to Know* (Free Press, 2005). While Buckingham tells us secrets for the big three, this newsletter will confine itself to the first topic: great management.

If you are one of those readers who thinks simple solutions to complex problems are just that – simple – I would encourage you take a second look at Buckingham’s book. Don’t be misled by the title. In fact you can substitute “core concepts” for “one thing”. Further, this is the same Buckingham who co-authored the carefully researched *First Break All the Rules* (Simon & Schuster, 1999) previously reviewed in this newsletter.....

What sets Buckingham apart, and one reason why you should become familiar with his work, is that his views are anchored in more than opinion or one person’s experiences. For example, he draws upon more than 80,000 interviews spanning more than 400 companies. To us, his research informed perspective is more compelling than those of a retired CEO like Jack Welch (Winning, 2005) or even worse those hideously inane offerings by successful coaches asserting that life is merely a metaphor for sport. (I

have always wanted to ask basketball coach Rick Pitino, author of *Success is a Choice*, why he chooses to lose so often.)

Buckingham starts with a clean and reasonable distinction between managing and leading. Today, it is popular to view leading as superior to merely managing. It is kind of like the superiority of having a career instead of just a job. Indeed, there are those like Michael Useem, director of the Center for Leadership and Change Management at the University of Pennsylvania, who contend that “Everybody should be leading, whatever their level in the hierarchy.”

To that, Buckingham asks, if everyone is leading, then who is following? Or, do you really want an organization where everyone is a chief or an aspiring chief and there are no Indians?

Buckingham’s contends that, while great managing has to do with developing each individual, the focus of leadership has to do with the future of the organization as a whole. Great management is done one to one. Conversely, leadership is universal and done organization wide. Organizations need both, and not every great manager should be aspiring to lead. In fact, too many leaders cloud and confuse the core message.

Buckingham asserts that *The One Thing You Need to Know* about great managing is to discover what is unique to each individual and capitalize on it. He then outlines the four unique characteristics you must know about someone to provide a great management relationship:

1. Strengths- Focus on these when recruiting and selecting. They are accidents of birth and cannot be learned. Skills, on the other hand, can be acquired through training. For Pitino’s sport of basketball, height would be a strength or talent and dribbling would be a skill. Hire for strengths and train for skills.

2. Weaknesses- In *First Break All the Rules*, Buckingham and his co-author Curt Coffman effectively challenge the conventional management practice of focusing on weaknesses and trying to achieve well roundedness. The core lesson from FBAR is to choose people with natural talents that fit their roles and to manage around weaknesses. If a weakness is due to a lack of natural talent it will never change. Short basketball players cannot learn to be taller.

3. Triggers- Great managers know that different people have different levers to be pulled to unlock optimal performance. However, Buckingham’s treatment of “triggers” is quite shallow. In fact, we have drilled a lot deeper in our Adaptable Leadership<sup>1</sup> program.

In Adaptable Leadership, we rely on the familiar SST personality type model as well as William Schutz’ Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Inventory (FIRO). This assessment provides concepts and tools for the manager to, first read which of three

interpersonal needs (Inclusion, Control or Affection) is preeminent, and then to adapt to meet it.

The word “need” is both powerful and appropriate. When an interpersonal need (Inclusion, Control or Affection) is met by a manager, performance is triggered. For example, those high in needing Inclusion embrace teams and will shut down if they sense they have been excluded or left “out of the loop”.

Conversely, the Control need is an indicator as to whether a staff member requires a lot of direction and guidance or prefers to work independently.

Finally, the need for Affection points to the level of emotional distance preferred by a staff member. While some like to have close family like relationships at work, others are more comfortable compartmentalizing work and private lives.

Our work with Adaptable Leadership complements Buckingham’s notion of “triggers” and provides a template for finding the key to forming the kinds of distinctive relationships to capitalize on the unique qualities of each team member. With it you will know, not be guessing, about which trigger to pull for which person.

4. Styles of Learning – Buckingham suggest there are three: 1. Analyzing; 2. Doing; and 3. Watching. Here again, Jungian theory, upon which SST is based would provide a more robust learning style theory. But, the point is an important one: developing talent requires teaching and coaching and adapting to the preferred learning style of a team member is the hallmark of a great manager.

What about The One Thing You Need to Know for great leadership and sustained individual success? Well, you’ll just have to figure it out. Or, buy Buckingham’s excellent book.

### **New Rules Summer 2005**

While waiting to check out at our local Barnes & Noble, I picked up a copy of Bill Maher’s *New Rules* from the display. I immediately found myself laughing out loud and attracting odd glances from my fellow shoppers. For those of you unfamiliar with Maher, he’s the quick witted and quite acerbic former host of TV’s *Comedy Central* and *Politically Incorrect*.

The premise of the book, adopted from his HBO television specials, is that he gets to make *New Rules* for others like:

- “No more McDonald’s in hospitals...Hello? You’re doctors. You’re not supposed to be in the repeat business.”
- “Stop sending me pop ups ads to Classmates.com. There’s a reason you



- don't talk with people for 25 years- you don't like them."
- "Donald Trump must go even further with his hair and comb it completely over his face."
- "Yes, I'll "continue to hold" but not because you said, "Your call is important to us." If my call was really important to you, you'd hire a human to pick up the damn phone."

What a concept: you get to make *New Rules* for others about things they do to annoy you. If we wrote *New Rules* for personality type differences and mimicked Maher's acid tongue, we might come up with the following:

#### *New Rule for Extraverts*

There's a reason there's a time limit on answering machine tapes: no one wants to listen to you ramble on interminably. From now on, leave your name, number and, in a few words, the reason for your call. Then, you must hang up!

#### *New Rule for Introverts*

Every once in a while you must display a visible sign that you are alive. This is particularly important when we are talking to you. A nod of your head, or an occasional "mmhmmm" will do, even if you don't mean it.

#### *New Rule for Sensors*

Did you ever hear about the guy who couldn't see the forest because of the trees. Hello? Just give us the Executive Summary, and if we want more information, we'll ask for it. Want to see my eyes glaze over? Give me one more detail.

#### *New Rule for Intuitives*

Where did that come from? We were calmly going from A to B to C when you make this quantum leap to an entirely different alphabet. Sorry we bore you with the facts, but when you come back down to earth, give me a call and I'll introduce you to something new... it's called reality!

#### *New Rule for Thinkers*

By now, we all have computers that come equipped with spreadsheet software. That means if we need cold impersonal analysis we can plug in the data, turn the crank and see what comes out. Since we can do that on our own, your single minded pursuit of logical analysis has become redundant. Want to know why so many of your decisions don't work out? It's because they are implemented by human beings, not machines. Get it, Mr. Spock?

### *New Rule for Feelers*

OK. You have a heart. Must you wear it on your sleeve? Here's a flash: the reason we are here is profit, not charity.

### *New Rule for Judgers*

Is it true? For a Judger, checking off a To Do List item is better than sex?

### *New Rule for Perceivers*

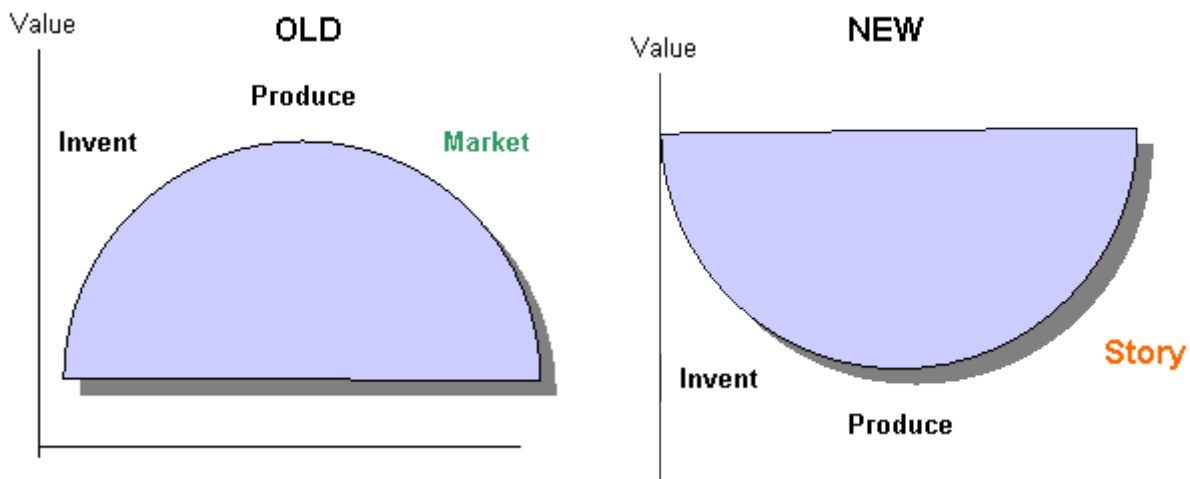
The *New Rule* limits the number of times you can change your mind to four times per hour. That means for fifteen solid minutes you must stick to a decision. Bet you can't.

We think Bill Maher has come up with a marvelous idea making up New Rules for other people. After all, it is so much harder and certainly a lot less fun complying with rules others make or us. If you come up with a New Rule, let us know.

## **All Marketers Are Liars Fall 2005**

Seth Godin is a paradigm buster. His 1999 *Permission Marketing* broke the long held (and in some circles, still believed) paradigm that the key to increasing sales was simply making more calls. That simple formula (more calls = more sales) no longer works because people are now supersaturated with telemarketing, pop-up ads and spam; each interrupting us from whatever we are doing. As an alternative to old fashioned "interruption marketing", Godin proposed a new paradigm in 1999, one where prospects first provide permission to engage them in an ongoing educational dialogue.

But, pardon the pun, *Permission Marketing* is another story. In his new work, with the purposely provocative title: "*All Marketers Are Liars: The Power of Telling Authentic Stories in a Low Trust World*", Godin again breaks a popular paradigm. This time he takes on the fundamental business relationships among **invention, production and marketing** and literally turns them **upside down** as illustrated below.



In the old business paradigm, illustrated on the left, the greatest value was provided by production. The essential elements for business success were inventing a good product and then manufacturing it with quality and efficiency. The key players in the old production centered approach to business were people with titles like plant managers and quality control experts.

Sales and marketing added the least business value because the prevailing view was that a better mouse trap would sell itself. In many organizations, the sales force was considered a necessary evil, assigned second class status behind those in operations, manufacturing or production.

In the new paradigm, leverage shifts from the left side of the curve to the right. Accordingly, marketing, no longer production, is the most important business function.

Again, Godin is a purposely provocative guy. He is not contending that quality products don't matter anymore than effective marketing didn't matter in the old paradigm. He is simply asserting that in today's economy quality is usually a given and will not alone result in business success.

Notably, the word "story" replaces "marketing" in the new paradigm. This is because his new formula is a simple:

### ***Marketing = Story Telling***

Godin reinforces his point that authentic stories (ones the story teller and buyer both believe) with- no surprise- many stories. For example, he writes about \$20 Reidel wine glasses whose makers fervently proclaim make wine taste better. Experts in wine tasting

support Reidel's story by writing in *Wine Spectator* magazine that, "*The effect of these glasses on fine wine is profound.*"

Here's the catch: double blind taste tests (ones where the taste testers don't know which glass is a \$20 Reidel and one that's priced at just \$1) cannot discern any difference in taste.

What's important, Godin contends, is not the science of double blind taste tests, rather that both the people at Reidel and their fans believe the Reidel story. And, in today's low trust world it is the authentic story that sells.

While we are big fans of Godin and have helped many clients incorporate a *Permission Marketing* approach into their prospecting, he isn't perfect. His anecdotes are all retail in character whether it be expensive wine glasses, Starbucks's coffee or the \$80,000 Porsche Cayenne which he claims is fundamentally the same car as the \$36,000 VW Tourareg.

Further, some of his assertions, whether purposely hyperbolic or not, are just wrong. For example, not *all* buying decisions are made *instantaneously* as he asserts on page 69. I know that because there are buying decisions I have made that were quite analytical and even a bit protracted

But, take the hyperbole with a grain of salt, and Godin is always worth a read. If, like most readers of this newsletter, you are in sales, we recommend that you buy two copies of *All Marketers Are Liars*. Read one yourself and give the other to the highest ranking executive in your organizations so she knows that there's a new business paradigm out there and sales has never been more important. Step two, is to make sure your value proposition is more than a fact dump and that you can deliver it as a compelling story. After all, stories are what sells.

## **No Such Thing as an Indiscreet Question Spring 2005**

There used to be a genre of jokes that asked how you could tell it was going to be a bad day. A memorable one was when your secretary (that's what they were called back then) called you on the intercom and told you that Mike Wallace and a crew from "Sixty Minutes" were waiting to see you.

Now in his 80's, Wallace has been grilling bad guys since the inception of *Sixty Minutes* back in 1968. Imagine being General William Westmoreland (commander of U.S. forces in Viet Nam) on the receiving end of this interview:

MIKE WALLACE (SIXTY MINUTES): *Isn't it a possibility that the real reason for suddenly deciding, in the summer of 1967, to remove an entire category of the enemy from the order of battle was based on political considerations?*

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: *No*

MIKE WALLACE: *...in your August 20 cable?*

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: *Yeah. No, I...*

MIKE WALLACE: *I have a copy of your August 20 cable.*

GENERAL WESTMORELAND: *Well, sure. OK, OK, all right.*

The above exchange was a lead in to a recent interview on National Public Radio. What really caught my attention, however, was the subsequent conversation between NPR's Steve Inskeep and Wallace on the power of asking good questions:

INSKEEP: *I think more than most interviewers the questions that you ask can be as interesting as the answers that they elicit. And...*

Mr. WALLACE: *Well, a lady by the name of Faye Emerson<sup>1</sup>, who was a good friend of mine a million years ago, told me, 'Mike, there is no such thing as an indiscreet question.' And you know what? It's true.*

INSKEEP: *You know, it's not just the substance of the questions with you, though, sometimes. It's the way that they're asked.*

Mr. WALLACE: *I couldn't agree more. If you've done it a long time, as you apparently have done, and as you know I surely have done, you learn that one of the most persuasive ways to get somebody that you're interviewing to open up is to write down maybe 50 questions ahead of time, and when you sit down with an interviewee under those circumstances, you become co-conspirators. They suddenly realize, 'He knows a lot about me, so I'm going to help him draw a round picture of me.'*

Obviously, what struck me about this exchange on investigative reporting is how it generalizes to our craft of selling. Anyone who has participated in training programs led by either Harry Koolen or myself, knows that we place an emphasis on the twin investigative skills of questioning and listening.

This is based on our own research of exemplary sales performers, where we consistently find that they spend more time planning and asking good questions than their more typically performing counterparts. Our findings are supported by the published studies of Neil Rackham (*SPIN Selling*, 1989) who, based on 35,000 sales interview observations, reports that the most persuasive verbal behavior is the question.

Still, we typically field push back in our workshops from some well meaning participants who feel awkward about asking questions that may be perceived as “indiscreet”. They fear that asking an “indiscreet” question may put the prospect or client off and create a barrier to building the relationship.

Good questioning is informed by science (the studies by Rackham and others) while the practice is an art. The objective is to reach the position described by Wallace when your prospect or client receives you as a “co-conspirator” in learning as much about them as possible.

Once there, it is time to get to a deeper level of understanding by asking questions about performance and not just execution. We call them questions that deal with the *consequences* of a current condition or course of action. Often they begin with the preface...”What would happen if...?”

Dedicate yourself to your craft like Mike Wallace dedicated himself to his. For your next call prepare, not just what to say, but what you intend to ask. Like Mike Wallace, write down as many questions you can think of before the interview. When the timing is right ask something like, “*What would happen if.....?*”

After all, Faye Emerson was right, “There is no such thing as an indiscreet question”.

1 Faye Emerson was one of the first hosts of television talk shows and was known as the “First Lady of Television”. Wallace practiced a little hyperbole in his reference to knowing her a “million years ago”. Emerson died in 1993.

## **Top Ten Reasons Why Love & Sales Are Alike**

### **February 2006**

Just in time for Valentine's Day, our take on the popular David Letterman Top Ten List gives a light- hearted look at the similarities between love and selling:

**10**

Visuals are important, but rarely enough on their own.

**9**

Old school notions that prospects are prey don't work.

**8**

Because someone brags about it doesn't mean they are good at it.

7

To succeed, you need to use  
different communication styles.

6

When done poorly, it feels like something is being done to you rather than with  
you.

5

You need to ask questions and listen  
to be good at either.

4

There's a temptation to focus on what we want rather than on what they need.

3

We spend a lot more time thinking about it  
than doing it.

2

There's a lot of mythology about both.

1

You're supposed to figure out  
how to do it on your own.

### **It Drove Perkins Nuts Applying a Personality Type Lens to the Conflict at HP Fall 2006**



“Please raise your hand if you *don’t* deal with conflict at work.”

This is a question I use in training sessions when I introduce the subject of *Personality Type and Conflict Resolution*.

A single hand has never gone in the air.

Conflict. We all deal with it. But how?

Left unattended, it can have ruinous effects on careers and corporations. In fact, personality conflict appears to be the root cause for the debacle at HP. Once the pride of the Silicon Valley, HP is in the throes of a scandal where directors' phone records were obtained by a possibly illegal process called "pretexting." Pretexters allegedly impersonated directors and asked for their phone records in an effort to gain information that would help stem leaks from confidential HP board meetings to the media, including the *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week*.

According to the September 18, 2006 cover story of *Newsweek*, personality differences ran amok between then-chairwoman Patti Dunn, who has since resigned, and Tom Perkins, who stepped down from the HP board in May of 2006, presumably because he discovered that he had been the subject of HP spying.

Those of you familiar with Jung's theory as explicated in the *Myers Briggs Type Indicator* and applied in the *SST®: Successful Selling to Type* program, will readily recognize that Dunn is *Sensing* preferred (concentrating on details and the here and now) while Perkins is *Intuitive* (preferring the big picture and focusing on the future). Here's an excerpt from that article that highlights their Sensing and Intuitive differences:

"Perkins, the venture capitalist, thought in broad strategic strokes, preferring to leave the details to others. Dunn thought the core of her job was to dot the I's and cross the T's .....It drove Perkins nuts...He recalls a meeting in his office with her in which he wanted to discuss how to compete better with Dell, IBM and others. According to Perkins, she was fixated instead on her discovery that there were inconsistencies between HP's bylaws and the Corporate Director Handbook. Those inconsistencies then occupied hours of discussion at subsequent board meetings."

*Newsweek*, September 18, 2006, p. 42

The operative sentence in this excerpt is: "*It drove Perkins nuts.*" We can all behave in ways natural to us and well-intended but that still drive people around us *nuts*. There is no right or wrong in this *Newsweek* account. Indeed, preparing competitive strategy and fixing inconsistencies in documents are both important. However, it appears that Dunn overlooked two essentials of effective leadership by failing to:

1. *Balance* natural preferences by using both Sensing and Intuition
2. Recognize that it is less about the leader's needs and preferences and more about those of others. Clearly, Perkins had a need to talk about HP's competitive strategy. And spending hours of time at the board level dotting the I's and crossing the T's *drove him nuts*.



Sondra VanSant's *Wired for Conflict* (CAPT, 2003) serves as an excellent resource for training we do for leadership development and conflict resolution for teams.

## **A Whole New Mind or a Balanced Old One?**

### **November 2006**

Recently, I attended a marketing conference session where the presenter asked his audience to raise their hands if they had read *A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink. Two hands went up: his and mine. I predict that if he asks the same question a year from now he will get a very different response. Most hands will wave enthusiastically in the air.

You just have to love a writer like Pink who has the intellectual chutzpah to announce that we are moving from the Information Age and heading to a new one he has termed the Conceptual Age. His fundamental premise is that pathways to success in the old Information Age required left brain dominated forms of thinking that are linear, sequential, analytical, and fact driven. Success in the Conceptual Age will require *A Whole New Mind*, one that Pink calls "high concept" and "high touch". These aptitudes are located in the brain's right hemisphere, one that synthesizes the big picture, recognizes patterns, and discerns emotions.

Pink asserts that the Conceptual Age is being ushered in by three forces: *Abundance*, *Asia*, and *Automation*. He illustrates the first by comparing back to school shopping when he was a kid to those of his own kids. Growing up in Ohio, going to a JCPenney in a climate-controlled mall was a big deal for Pink. Today, his kids can choose from any number of mega shopping sites featuring the likes of Target, Staples, and Best Buy. Not only are the clothes and school supplies found there bountiful, they are also high quality and inexpensive. He observes that for most of history, and indeed still in many parts of the world, human existence was defined by scarcity. But, in the US and many parts of Europe and Asia, it is now defined by *abundance*.

Second, many Information Age intellectual tasks like computer programming can be done far cheaper in *Asia*. While it may be controversial, outsourcing jobs to destinations like India will make many white-collar Information Age skill sets obsolete.

Third, *Automation* has put information at our fingertips. As a consequence, Information Age knowledge workers will need to make adjustments much like blue-collar workers did in past generations. They will need to learn to produce value that computers cannot offer better, faster, or cheaper.

*Abundance*, *Asia* and *Automation* are the three driving forces behind this new Conceptual Age, one that will require six essential intellectual skills:

1. Design – Because of abundance product features will no longer differentiate. That will be left to product design, which will become the key to what is bought and sold.

2. Story -- As Seth Godin (*All Marketers Are Liars*, 2005) points out, facts alone don't sell. Stories do.
3. Symphony -- To excel in the Conceptual Age, thinkers will need to be able to connect the dots to create something new. Or as comedy genius Sid Caesar puts it, "The guy who invented the wheel was an idiot. The guy who invented the other three, he was the genius."
4. Empathy -- Left hemisphere knowledge workers used to demean anything that was "touchy-feely". (Hell, they still do.) Pink gives hope that there will be a chance for payback because empathy -- the ability to *feel* what the other party is feeling -- is one of the six essential intellectual skills for the Conceptual Age.
5. Play -- My daughter provides *play therapy* for her clients -- a phrase that lots of left-brain thinkers have trouble grasping. But, pardon the pun, *think* about it, most of our social skills are acquired through play. Pink makes the case that many Conceptual Age intellectual skills come from play as well.
6. Meaning -- The Information Age saw to it that our material needs were not only met, they were met in abundance. Pink proffers that as a society we will look to climb Maslow's hierarchy of needs and then seek greater meaning in our lives.

Everyone will benefit from reading Pink's provocative book. But for those of us familiar with psychological type, there is a special pearl in between the covers of *A Whole New Mind*: The differences between left- and right-brain thinking align very closely with Jung's theory of personality types as explicated in the MBTI.

Fundamentally, L- Directed Thinking (linear, sequential, analytical, and fact-driven) is very much like the thinking done by Sensing-Thinking types in Jung's theory. Conversely, R- Directed Thinking (big picture, recognizes patterns, and discerns emotions) lines up very closely with the way Jung's Intuitive-Feelers reason. Indeed, Pink's summary phrases of "high concept" and "high touch" well describe Intuition and Feeling, respectively.

In the table below, I have listed words used to describe the different hemispheres along with the Jungian mental functions they appear to match.

Hemisphere of the Brain	Jungian Mental Function	Shared Descriptors
<b>Left</b>	<b>Sensing</b>	Linear
		Sequential
		Details
<b>Left</b>	<b>Thinking</b>	Analytical
		Logical
<b>Right</b>	<b>Intuition</b>	Big Picture
		Concepts
		Creative

Hemisphere of the Brain	Jungian Mental Function	Shared Descriptors
<b>Right</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	Emotions
		Empathy

Put in SST or MBTI language, L-Directed thinking, the kind that has been most common in business, is ST or Sensing-Thinking. Pick up nearly any business communication, whether it be a marketing brochure or pitch book, and analyze the messages therein. Almost exclusively they are ST (L-Directed), emphasizing the facts and logic to buy. The intellectual themes that are often neglected are those relating to NF or Intuitive-Feeling (corresponding to R-Directed Thinking) like the big picture and positive impact on people.

Those of you familiar with SST know we put an emphasis on *Balancing* communication -- preparing messages that appeal to all styles of thinking (Sensing, Intuition, Thinking, and Feeling). Pink's message is very similar. Success in the Conceptual Age will require both hemispheres of the brain. Indeed, left hemisphere thinkers (Sensing- Thinking types) should prepare for pay-backs because *Wired* magazine proclaims that *A Whole New Mind*, explains "Why right-brainers will rule the future."

## Unmasking the Multitasking Myth

### April 2007

In the early days of my consulting career, I recall working with a technology company on their strategic plan. When we got to the Opportunities part of our SWOT<sup>1</sup>, the CEO wrote www on a flip chart. Showing off all the reasons why they hired me, I asked: "What is that?"

It was 1994 and the world was different. We didn't have the information super highway. Nor did we have iPods, camera phones, PDAs or instant messaging.

Thirteen years later, we have more devices designed for convenience and to enhance productivity. But do we have more time? Or are we tied down with electronic tethers? Is the quality of life really better when a cell phone rings in the middle of a concert? Am I the only guy who sometimes wants to reduce the cacophony in a restaurant by ripping the mobile phone away from an ill-mannered diner?

Not too long ago, I saw the off-Broadway show: *I Love You. You're Perfect. Now Change*. Before the show started, one of the actors addressed the audience and said:

"We love you. You are perfect. *And all of that* will change if your cell phone goes off!"

Those who have participated in one of our workshops know that we kick things off with a similar announcement. However, it is not unusual now to get a little push back accompanied with the assertion that younger learners can *multitask*.

Guess what: multitasking is a myth.

Research reported in the *New York Times* (March 26, 2007) concludes that:

*“Multitasking is going to slow you down, increasing the chances of mistakes. Disruptions and interruptions are a bad deal from the standpoint of our ability to process information.”* David Meyer, Cognitive Scientist, University of Michigan.

The same article reports research that a group of workers at Microsoft:

*“...took on average, 15 minutes to return to serious mental tasks like writing reports or computer code after responding to an incoming e-mail or instant messages. They strayed off to reply to other messages or browse news, sports or entertainment sites.”*

Now think of what that does in a workshop when one or more participants checks out for an average of 15 minutes at a time. It is devastating!

Partner Harry Koolen and I always make the observation that a successful workshop is one where we learn as much as the participants. We do not pretend to be the only resource in the room. When a workshop participant is checking e-mail, he is unfairly depriving the other participants of his contributions to our subject.

Do you believe multitasking can be done better by younger workers? That seems to be the conventional wisdom. Well, think again because that too is a myth.

In a study conducted at the Future of the Mind at Oxford University (reported in the same *New York Times* article), researchers found that the older group performed just as well as the younger one in completing mental tasks when interrupted by a cell phone or instant message. The caveat, however, is that it does not mean anyone actually performs better. Instead, the study revealed that performance for both groups *dropped* 10 percent when they were required to multitask.

Since this is the *SST Newsletter*, it is appropriate to put a personality type spin on multitasking. We know that Extraverts are more prone to distraction when working. When the phone rings, Introverts feel disrupted. But we Extraverts usually welcome a ringing phone and are anxious to pick it up. The take away here is that, if you are Extraverted, you may want to pay special heed to these recommendations:

1. Check your e-mail no more than once an hour.
2. Don't talk on your cell phone when driving. Doing two tasks at once, driving and talking on the phone, impedes your ability to operate a vehicle.
3. Turn off your mobile phones and PDAs when participating in a workshop.

4. If you must talk on a mobile phone in a restaurant, don't sit near me. It could be bad for both of us.

1 SWOT stands for: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

## **The Neglected Communication Skill: Listening Summer 2007**

Those of you who have participated in one of our training programs know that both partner Harry Koolen and I like to use film to illustrate key concepts. For example, the movie classic *Casablanca* revolves around negotiating for letters of transit (visas) that will enable the holders to flee Casablanca and the growing grip there of the Third Reich. Humphrey Bogart's character *Rick Blaine* has them, and Ingrid Bergman's *Ilsa Lund* wants them. Negotiation tactics like BATNAs (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement) are vividly illustrated in scenes like *Ilsa's Plea*.

I am always impressed by how the film resonates with today's training groups, most of whom were raised by parents who weren't even born when the film was made in 1942. Further, it never fails that one or more of the guys in the group will comment on how utterly captivating and beautiful Ingrid Bergman is. I confess to sharing those views and to being an Ingrid Bergman fan.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that when I saw the title, *Ingrid, a Personal Biography* by Charlotte Chandler (Simon & Schuster, 2007), I rushed to order it -- for the photographs, if nothing else. As a bonus, I learned that the book offers some compelling insights into what is really persuasive in fields like selling and negotiation. It is not BATNAs, nor is it other important skills we teach like framing, and personality-based selling. Rather, it is the often neglected communication skill: listening.

Here is what the great Ingrid Bergman has to say on the subject:

*"Listening is very important. I have noticed how often actors don't seem to listen to what others are saying because he or she thinks they know it already. When I am talking to actors in a play or a film it is a terrible feeling if they don't seem to be listening. In life if someone isn't listening to you, you can raise your voice, move closer, attract attention with body language, touch the person, but in stage or film you are limited."*

(Chandler, 2007 73)

What jumps off the page in the above quote is the phrase, "know it already." How often do we as salespeople neglect to listen to our prospects or clients because we think we "know it already"? After all, we already have the solution: It is in our product catalog.

Jumping in prematurely with a pitch is a particular problem for those of us who share my Extraverted orientation. This is why we find that, contrary to conventional wisdom, Introverts are often the ones who excel in major and complex sales settings. While we

Extraverts are filling the air with words, Introverts become more practiced and skilled at listening. (See article *Introversion and Selling*.)

Although listening is vitally important to excellent communication, a small fraction of time is spent teaching and training in listening. Among the four communication modes -- writing, talking, reading and listening -- most of our time is spent listening (Burley & Allen, 1995). Yet, few of us are formally educated nor trained to be better listeners.

Next time you are in a selling or negotiating situation, remember how distracting it can be if you act like you “know it already.” Avoid giving your client what the beautiful Bergman called that “terrible feeling” that you are not listening. Instead, follow colleague Steve Wiley’s prescription and *listen until it hurts*.

By the way, for all the guys in our training programs who have become Ingrid Bergman fans, the black and white photos are well worth the \$26 USD!!!

## **Rainmakers, Closers and Other Sales Myths Summer 2007**

This is a summary of the Rainmakers book that was first published in Clement Communications Master Salesmanship Newsletter June 2007

Although the word *myth* is derived from the Greek *mythos*, the Greeks were not alone in their belief that an occasional animal sacrifice was important to appease the gods and ensure their well being. Scandinavians had Thor, the Romans followed Odysseus, and Jews of the Old Testament sacrificed humans until Abraham was informed by his God that he did not have to sacrifice his only son, a mere ram would suffice.

Modern businesses, no matter how large or famous their brands, tend to behave like their ancient ancestors, and turn to mythology when it comes to something that is today both vitally important and misunderstood: sales. But, instead of sacrificing a virgin, they have their salespeople pursue one of four sales myths: *Rainmakers, Closers, Schmooze or Field of Dreams*.

### **Rainmakers**

Inhabiting the desert of the American southwest, the Hopi have coped successfully with the natural rigors of their region. Central to their culture is the worship of the sun, fire, and rain. Rain dances are conducted with live snakes to petition the gods to bring rain and ensure a good harvest. The Hopi practice likely influenced a breed of less honorable rainmakers who roamed the dust bowl in the 1930s promising rain in exchange for money. They didn’t propose to do a Snake Dance, just to apply their charismatic capabilities to coax rain from the skies.

Today, *rainmaker* is a term used to connote a salesperson who has special, God-given talents to ensure the welfare of the business or professional practice by bringing it what

it needs to survive: new business. Whether it is accomplished with snakes or charisma matters little as long as it rains.

The problem with the Rainmaker myth is that people are not born to be salespeople anymore than they are born to be geologists, language teachers, or oyster shuckers. While there are natural talents, selling skills can be learned. And the perpetuation of the Rainmaker myth does a grave disservice to anyone who was discouraged from the field because they were not born with a rainmaking personality. There is no such thing.

## Closers

Movie classic *Glengarry GlenRoss* is instructive in debunking sales myth number two: Closers. In the opening scene, just as Blake (Alec Baldwin) is launching his tirade with Mitch and Murray's underperforming sales team, Shelly "The Machine" Levine (Jack Lemmon) gets up and walks over to the coffee pot. Blake confronts the startled Levine with what has become the most famous line from the film: "Put that coffee down! Coffee is for closers."

After leveling Levine, Blake turns to a blackboard and writes this simple formula for selling success:

A - Always  
B - Be  
C - Closing

Always Be Closing!

In *Glengarry GlenRoss*, art imitates life. Closing had been the cornerstone of sales training programs for many years.

There is just one problem with closing: It doesn't work. In fact, the central finding of a twelve-year study of more than 35,000 sales calls led by Neil Rackham (1988, 28) found that "the use of closing techniques is negatively related to success."

## Schmooze

Myth three is one embraced by salespeople, prospects, and clients alike. After all, who wouldn't like free tickets to the game, tournament, or show?

The Schmooze myth persists for obvious reasons. While the cold calling, rejection, waiting, report writing, and boring meetings are all arduous dimensions of the sales racket, the schmooze is great. Many salespeople would sooner surrender a first born than give up schmooze.

While it is the most coveted myth, it is also the most demeaning to the sales field. Salespeople blinded by the power of schmooze are acknowledging that they don't know

how buying decisions get made. Like the ancient societies who gave elaborate gifts to mythical gods, modern business organizations that don't understand selling invest huge sums of money to appease existing clients and woo prospective ones.

## Field of Dreams

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, baseball-playing ghosts instruct Kevin Costner's character to build a baseball field because "If you build it, they will come."

This mantra seems to be the myth behind many failed, failing, and under-performing enterprises. Marquee names like Apple Computer, Beta video recorders, and Xerox office equipment are among them. If you asked top executives at any one of those organizations, they would tell you the same thing: The ghosts lied. Just building a superior product does not mean that customers will come.

Although Xerox is recovering from a near financial collapse in the early 2000s, it is a mere shadow of its former self. This slow and painful recovery (especially for more than 14,000 laid off workers) is not due to the quality of its copiers.

Rather, a main contributor to the Xerox decline can be traced to how it reorganized its sales force. In an effort to streamline its operations, Xerox moved from a geographic structure to one based on industries. Many long-term sales relationships were disrupted, which served to alienate customers. Sensing a golden opportunity, competitors like Ricoh and Canon had their sales teams move in on long-time Xerox clients with a vengeance.

## Summary

To succeed today, salespeople need to abandon mythology and recognize that:

1. Successful salespeople are made, not born. Sales skills can be taught coached and learned.
2. Opening the sale with good investigation (questioning and listening) is the key to winning sales, not manipulative closing scripts.
3. Schmooze is not a substitute for a serious business relationship in which the salesperson has earned the position of being a trusted adviser.
4. The ghosts in *Field of Dreams* lied. Customers and clients will not come just for a newly engineered product feature. Soft skills, like selling, make a hard difference in business results.



## **BATNAS & US & Iraq Negotiations Fall 2007**

One of the core negotiation principles we teach is having a BATNA: Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement. It is essential because the party who holds the stronger BATNA, not necessarily the one who is bigger or more powerful, wins.

We illustrate the concept with the great and classic film *Casablanca*. As you may recall, the 1943 Academy Award winning movie revolves around negotiating for letters of transit (visas) that will allow the holders to flee Nazi-controlled Casablanca for the US.

Rick Blain (Humphrey Bogart) has them, and Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) wants them. In the scene entitled "Ilsa's Plea," Ilsa puts her BATNA on the table when she pulls a gun, points it at Blain and says, *"I tried to reason with you. I have tried everything. Now I want those letters. Put them on the table."* Bogey one- ups her BATNA by stepping closer and saying, *"Go ahead and shoot. You will be doing me a favor."*

The BATNA principle came to life for me again in the context of a current conflict, the war in Iraq. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman wrote last month about the Iraqi Parliament taking the month of August off, while our soldiers put their lives at risk in the scorching desert where temperatures push 130° F (54.4° C). Obviously, from an American perspective, if our young soldiers can endure those kinds of conditions, the Iraqi parliamentarians ought to be able to meet in their air conditioned facility and advance a political solution for their country.

Although he doesn't use the term BATNA, Friedman hits on the same principle when he observes that, while the US is bigger and more powerful, the Iraqis have a stronger BATNA. Believing that the Bush administration will never walk away from a negotiation there, the Iraqis will not make concessions, like keeping Parliament in session.

The lesson to be learned is to always have your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement determined before you enter into a negotiation. Stick to it and be ready to walk. If you don't, you will lose the negotiation, even if you are bigger and stronger.

## **Applying SST to Reduce Sales Force Attrition Fall 2007**

A recent study reported that almost one-quarter of U.S. workers changed jobs and nearly three-quarters of the businesses surveyed anticipated increased competition for talented employees (MetLife Employee Benefits Trends, 2007). The sample in this study was comprised of all workers. One would have to believe that, if a similar study focused just on *salespeople*, those percentages would be even more severe. Indeed, we have consulted with clients in efforts to reduce sales force attrition who were confronting significantly higher attrition than twenty-five percent.

More than any category of workers, salespeople are both threatened with termination and wooed by competitors. Salespeople are the foot soldiers of an organization who engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat on a daily basis. And just as Sun Tzu advocated an occasional beheading of ancient Chinese soldiers to motivate the troops, modern salespeople are sporadically terminated for not meeting their quotas. On the other hand, high performing salespeople are courted by competitors in hopes that they will bring their talents, relationships, and books of business to the other side.

Whether you are kicking salespeople out the door or your competitors are stealing them from you, sales force attrition is emerging as a serious business challenge. Spherion, a prominent recruiting firm, estimates that, when you count separation pay, moving expenses, background checks, travel costs for interviews and the like, it costs 1.5 times an employee's salary to replace them.

And that's not factoring in the opportunity costs of managers investing their time in staff selection and training rather than moving the organization forward by focusing on key strategic initiatives. But perhaps the biggest cost in salesperson attrition is the disruption of the interpersonal bonds they have built with customers and clients. Those trusted relationships salespeople form with clients could be the most valuable article of trade your business owns.

Why do salespeople leave?

Contrary to conventional wisdom, salary is not the top reason. The MetLife study cited previously found that the "quality of co-worker and or customer relationships" was the top consideration in deciding to stay or leave an organization. Life-work balance was the second most important consideration and "working for an organization whose mission or purpose I agree with" was ranked as third most important. Salary was near the bottom.

These findings are consistent with research done by Rackham and Ruff (1991) who found that unless salary differences were way out of whack, they were not a key reason for salespeople to leave for higher pay.

It is clear that people work for more than compensation. None other than Sigmund Freud observed that, *"Love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness."*

A century after Freud's famous quote, most modern workers spend more time with their colleagues at work than they do with their loving spouses, family or friends. We have become more dependent on workplace relationships for the fulfillment of fundamental social needs, whether they are inclusion in a social group, receiving recognition, asserting power and influence, or receiving and providing emotional support to others.

Research done by the Gallup Organization and reported in *First Break All the Rules* (1999) found that the key person for providing these social needs is the immediate supervisor. It is not the famous or charismatic CEO. Rather, it is the sales manager who provides everyday coaching and support to his or her sales team. These are the people who supply, or withhold, what we are looking for when we go to work and make the difference in whether salespeople stay or leave.

Different salespeople (and this generalizes to all workers) need different things from their immediate boss. Or, as that old '60s saying went: There are different strokes for different folks. Jungian theory, upon which the SST sales program is based, provides insights for managers on how to customize their relationships for each member of their team.

In summary, sales force attrition can exact a huge toll. Not only does it cost 1.5 times an annual salary every time a sales position turns over, but you put your key accounts at risk whenever a trusted relationship with a member of your sales force is interrupted. Taking care to identify and meet the needs of your team members is a smart strategy that will improve retention of your sales talent. It is never enough to just loosen your purse strings.

## **Are Men & Women Hardwired Differently?**

### **November 2007**

*"Are there personality differences between men and women?"*

Invariably, this question is raised during a SST workshop when we are introducing Jung's theory and the four scales upon which SST is based. Indeed, on one of the four dimensions, Thinking–Feeling, roughly sixty percent of men show a preference for Thinking, while almost seventy percent of women are Feeling-preferred. This means most, but certainly not all, men are objective and logical in their decision making while more women are sensitive to relationships and the impact decisions have on people.

Are men and women hardwired differently? Or are men taught and rewarded for being tough and analytical, while women are expected to be warm, nurturing and sensitive? As we recall from the classic "nature versus nurture" debate from Psych 101, the answer is probably a little bit of both.

Add to this discussion a powerful book by Pat Heim and Susan Murphy, *In the Company of Women* (Putnam, 2001). The authors provide many anecdotes and cite lots of research documenting what I believe we all know to be true, but risk being politically incorrect by discussing. Indeed, men and women are different in the ways we one, handle *conflict* and two, the importance of and how we form *relationships*.

I know this is true, less from my current work as consultant and sales educator, but more from my previous role as a college administrator who oversaw both judicial and counseling services. More than eighty percent of the students who went through the judicial system on our campus were men. They routinely handled *conflict* by fighting with one another and breaking things. Conversely, nearly eighty percent of the students using college counseling services were women. They sought help and support when their *relationships* were out of sort.

I commend this book to everyone, men and women alike, to better understand how we function and what we need from one another as colleagues, teammates, and in leader-follower relationships. Heim and Murphy make a compelling case that men and women are different in what we need in these pivotal workplace relationships.

If nothing else, be certain to learn more about the *Power Dead Even Rule*. Heim and Murphy proffer that women need to maintain equilibrium among *relationships*, *self-esteem* and *power*. When they are not dead even, all hell can break loose, not only between two co-workers, but in an entire team or organization. Ever wonder why it is that women attack other women when a woman is promoted? It is the *Power Dead Even Rule* gone awry.

While I believe this book is a must read in terms of understanding gender differences in handling conflict and in the importance of relationships, I will continue to rely upon the broader Jungian lens in answering the question about personality and gender differences. My view here is that Feeling-preferred men (and after all that is forty percent of us) behave more like Feeling-preferred women than Thinking-preferred men. Further, Thinking-preferred women (and there are plenty of you too) are more like their male counterparts in how they go about making decisions than they are like other women who prefer Feeling.

But let us know what you think. Do you agree that Jungian personality preferences trump gender differences in how we make decisions? Do you have any *Power Dead Even Rule* anecdotes to share? We would like to hear. Email us your comments and we will post them here.

### **Presidential Politics 2008 Predictions Based on Personality Type March 2008**

We started applying a type lens to presidential politics back in 1996. Coincidentally, we were conducting a SST workshop on the same day as one of the Bill Clinton-Bob Dole debates. Naturally, we used our type-watching tools to read the two politicians. The personality differences between the candidates were striking. In fact, we saw Clinton and Dole as polar opposites: Dole, an ISTJ, seemed to obsess with facts and to lose energy during the debate; Clinton,

whom we typed as an ENFP, was more charismatic, talked about building a bridge to the next century, and gained energy as the evening wore on.

In 2000, Al Gore was frequently described as "wooden," while George W. Bush was the more extraverted candidate -- the one voters said they would prefer to meet for a beer. Bush won. The last time we wrote on personality and politics was during the 2004 presidential election which pitted Bush against John Kerry. We know the outcome, a second term for Bush.

There seems to be a pattern. In each of the past three presidential elections, the more extraverted candidate won: Bill Clinton defeated Bob Dole; George W. Bush was elected over Al Gore (my Democratic friends would point out that Gore had more popular votes); and Bush beat John Kerry.

The question today in 2008, another presidential election year, is who is more extraverted among the remaining three candidates? Will voters choose the more extraverted candidate to represent the Democratic Party? Will Clinton or Obama prevail over McCain because one is more extraverted than John McCain, the presumptive Republican candidate?

#### **Predictions:**



My view is that Obama is more extraverted than Clinton and thereby will win the Democratic nod. Of the three candidates, McCain -- the most introverted -- will stumble in debates against either Clinton or Obama, and lose. Remember, McCain lost the GOP nomination to the more extraverted Bush in 2000.

While this kind of armchair analysis can be fun, it is also discouraging because Extraversion and Introversion (at least as Jung intended the terms and how we use them in SST) have nothing to do with competency, either in selling (see *Introversion & Selling* in the *SST Newsletter* archives), or in executing the duties as President of the United States. Indeed, Abraham Lincoln, considered by many to be the greatest president ever, seems clearly to have been introverted, at least based on my reading of Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*.

If you would like to do your own type-watching and forecasting, here are the behavioral cues we use to read Extraversion and Introversion:

<b><i>Extraversion</i></b>	<b><i>Introversion</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Often enjoy meeting people</li> <li>* Speak freely and comfortably</li> <li>* "Do-Think-Do"</li> <li>* Tend to think out loud</li> <li>* Act quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cautious about meeting new people</li> <li>* Choose words carefully</li> <li>* "Think-Do-Think"</li> <li>* Tend to be reflective</li> <li>* Act deliberately</li> </ul>

## **The Sales Pipeline** **by Harry Koolen & Arnold Tilden** **March 2008**

This newsletter bears the title *SST®: Successful Selling to Type*, our proprietary sales method that enables its users to improve sales performance by customizing their communication to appeal to the personality type of the buyer. Consistent, high level performance, however, requires not only sales effectiveness techniques like SST®, but sales efficiency as well. Hands down, the best tool to be efficient and disciplined in your approach to selling is the pipeline, which is comprised of milestones that reflect steps in the underlying buying process.

Historically, milestones were stone markers set up along roadsides to indicate the distance to the next village. By reading milestones, travelers were able to judge how far they had come and how far it was to their next stop or ultimate destination. Milestones enabled travelers to plan their trip and calculate when lodging, food, water, and fuel would be available.

In selling, milestones indicate a salesperson's current location in a long sales journey. Without a sense of milestones, salespeople wander about like lost travelers. They work just as hard as those with milestones to guide them, but it takes them much longer to arrive at the desired destination. And getting there often involves more luck than skill.

Conversely, a salesperson with a process characterized by milestones knows what needs to be done next and by whom. Milestones keep salespeople on track, help them from wandering off course, and like they do for travelers, indicate how far the team has come, how far it needs to go, and perhaps most importantly, what it takes to get there.

A milestone in the sales process is distinguished by two important criteria:

### **1. Importance**

Each milestone must be important and represent significant progress in the underlying sales process toward a successful sale. The emphasis should be on achievement and results rather than mere activity. Having a chat with a client about the fortunes of a sports team is an activity that would not pass the importance test. To borrow again from the traveling metaphor, it is not about walking around for exercise or activity sake, it is about getting to a destination. It is also critical to recognize that there are no time limits defining the intervals between milestones in the sales process.

## *2. Measurability*

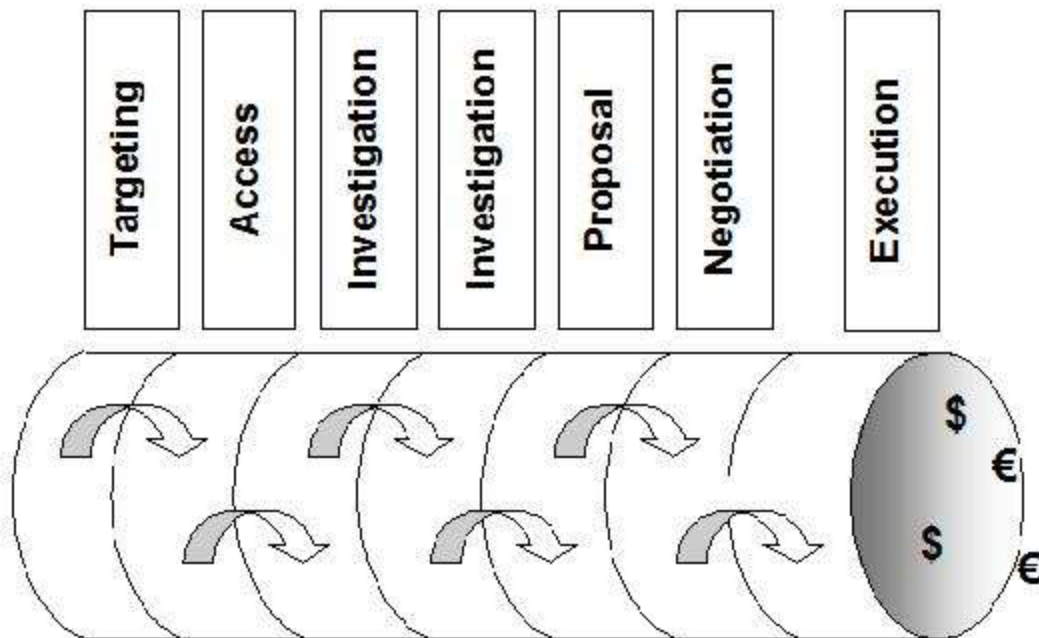
There must be tangible evidence like receiving information, getting permission to make a proposal, or getting access to buyer influences. Salespeople do not satisfy the measurability requirement by just meeting and talking.

Milestones must meet both conditions if they are to be useful signposts for both salespeople and sales managers. Establishing credibility in the eyes of a prospective buyer is clearly important for a salesperson, especially in consultative selling. But how do you measure credibility? Creating a milestone around credibility is, thus, a formula for ambiguity. While the importance of a salesperson's credibility in the eyes of key decision influencers is beyond dispute, some kind of proxy is needed in order to measure it. For example, if credibility must precede proposal opportunity, then proposal opportunity, which can be measured (after all, it's either zero or one), becomes the milestone.

Thus, if you're a sales manager and one of your salespeople tells you, "My next milestone with XYZ company is to establish personal credibility with the Chief Information Officer," ask him or her the following question: "If you are successful in establishing your credibility in the eyes of the Chief Information Officer, where will you be in the sales process?"

## **PIPELINE**

Plotting all the milestones that characterize a sales process provides the outline of a *pipeline*. Salespeople then record all of their accounts, indicating where they fit with the various milestones. Effective management of the pipeline is one of the key aspects of both personal sales management and sales leadership, especially given the long lead times that are sometimes associated with major and complex deals. A representative pipeline is illustrated below:



Pipelines are invaluable tools for the following:

### **Tracking**

The pipeline report enables salespeople and their leaders to understand where action is taking place and where they need to redirect action (individually and on a group basis).

### **Forecasting**

The pipeline report is an excellent predictor of future revenue. Over time, ratios can be determined on how much activity typically flows from one milestone to the next, and ultimately to new business.

### **Coaching**

Once ratios have been reliably set, an individual's performance can be assessed against the team to help the manager pinpoint specific areas for coaching. For example, let's say the team's ratio is five formal presentations to two wins. If one team member is only winning one per five, he or she may need coaching or training in presentation skills.



## Monitoring Strategy

The pipeline report can be used, not only to direct activities and techniques that might be focused on specific tactical situations, but also to help the sales manager monitor overall strategic direction for the group. For instance, if the aforementioned hypothetical sales team's aggregate ratio would drop from five presentations to two wins to five-to-one, it could be signaling a significant change in the market place.

## Managing Resources

The pipeline report helps identify potential resource log jams and conflicts. As noted above, we once worked with a client with a milestone of arranging meetings with in-house and client-side technical specialists. A log jam occurred at that milestone. We learned that product specialists were not rewarded for assisting in sales conferences, just punished for falling behind with their internal assignments. It took a while to sort out the problem, but the pipeline report helped bring it to the surface.

## Popular Sales Method Gets It Half Right Summer 2008

In the 1980s, Neil Rackham and his team of researchers conducted a monumental and pioneering study when they investigated what works in major and complex selling. They observed 35,000 sales calls analyzing the behaviors displayed by salespeople that led to successful outcomes.

The Rackham research question was simple but elegant: What works in major and complex selling?

Surprisingly, skills being taught by the best companies in the world like *closing* and *handling objections* were found to be negatively related to success. However, there is another surprise in this story. Rackham's researchers only got it half right.

Would you like to guess their fundamental finding? What did the salespeople in Rackham's sample do that led to a successful outcome?

- ☐ A. Ask questions
- ☐ B. Listen
- ☐ C. Use closing tactics
- ☐ D. Handle objections

If you checked B for Listen you are incorrect, technically. But, more importantly, you are *right*. What I mean is that high performing salespeople not only ask good questions, as Rackham's team found, they also listen.

Rackham's researchers, however, missed this because, while you can hear, count, and categorize questions, good listening is silent and invisible.

By the way, if you checked C and or D, you are not reading carefully.

This flaw in Rackham's research methodology, in turn, spawned a flawed sales methodology, which Rackham and his Huthwaite firm championed. It is known as SPIN. Most of you in sales are familiar with this acronym with S standing for Situation questions; P for Problem questions; I for Implications and N for Need-Payoff.

While Rackham and his team are owed a debt of gratitude for freeing salespeople from the wrong-headed techniques of closing and handling objections, they contributed, ironically enough, to another imperfect sales approach with SPIN.

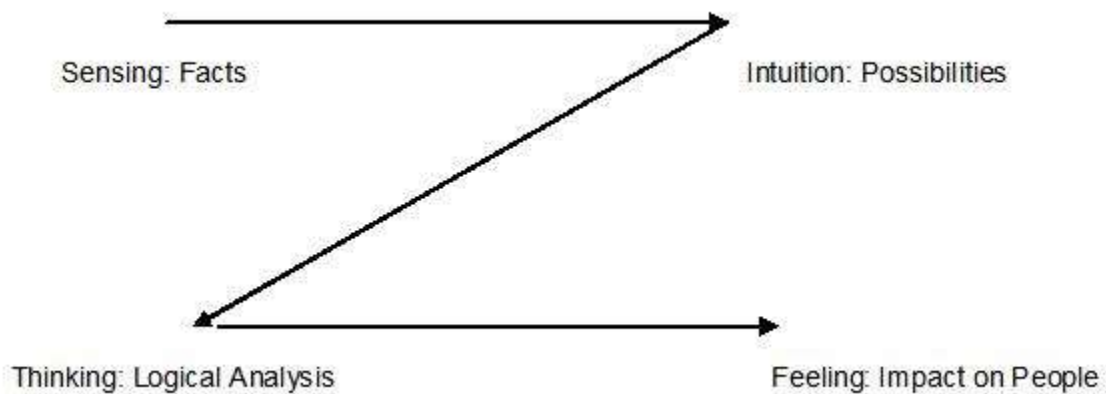
If you are planning and asking great questions but not *listening until it hurts* (credit here to Steve Wiley), you are executing only half of the investigation skills. And this is easy for SPIN proponents to do, since Rackham not only fails to emphasize listening, he never mentions it. If you want evidence, pick up his book, *SPIN Selling* (1988) and visit the index. You will find that the word listen does not have a single entry.

In summary, Rackham and his team got it half right. High performing salespeople do ask good questions. But they also listen empathically to the answers. This is why, of course, we give balance in our training programs to what we call the twin investigation skills of questioning and listening.

## **Z Problem Solving & the US Financial Crisis Fall 2008**

Recently, I had the privilege of leading a sales education program for a group of private bankers. The group was quite diverse, coming from: Greece, Ukraine, Brazil, Belgium, Spain, Holland and Luxembourg.

On the second day, we considered a follow-up application to SST, the Z Problem Solving Model, which is illustrated below:



To practice the Z problem solving method, we applied it to the US economic crisis. This was September 23, 2008 and the crisis had just hit the news. In our humble view, we came up with an approach, which we believe was both more balanced and superior to what we understood from Bush, Paulson and Bernanke, who basically said: *"We have a financial crisis. Trust us and give us a check for \$700 billion."*

Here is a summary of our solution:

### **Sensing: Facts, Details, History**

- Give all of the facts.
- Don't hide information.
- Explain in detail how it happened, citing important dates.
- Describe historical events that were similar and what happened.
- Highlight what worked as a solution in those historical occasions.
- Note that when the US helped rescue the Mexican economy there was a long term financial gain.

### **Intuition: Possibilities, Innovations, Alternatives**

- The economy is truly interconnected and global.
- Convene a meeting of key central bankers around the globe, perhaps those from the G8.
- Consider issuing *war bonds*.
- Develop alternative models, forecasting future outcomes of each.
- Refer to the solution as an investment in the future, rather than a bail out for Wall Street.
- Withdraw troops from Iraq and invest savings to stimulate US economy.
- If people withdraw investments, they will lose in the long term.

### **Thinking: Logical Analysis, Pros & Cons**

- Highlight the consequences of each of the models, including no action.
- List the pros and cons of each solution.

- Emphasize that, with a good solution, this same problem will never happen again.

### **Feeling: Impact on People, Values, Packaging the Message**

- Emphasize the impact on people for each of the options.
- Examine not only the logical criteria for decision making, but emotional factors as well.
- With the message, seek to reduce fear and restore trust.
- Consider how the problem solution connects with United States values like democratic process, checks and balances, and fairness to all citizens.
- Package the problem solution in a fashion that connects with the emotions of fear and mistrust.

No one from this group, especially its facilitator, professes to have a deep understanding of economics. But following the Z Problem Solving process, our solution, which incidentally took less than one hour to do, was more comprehensive, creative, and would have been better communicated than what unfolded in real life. We believe the lesson is that the Z process can lead to both efficiencies and effectiveness in solving problems, both large and small. A good problem solving model requires more than technical expertise (Bernanke and Paulson have that), but a good process as well.

## **Selling in an Economic Crisis**

### **January 2009**

Recently, I was one of several speakers at a conference for sales managers. After my presentation, which was based on my *Rainmakers, Closers & Other Sales Myths* book, I was asked: "How do we manage salespeople in an economic crisis?"

My response is outlined below:

### **Focus on Behaviors**

Success in sales is a function of many factors, some of which the salesperson can control and some she cannot. For example, a salesperson can be *efficient* in managing his or her pipeline and *effective* in a method that emphasizes planning and asking good questions, listening, and customizing solutions. But a salesperson is unable to control variables like budget cuts by buyers and price cuts by the competition.

In an economic crisis, it is important for sales managers to focus on and reinforce the *behaviors* the salesperson can control. Once external variables correct, results will follow.

## **Don't Motivate by Fear**

In the opening scene of *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1992), Alec Baldwin's Blake announces the terms of this month's sales contest:

*First prize: a Cadillac Eldorado*  
*Second prize: a set of steak knives*  
*Third prize: you are fired*

At the aforementioned conference, my talk was followed by a case study competition that dealt with managing sales in an economic crisis. I listened to six small group solutions, each one featuring motivating through fear by slashing the lower performers or by reducing the proportion of compensation from salary and increasing the amount to sales commissions.

Fear is a fundamental of the human condition. When our ancestors were threatened by a Saber Tooth Tiger, they turned and ran as fast as they could. And that is what your sales force will do today if you act like Alec Baldwin's character and threaten them: They will begin looking for a better place to work as fast as they can.

## **Use Intrinsic Rewards**

Ask a sales manager to describe his reward system and he will go into detail about formulas to provide commissions, bonuses, and prizes like trips to tropical paradises. These are all forms of extrinsic rewards because they are tangible and provided by someone else.

In the *Great Jackass Fallacy* (1993), Alfie Kohn reveals the limitations of extrinsic rewards: They do, indeed, work in situations requiring faster or harder behaviors. However, they have no influence on behaviors that require working smarter.

Placing carrots on the end of a stick can work if you want to motivate your sales force, like jackasses, to run faster. However, if success requires them to work smarter by planning excellent questions, identifying and building relationships with all four buyer influences, and using the SST method to customize communication, you must employ intrinsic rewards.

Instead of mimicking Alec Baldwin's character and threatening to fire salespeople on your team, look to find what is intrinsically rewarding to each team member. This is the time to customize and build relationships with your team. SST Seller Profiles can be a helpful resource for understanding the similarities and differences in what makes salespeople tick. You will benefit with better short-term performance and long-term retention of top performing salespeople. One of the core findings of *First Break All the Rules* (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999) is that people leave their managers, not their organizations. The economic crisis will

end, and when it does you want the best players on your team and not your competitors.

### **Break Type-Alike Boundaries**

Those of you who have participated in an SST program, know that salespeople tend to seek out buyer communities who speak the same personality type language, whether it be Sensing-Thinking; Sensing-Feeling; Intuition-Feeling or Intuition-Thinking. (These personality groupings are represented in the four quadrants of the SST logo.)

SST provides easy to master concepts and tools to communicate effectively with all prospective buyers, not just those similar in personality type to the salesperson. In an economic crisis, it is especially important to coach an SST-trained sales force to break their type-alike boundaries, thereby expanding their potential buyer base in an efficient fashion.

### **Look for Opportunities**

*"When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."*

-- John F. Kennedy

Clearly, this economic crisis is fraught with danger. We have seen icons of American business like Lehman Brothers close. Great newspapers like the *Chicago Tribune* have declared bankruptcy. And who knows what the future of the automobile industry holds.

But, there are opportunities as well. This is the time to look for them. Where are Lehman Brothers clients going? How will readers of the *Chicago Tribune* get their news? People will need transportation, regardless of whether it is by a U.S.-made car or not. What is important to them as they get transported from one place to another? Look beyond just the dangers threatening your industry and to new opportunities as well.

In summary, in an economic crisis, sales managers should:

- Focus on behaviors, not just results.
- Avoid using fear as a motivator.
- Use intrinsic rewards to build personal relationships with the team.
- Coach salespeople to break type-alike boundaries.
- Look for new opportunities that fall out from the crisis.

## **A Review of *Buy-ology* by Martin Lindstrom: A Different Sort of SST January 2009**

The title caught my attention: *Buy-ology: Truth and Lies About Why We Buy* (Lindstrom, 2008). A closer look revealed that the book reports the results of recent research on how the human brain reacts to brand advertisements. When I learned that the scientific process cited in *Buy-ology* also goes by SST, the book moved to my must read list.

It turns out that the SST process at the basis of Martin Lindstrom's book stands for *Steady State Topography*, a process used to determine how the brain reacts to images. This kind of *neuromarketing* research is cutting edge because we have learned that there is a huge gap between what we say in traditional marketing research and how we actually behave.

For example, Lindstrom reports that, while smokers report that messages linking cigarettes and cancer discourage smoking, those warnings actually stimulate the section of the brain associated with cravings (the nucleus accumbens). In other words, warnings of cancer do not deter cigarette smoking, they actually encourage it.

Thus, the first major take-away from *Buy-ology* is to read market survey results with a grain of salt. This is nothing new for those of us familiar with research methodology and dynamics like social desirability. We didn't need brain scans to know that cigarette smoking today is socially undesirable and subjects will be influenced to report that they are trying to quit. Just ask President-elect Obama. Nonetheless, it is nice to have hard science back up softer forms of research that preceded it.

Speaking of major take-aways from *Buy-ology*, I am afraid they are limited for our SST ® readership (as in Successful Selling to Type) because *Buy-ology* research focuses on retail behavior rather than the major and complex business-to-business selling most of us do. For example, I challenge one of Lindstrom's central premises which holds that buying decisions are "90 percent" subconscious and not rational. This may be true for the products Lindstrom references, like soft drinks, shaving cream, shampoo, bottled water and beer. But it is less true for a business buying multi-million dollar financial, engineering or technology solutions. Trust me, the conscious and rational parts of the brain get involved in those decisions.

Still, *Buy-ology* is an interesting read and important contribution because it is based on research and not some guy's opinion (see "What's Wrong with One Guy's Opinion?" (SST Newsletter, Spring 1999). Here are some of the findings that caught my attention and you may find of interest.

## **Product Placement**

Lindstrom described SST (*Steady State Topography*) research on the effectiveness of advertisements displayed by Coke and Ford on the hit television show *American Idol*. In short, Ford's advertisements were the traditional ones shown periodically throughout the show. Coke, on the other hand, integrated its images with judges drinking Coke, sitting on Coke-shaped couches and the like. While subjects showed more SST-measured brain activity for Coke, they actually declined for Ford. Lindstrom's interpretation is that when a brand becomes part of the story, associations stick. However, if they are just randomly placed and have no connection to the story, they become easy to forget, like white noise. This strikes me as another reason to incorporate stories into our presentations.

## **Religion and Sports**

I live in State College, Pennsylvania, home of a successful university football program: the Penn State Nittany Lions. I have long thought that support for the Nittany Lions had reached religious proportions. Now, I know why.

Lindstrom reports brain-based research which shows that images of sports stars stimulate the same parts of our brains (middle inferior orbitofrontal cortex) that religious icons do. He goes on to reinforce the scientific research by pointing out that few of us make conscious decisions about religion or sports. We root for the Red Sox or the Yankees. We worship in a Catholic or Lutheran church. Few of us do research on our sports teams or religious choices. We are just Yankee fans and Lutherans.

So, when you visit State College and see a bumper sticker that reads "If God Isn't a Penn State Fan, Why is The Sky Blue and White?," don't try to analyze it. Just honk your horn and say something like, "Go Lions!"

## **Does Sex Sell?**

Given the sexy images plastered all over magazines, television and even billboards, one would have to assume the answer is "yes." However, the research shows that subjects had no better recall of advertisements with sexy images than those without. Before your firm dumps Tiger Woods for skimpily clad super models, you should buy the head of marketing a copy of *Buy-ology*.

## **Summary**

Even though Lindstrom's research focuses on retail buying decisions, it is still a useful read for business-to-business salespeople and their managers. We should all be sensitive to the emotional factors that help determine brands. And, our clients are not only branding the products we represent. Their minds are also at work branding us. We want to be that distinctive brand of salespeople who ask



good questions, listen empathically and customize our communication to appeal to our buyer's.

## **SST® Second Edition April 2009**



The world was different nine years ago when the first edition of SST was published. It was before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Bill Clinton was president; we had a record surplus; the Euro had yet to debut; Enron had a baseball stadium named for it; the internet was in its infancy; few people knew the meaning, nor the implications, of "sub prime" and Barack Obama was a little known Illinois state senator.

But, the basic premise of SST holds true: People buy from people regardless of how large and complex the transaction. However, people have different personalities and treating them all the same is like a skilled craftsman using only a hammer. The one tool approach works when all of your prospects and clients are nails. We know they are not.

Nevertheless, SST is organic and continues to evolve and respond to a historically volatile environment in which we sell today. The second edition of SST® reflects that evolution, making it an even stronger program. Perhaps the most notable addition is the inclusion of "Sixteen Seller Profiles" in Chapter Twelve. The first edition of SST provided profiles of how the sixteen types *buy*, but not how they approach selling.

Further, we have entirely reworked Chapter Three on "The Investigation" to reflect our experience that there are two essential discovery skills: *questioning* and *listening*. While we respect the pioneering research behind the popular SPIN model, we find it limited in effectiveness because it only addresses questioning.

We added a chapter (eleven, to be precise) on "Breaking the Rules of Management," which we recommend reading prior to studying Seller Profiles. It

makes the case for not only managing weaknesses, but also for leveraging strengths. Finally, we have selected articles from the last nine years of the *SST Newsletter* to provide background reading on both sales and sales leadership. They comprise chapters thirteen and fourteen.

Some of the articles go back to the early days of SST and provide an interesting historical context. For example, the CEO of Chrysler is quoted in the 1998 "Duh: What Is Really Wrong With the US Auto Industry" as saying, "Something on the order of 65% of customers don't like the car buying process...If they don't like it we better change." Well, they didn't change and at the date of this writing the US government has required that Chrysler negotiate an acquisition by Fiat. If only they had heeded their own advice.

**Chapter One** describes the "Evolution of SST" and how it has grown from the recognition that counseling and selling require the same basic skills of: asking good questions, listening and helping clients choose solutions.

**Chapter Two** introduces essential and necessary "SST Tools" to sell successfully to type. They are *Industry Profiles*, *Behavioral Cues* and *Implications of the Four Part Framework*.

**Chapter Three**, as noted above, has been entirely reworked. It now features the *Know What*, *Know How* and *Know Why* questioning modeled pioneered by PfP Consulting partner Harry Koolen.

**Chapter Four**, "The Four Languages of SST," covers how each of us combine a preference for taking in information (what Jung called *Perceiving*) with one for organizing and deciding (what Jung called *Judging*) that determines one of four natural orientations for thinking and communicating. Once we know our own preferences, we can be more effective communicators by simply balancing messages we send to ensure that they appeal to all types. This is the SST default position and can be easily mastered in as little as a half-day of training. When we know the preferences of the person with whom we are communicating, we can shade the messages we send to appeal to their particular personality type. *Balance* and *Shade* are core SST concepts.

It is important to emphasize that while **Chapters Five through Eight** profile sixteen personality types (four for each language of ST, SF, NF & NT) the real thrust of SST is to better understand *one* personality: your own. Enlightened self understanding helps us see that we tend to send messages to others the way *we*, but not necessarily *they*, would like to receive them.

**Chapter Nine** addresses Miller & Heiman's *Buyer Influences* model. SST offers essential tools for gaining insights to what represents not just business *results* but personal *wins* for our prospects and clients. After all, as

Heiman and others (1998, p. 198) assert, "It is never enough to sell results alone."

**Chapter Ten** proposes our "Sales Success Formula," which is *Sales Success = Ability X Motivation*. It can be a very helpful diagnostic tool, both for understanding the dynamics of individual performers, as well as team level functioning. The formula also serves to remind us that, just because a salesperson has acquired great skills from SST, that does not mean he or she can ignore the daily disciplines that are influenced by the *Motivation* part of the equation. The formula is multiplicative which suggests that a wonderfully skilled person with zero motivation to succeed will deliver zero level performance.

**Chapter Eleven** is new to the second edition. It advances the proposition that SST users and their leaders begin "Breaking the Rules of Management" by focusing, not on managing weaknesses, but leveraging strengths as well.

**Chapter Twelve** lists the "Sixteen Seller Profiles" and is another addition to this edition of SST. Edition one was restricted to sixteen buyer profiles.

We reinforce its growth and the skills of SST practitioners with quarterly newsletters. Archived articles from *SST Newsletter* serve as the content for **Chapter Thirteen** and **Chapter Fourteen**. Respectively, they are titled "SST in Practice" and "SST Sales Leadership."

**Chapter Fifteen** "The SST Practice Tee" is for those of you who want to close the gap from knowing to doing. There are no real secrets to mastering SST. Like everything else, practice is the key and this chapter provides drills to help you convert what you learn in SST to improve your sales performance. Perhaps you will be inspired by a few reviews of the first edition posted at a third party cite.

## **What Do Doctors and Salespeople Have in Common?**

by Martynas Jocys (left, in photo) & Kestutis Cvetkovas

**April 2009**



The idea for this article came unexpectedly during an SST workshop in late 2008 held in Vilnius, Lithuania. There were participants from various professional areas including a few representatives of pharmaceutical companies. One of the assignments, “You Are Doctors,” is designed to show the importance of questions in sales. During the discussion, one of the participants, Merck Sharp & Dohme Baltic Region Manager, Martynas Jocys, brought to our attention a noteworthy fact: During their studies, future doctors are trained to ask questions in order to come up with an accurate diagnosis. When a patient complains of aches, there are seven methodical questions that all doctors have among the tools of their trade.

Martynas, himself educated as a doctor, was kind enough to let us know these questions. You might have heard them during your last visit to a doctor – or maybe you will have a chance to assess how good a job your GP does the next time you see him/her.

### **Questions about Pain**

1. What is the localization of the pain? (Where does it hurt?)
2. How does it hurt? (What is the pattern and intensity of pain?)
3. Where does the pain spread to?
4. What circumstances provoke the pain?
5. What makes the pain more intense?
6. Are there any other symptoms along with the pain?
7. What is the duration of a painful episode? (How long does it hurt?)

These questions allow a doctor to determine the source of the pain and decide on a treatment strategy. While pain is a fairly common ailment, its sources can be numerous.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), misuse of drugs is among the leading causes of death. This fact attests, once again, to the importance of accurate diagnosis – because a mistake can bring serious consequences.

The Spring 2005 SST newsletter (a review of Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink*) discusses the difference between doctors who get sued by their patients and those who don't. While most of us would assume that doctors who get sued are those who commit malpractice, Gladwell informs us that assumption is wrong. It turns out that the chief differentiator is the time given to patients: 15 minutes as opposed to 18.3 minutes. Moreover, doctors who don't get sued practice active listening and ask their patients questions like “Could you tell me more about...?”

Nothing mysterious about that, it might seem. A doctor asks questions, hears answers – the next step is to draw conclusions and commence treatment. But will it be successful? What if the diagnosis is wrong? Results may be appalling. Most dreadful of all, it's you, and not your doctor, who will have to bear them.

But let's not go too far. Let's get back to SST workshop and parallels between doctors and salespeople.

Not only does a doctor have to diagnose, but also to plan treatment. S/he must be familiar with drugs, their effects, compatibility, etc. The same applies to salespeople – good knowledge of their products is an absolute must.

We expect our doctors to solve our health problems. The goal is to get well, not to collect a prescription. Sales professionals should also look for solutions to their clients' problems. Clients are like patients – they expect their salespeople to come up with practical solutions to their business – not to get burdened with another useless item or service.

### **Dialogue Instead of Interrogation**

On the one hand, a doctor and a salesperson share a similar mission – to find a solution that best meets their client's needs and expectations. On the other hand, however, their situations are quite different, for patients, unlike business clients, are usually well aware that frank and accurate answers will help their doctor help them. These are perfect circumstances to start a *dialogue*.

For a salesperson, meanwhile, starting a dialogue is a far more complex task. Most clients have become “experts” in dealing with sellers who are pushing their products regardless of whether or not they will treat the client's pain. Many sales encounters come to resemble an interrogation, not a dialogue.

A client might seem to show genuine interest, listen carefully to your arguments, even express occasional approval – while in fact s/he doesn't hear a word you are saying.

Initiating a dialogue is therefore another crucial skill that is indispensable for successful doctors and salespeople alike.

SST offers a method to appreciate and develop this skill. Isaacs (1999, p.19) defines dialogue as a “conversation in which people think together in a relationship”. It's therefore a good idea to reread the section “Planning a Successful Sales Dialogue” in the third chapter of the SST book.

### **Questions and Selling Process**

Recently, the authors paid a sales visit to a doctor to discuss a recent innovation in cancer prevention. Many of his patients would certainly benefit from it, yet for quite some time he had been having trouble finding anyone to try the vaccine.

Most of the time this doctor would welcome the benefits of the product, would show interest and agreement. But when asked why no one was interested, he would say that the major obstacle was the price of the vaccine. So as our last visit was nearing an end and having heard, once again, that the main problem was the price, we presented the doctor with a question: “Suppose we eliminate the price issue, would you use it on someone you care about?”

We, sales professionals, are well familiar with situations when clients concentrate their objections on prices. Were this indeed the only issue, it would be perfectly reasonable to expect of our dear doctor to respond with a firm and unequivocal “Yes.”

He, however, after a few moments of hesitation, said he would need to give it some thought. “Why would you need to think?” we asked. And then, quite unexpectedly, our doctor came up with a whole range of real questions and objections – something we were looking for all this time and couldn’t quite get. It led us to reconsider which stage of the buying -selling process we were actually in.

The process of selling – especially selling intangible or invisible services – is hardly ever concluded in one meeting. It usually takes several meetings during which a buyer goes from one stage of selling process to the other. It is important, therefore, to determine which stage a buyer is in and to plan further strategy accordingly.

And the key to making this determination is finding the right question to ask. That is exactly what we did during our visit to the doctor to advance our relationship. The natural tendency when we are stuck in the sales process is to think of new and clever things to say about our product. Rather, we should focus on the better question to ask.

## **Summary**

If every doctor has a method to diagnose the causes of his/her patients’ pains, so should every salesperson. A key to that is asking the right questions to identify the source of a buyer’s “pain,” locate his/her stage in the buying process and establish a dialogue designed to learn as much as you can about your client.

## **About the Authors**

Kestutis Cvetkovas is the General Manager of Versse, Ltd. headquartered in Vilnius Lithuania. Versse was recently certified in SST.

Martynas Jocys is the Baltic Region Manager of Merck Sharp & Dohme.

## Jack Nicholson Speaks Up for Salespeople April 2009

Recently, at a workshop on *Rainmakers, Closers & Other Sales Myths*, I was asked a great question on why salespeople in many organizations are treated like second class citizens. We speculated that many executives have been the object of sleazy retail selling practices themselves and paint the entire sales practice, including those of us who are truly consultative and value creating, with one broad brush that reads: Sell is another four letter word. It is truly paradoxical that the field that is the life blood of so many businesses is often treated with little respect. Wouldn't you like Jack Nicholson to speak for us? It would go something like this:



Operations: We want answers

Nicholson: You want answers?

Operations: We want the truth!

Nicholson: You can't handle the truth!!!

Son, we are in a business that requires revenue. And that revenue must be brought in by people with selling skills and talents. Who else is going to bring the money in? You, Mr. Operations? You, Mr. Comptroller? You, Mr. HR?

We have a greater responsibility than you can even begin to fathom. You scoff at the sales force and you mock us as the guys who had low GPA's in college and now have low handicaps. You have the luxury of not knowing what we know: that the competition is using ruthless tactics to take our business away. And my very existence, while grotesque and incomprehensible to you, fights with the competition every day and saves our accounts and your money!

No, you don't want to know the truth because deep down at your comfortable meetings, you don't want me there. You want me out fighting with the competitors. You NEED me out making calls.

Yes, we use terms like schmooze, pipeline, technical buyer, account coverage, pitches, wins and losses and SST that you don't understand. We use these words as the backbone of a life spent negotiating for and winning business.

No, I have neither the time nor the inclination to justify myself and the rest of my noble team to people who rise and sleep under the very blanket of revenue we provide and then question the manner in which we provide it. I would rather you just said "thank you" and then got out of our way. If you can't do that, then I suggest you pick up the phone and start making some sales calls. Either way, I don't give a damn what you think!

The truth? You can't handle the truth!!

**Enabling a Sales Force**  
By Harry Koolen ©  
Managing Partner, PfP Consulting  
**July 2009**

I recently participated in a webinar on how selling has been impacted by the emerging "new" economy. Towards the end of the session another participant submitted the following question [direct quote]:

“How do you enable a sales force to increase its win rate?”

Now granted, this question was not directly related to the topic at hand, but it stumped the band. The speakers ended up dancing around it. I considered it an interesting question at the time, and I still do. Unfortunately, during the webinar there was no way for me to either identify the person who submitted the question or offer my own thoughts on a possible answer. Since the question has been nagging me ever since, I thought I would do so now. If the unfulfilled questioner is still out there in cyberspace searching for an answer, I offer the following thoughts.

First, it is important to clarify what we mean by “enable.” Without knowing specifically what the questioner had in mind when he / she framed the enquiry this way, I can say that upon hearing the question my first thoughts were of Jan Carlzon’s brilliant (and timeless) essay, *Moments of Truth* [NY: Collins Business, 1989]. Carlzon became head of Scandinavian Airlines in 1981 at a time when SAS was a slow, inward-focused bureaucracy suffering huge financial losses. In a few short years, he turned SAS into a lean, highly profitable, customer-focused organization.

Carlzon defined a moment of truth as any instance when an employee of SAS had contact with an existing or potential customer. His strategy at SAS was predicated upon empowering employees to make the right decisions in these moments of truth – decisions that would result in retaining an existing customer,



or acquiring a new customer. *Moments of Truth* is essentially Carlzon's story of how he "enabled" SAS to make this strategic and cultural transition.

One of the lessons we can take from Carlzon's experience at SAS is that enabling a sales force involves much more than just training; it requires an organization-wide commitment to the sales strategy and a client-centric culture. A look at the characteristics of a truly enabled sales force reveals the extent of the organizational commitment required.

An enabled sales force is characterized by:

- Well-defined target markets and clients – There is an organization-wide consensus around priority markets and priority clients and prospects.
- Well-defined product strategies – Win rates are higher when product strategies are well-aligned with target markets and clients, making it easier for salespeople to demonstrate good "fit" to clients and prospects; negotiable customization and pricing parameters are also clearly specified.
- Sales discovery and dialogue skills – These skills sets should be at the heart of the sales training program, enabling salespeople to more effectively engage clients and prospects (after all, relationships are built on conversations) and develop insights related to clients' needs and goals.
- Product application knowledge (the complement to discovery skills) – Through this more nuanced approach to product training, salespeople are better able to "fit" product solutions to specific client objectives more persuasively, one client at a time.
- Clearly-defined sales process – At the core of the sales process is a pipeline tool that reflects the milestone stages in the underlying sales cycle and is aligned with what is known about clients' decision processes.
- Customized CRM system – When a CRM system is well-customized it is not just functionally more user friendly for salespeople and others, it is also aligned with product, market, and client strategies (customizing a CRM system is not just a technical exercise, it also involves managing a set of social challenges directly related to how organizational culture helps enable the sales force).
- High levels of trust and risk taking – Being enabled to make decisions in moments of truth meant that SAS employees believed

the company's leadership trusted them, thus changing perceptions of risk across the organization; the same phenomenon characterizes a truly enabled sales force.

- Well-aligned reward system – The extrinsic incentive and reward system is transparent and is aligned with product, market, and client strategies (note, too, that all of these enabling characteristics also add up to providing salespeople with higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction, and nothing is more enabling than an intrinsically-motivated sales force).

So, there it is. If the mystery webinar questioner is still out there, searching for satisfaction, I hope this helps.

## **Successful Change Leaders Use Marketing**

By Matthijs Van der Want

OVV Consulting

**July 2009**

Lately, I did notice in the news that a lot of companies are reorganizing their businesses. Given the current economic crisis, that was not at all a surprise to me. However, it triggered a reflection about my own experiences as a change leader. I paid special attention to the communication part, because it's one of the central reasons why change programs fail. I did draw the conclusion that the communication in the change efforts I led could have been much better. At that moment, it struck me that applying marketing principles to change could probably provide a solution. In fact, the *SST* motto came to my mind: effective business communication is not about us, it is about them.

Since change programs are about adapting culture and behavior, understanding and conviction of the necessity to change are essential. Without effective communication, change leaders will not get staff engaged, motivated and into action. The change process in business is analogous to the creation and spreading of a new religion or a movement. That's why it's so difficult.

Change programs are also about handling resistance, because fundamentally people do not like to change. Their motives for resisting change are often based on: 1. feelings of being powerless; 2. no clarity of what management expects from them; 3. not enough conviction of the necessity to change; and 4. no personal gain. All four of these underlying reasons need to be addressed by change leaders because, when it comes down to it, the only person who can change behavior is the team member himself or herself. The communication should focus on removing these barriers by being clear and certain about what the change will bring to the company and them. Again, it's not easy to accomplish.

According to marketing theory, communication should be focused on keeping existing and acquiring new clients. The company aims to build a positive relationship with its clients. Therefore, communication is client-centered and based on the insights of their needs, motivation and behaviors. To monitor the relationship, the company regularly conducts client satisfaction surveys. Further, the company makes use of image branding in order to strengthen their marketing effort. The chosen brand name, logo and slogan will return in each communication.

In fact, the same works for a change process. According to the theory of change, the communication should be focused on keeping the faith in the change and on spreading the awareness of the necessity to change among the involved employees. The company aims to build a positive relationship with them. Therefore, effective change communication is based on how value can be created for team members, the clients of the change process. To monitor this relationship, the company regularly conducts commitment for change surveys. Finally, the company makes use of image branding of the change in order to strengthen the process. The chosen brand name, logo and slogan will return in each communication.

Thus, in the same way as the customer seduced by marketing decides to buy, so can the involved employee be influenced by internal marketing to make the decision to change.

What does embracing this idea mean? For one, it means that in order to be a successful change leader, marketing communication plans need to be developed and implemented. This includes the use of different marketing tools and controlling the marketing communication requirements.

## **Change Marketing Plans**

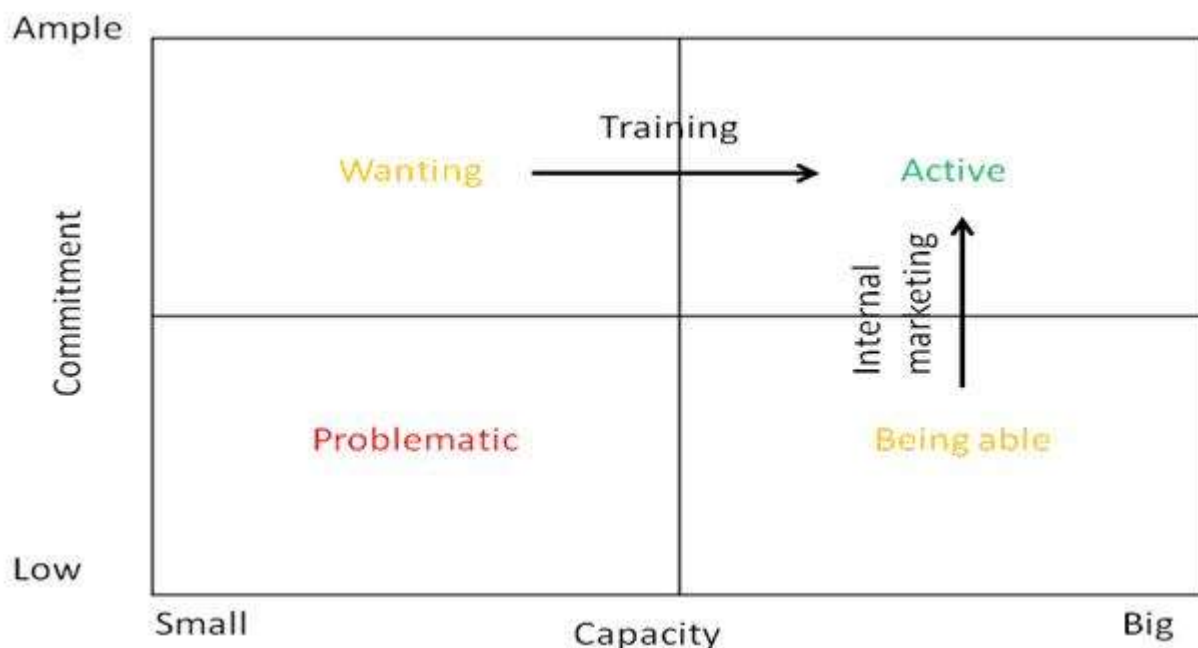
A change program consists of four phases. The communication plans will differ per phase because the aim of the communication differs.

- **Analysis phase:** The management of the company conducts an analysis of commercial performance figures and the results of satisfaction surveys among clients and involved staff and decides to implement a change program, install a project organization and announce the launch. The aim is to inform the organization of the change program.
- **Awareness phase:** During the launch, the objective is to gain conviction and commitment to the necessity of change among the involved staff.
- **Implementation phase:** During implementation, the focus is on the progress of the program actions, celebrating early wins and telling

success stories. The aim is to keep and to spread the religion of the change.

- **Embedding phase:** In this final phase of embedding, the change will no longer be owned only by the management but by the involved staff. The aim is to commit the whole organization to finalize the change program. At the end, one does no longer talk about the program, but just shows the right behavior.

In addition, these plans need to take into account the following four internal target groups. Each of the involved staff can be placed in one of the quadrants of the matrix below based on their *commitment* and *capacity* to change:



Because those in the upper right quarter are committed and capable, they will immediately become believers and active and do not need a lot of attention. By using principles of internal marketing with those with a rather low commitment due to a lack of conviction, one could move them upward. During conversations with them, attention should be given to the personal gain and their reasons for resisting the change. By providing training and coaching to those with a lacking capacity, one could move them to the right. The management can't ask personnel to change their behavior without providing the learning conditions for change. Nevertheless, some of the involved staff will lose out. Most of them will be situated at the beginning in the lower left quarter. In addition, one can't overcome the fact that some of the staff will interpret the change as a scheme to reduce the number of personnel.

## Marketing Tools

The following ways of communication from marketing theory can be applied during the change process. The table below provides some examples:

Marketing tool	Change process example
Personal Sale, taking SST into account	Balanced messages with Sensing (Facts); Intuition (Strategy); Thinking (Logic for change) and Feeling (Impact on People)
Advertisement	Advertisement of the launch in the company magazine about the necessity
TV spot	Because the reach is too broad, it's not applicable
E-marketing	Dedicated website with a focus on the progress and the desired behavior
	Blog of the change manager
	E-mailing of the presentation used by project team to address steering committee
Direct mail	Personal letter of the CEO to the involved staff to thank them for their effort
Public relation	Communication to external stakeholders concerning reasons and progress
Promotion	Accessory printed with the brand name, logo and slogan of the change

In my opinion the most important step is the first one, the personal sale. All the layers of the organization do need in each contact with stakeholders to spread their faith in the change with full conviction. The managers involved should not only communicate in that way, but should act accordingly as well from the beginning onwards. If all goes well, the gospel of change sounds louder and louder from within the company.

For each marketing tool one wants to pursue, it's highly recommended to determine the aim, the target group, the frequency, the costs and the reach. The reach is the part of the target group, which has been convinced by the communication. Questions can be asked to members of the target group afterwards in order to measure it. In the end, one needs to optimize per plan the different ways on the basis of their estimated reach under the restriction of the communication budget of the change program.

## Communication Requirements

According to marketing theory, the communication will be only effective if certain requirements are fulfilled.

First, marketing during a change process should be consistent in the sense that each effort boils down to the same core message (no contradictions) and be coherent with each communication reinforcing the religion of the change.

In addition, horizontal (all involved departments communicate the same) and vertical (all management layers communicate the same) integration of

information should be the case. The guarding of this is certainly a task of the project team, but loyal support of everybody in the organization is needed. Only one senior manager who is off message can undercut the entire change process. All leaders must consistently communicate that the program will succeed, acknowledge the necessity for change, and confront change-resistant actions.

Finally, there is a necessity of the integration of feedback. Its importance should not be underestimated. The acknowledgement of the interdependence of the involved staff and horizontal and vertical exchange of knowledge, form the basis for a successful implementation of the change program. All the involved managers and employees bear the full responsibility for this. Feedback in all directions related to the impact of the change is important because it could ultimately determine the success of the program. Continuous learning from each other is the purpose.

In summary, most unsuccessful change efforts fail because people resist and are often threatened by change. Organizational change efforts can take on the character of a religious conversion. To succeed, care needs to be taken to plan and execute a marketing plan to win support of staff during the four phases of the change process. Internal groups can be targeted for marketing according to their commitment and capacity to change.

### **A Review of *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell: What Do Bill Gates and the Beatles Have in Common? July 2009**

If you are looking for one great book to tote to the beach this summer, I recommend Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers: The Story of Success* (2008). You may recognize Gladwell as the author of best sellers *The Tipping Point* (2000) and *Blink* (2005). In fact, if you have enough vacation time and haven't read them yet, I would bring along the whole trilogy. They are that good.

Gladwell's genius is finding and summarizing important research with entertaining stories. He then helps us connect the dots to see implications in terms of how we manage our lives, families, careers, and yes, sales efforts. Thanks to Gladwell, the titles of his first two books have become part of our everyday vernacular. Even if we haven't read the book, we still understand the term *tipping point* is that moment when a trend or idea *tips* and then spreads like an unchecked epidemic. If we have ever bought something because of the package (and who hasn't?), we understand that we make buying decisions, not only rationally, but in a *blink*-of-the-eye moment through the adaptive conscious.

Now, in *Outliers*, Gladwell tackles the prevailing and dearly held view that key ingredients to success are intelligence and ambition. That is only part of the

success formula. Success also has to do with the accidents of when and where we were born and the resulting opportunities some are offered. Gladwell describes the outlier phenomenon this way:

*"It is not the brightest who succeed. Nor is success simply the sum of the decisions and efforts we make on our own behalf. It is, rather, a gift. Outliers are those who have been given opportunities — and who have had the strength and presence of mind to seize them."*

One person given an *outlier* opportunity is Bill Gates. He was a geeky kid who attended a private school whose mothers financed a computer club. This was 1968 when computers, let alone computer clubs, were rare. Rather than practicing piano or playing soccer, the kid who would become the richest man in the world would spend hours on end writing computer programs. Indeed, he spent what turns out to be the magical figure of *10,000 hours* as a programmer.

What do Bill Gates and the Beatles have in common? It is definitely not geekiness. When Gladwell dissects the Fab Four's success story, we discover that, like Gates, the Beatles *seized the opportunity* they had in Hamburg Germany and got *10,000 hours* of practice. Unlike their native Liverpool, where bands would play short one-hour sets, in Hamburg the Beatles would play eight hours, seven days a week. The author of the Beatle biography, Philip Norman, writes that the Hamburg crucible transformed the Beatles into a disciplined group that sounded like no one else. "It was the making of them," he concludes.

Like all of Gladwell's books, you will find yourself reading a chapter, and thinking of implications. If you are an Extravert like me, you'll be anxious to discuss the implications of the 10,000-hour rule. How many people on our teams practice the way Bill Gates and the Beatles did? Where can we find more? If you are an Introvert, you will want to close the book, stare at the surf and ponder deep thoughts. What will the next opportunity be for me? For my business? Can I make opportunities? Now, that is great summer reading.

## **Is Sales a Man's Game?**

### **October 2009**

In the opening scene of *Glengarry Glen Ross*, the 1992 film based on David Mamet's Pulitzer Prize winning play, Alec Baldwin's character is brought in to motivate Mitch & Murray's underperforming sales team played by: Al Pacino, Ed Harris, Alan Arkin, and Jack Lemmon. After introducing "a little something new to this month's sales contest...third prize: you're fired," Baldwin gets in the face of Shelly "The Machine" Levine, (Jack Lemmon), and whispers:

"And your name is *I Am Wanting*. You can't play in a man's game. You can't close them and go home and tell your wife your troubles."

Which frames the question of this article: Is sales a man's game? After all, everyone selling real estate for Mitch & Murray, in the fictional *Glenn Garry Glen Ross*, is a man.

With some clients, we conduct what is called an Exemplary Performer Analysis, perhaps a too fancy title for comparing the methods of top, or exemplary, sales performers to more typical ones. We are interested in learning if there are approaches or techniques high performers employ that we can spread to the rest of the sales force in our training.

One of the things that strikes us is that women are often represented in a disproportionately high level among the exemplary performing group. Once, women were only about twenty percent of the sales team, but comprised sixty percent of the top performers. When we asked the women why, we heard responses like this:

"While there were lots of role models for men to follow, I have had to develop a sales strategy that works for me. It leans more toward relationship building versus the more aggressive tactics most of my male counterparts use."

Karen Stroman, Commercial Manager, BASF, New York

Karen's comment may provide a personality type insight into why men and women could have different approaches to selling. Of the four Jungian scales used in SST®<sup>1</sup>(and the MBTI), only one shows a difference by gender. Research finds men and women in the same proportions for Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition and Judging-Perceiving. However, on the Thinking-Feeling scale men are more likely to show Thinking and women are more likely to favor Feeling.

For those unfamiliar with type theory, what this means, and consistent with Karen's observation, is that more women put an emphasis on building relationships than do men. Further, this could explain why we find women disproportionately represented among high performing salespeople we interview.

Thinking preferred men, like me, should not find this hypothesis discouraging. We all use all of the preferences, albeit some more naturally than others. Thinking preferred sales men would benefit from emphasizing relationship building to complement their gifts at logic and analysis. And, we should all



recognize that women may have a natural predisposition to building relationships that serves them in sales.

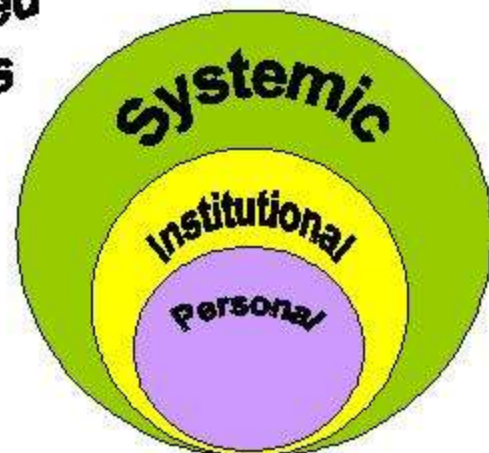
## **Want to Regain Trust After the Crisis? Look to Woody Allen**

by Harry Koolen ©  
Managing Partner, PfP Consulting  
**October 2009**

What can we learn from Woody Allen about trust, now that we are one year removed from the worst of the financial crisis? Quite a lot, as it turns out. Surveys published in the *McKinsey Quarterly* and the *Journal of Service Research* (JSR) suggest that, while private bankers and retail financial advisors should pay particular attention, all salespeople can learn important lessons here. When Woody Allen observed that “ninety percent of success is showing up,” he unknowingly provided a surprising insight into one of the foundations of trust in client-advisor relationships, especially in times of high anxiety such as we have experienced over the past year.

Trust has clearly been one of the biggest casualties of the economic meltdown. The crisis has eroded trust to varying degrees on three levels: personal, institutional and systemic. We can think of these levels of trust as being nested (since there are important interdependencies among the levels) and look at them through the eyes of a client.

**Levels of Trust Impacted  
by the Financial Crisis**



- **The Personal Level of Trust** – This is the trust the client places in his / her financial advisor or salesperson.
- **The Institutional Level of Trust** – This is the trust that the client places in the company that stands behind the advisor or salesperson.
- **The Systemic Level of Trust** – This is the trust that the investor places in the overall financial system within which banks and other financial service providers operate.

The *McKinsey* and *JSR* surveys focus on the level of personal trust. Of course, this is the realm of trust over which financial advisors, and all salespeople for that matter, have the most control. *McKinsey* surveyed 2,000 US consumers in January 2009 and found that 63 percent haven't changed their investment portfolios and don't plan to postpone retirement. This in spite of the fact that in 2008 the total value of household assets in the US (excluding real estate) declined by an average of 18 percent and \$2.4 trillion was wiped off defined contribution retirement accounts and IRAs.

Not surprisingly, *McKinsey* found that consumer anxiety more than doubled<sup>1</sup> during 2008, with high net worth individuals growing even more concerned than others. Yet, during the last six months of 2008 (when most of the financial decline took place), the overall level of advice provided by financial advisors to their clients fell significantly. The good news for advisors who - from the perspective of their clients - disappeared during the height of the crisis is that only one percent of consumers surveyed moved assets away from their primary financial institution in the last six months of 2008.

*McKinsey* chalks this up to a broad-based failure of individual investors to understand the state of retirement security, or what *McKinsey* calls the retirement readiness index (RRI). Earlier this year, the RRI stood at 63. To put this in perspective, an RRI of 100 is necessary to maintain one's current standard of living at retirement, while an RRI below 80 will require significant reductions in spending on basic needs such as housing, food, and health care.

Whether most investors are in denial or just bewildered by the extent and complexity of the crisis, there would appear to be an enormous opportunity for advisors to build trust with both existing and potentially new clients during the crisis. Further, the research shows that the personal level of trust, the level financial advisers and private bankers can influence directly, can be the most important.

This is certainly the conclusion of the *JSR* survey, in spite of its having been conducted in February 2008, before the worst of the crisis. Eisengerich and Bell surveyed more than 1,200 clients of Goldman Sach's Australian affiliate

to determine the impact of customer education initiatives on the relationships between service quality and trust. They discovered that efforts to enhance clients' knowledge of products, services and markets had a positive and strong impact on trust. Interestingly, they also found that the relative impact of "service outcome" (for example, higher rates of return on investments) on trust actually declined as customer education initiatives increased.

Thus, as clients' knowledge of products and services grows through sales-led education initiatives, factors such as investment returns become less important for building trust. Loop back to the *McKinsey* study and consider the potential value of RRI-based conversations in this environment. We can't help but wonder how many financial advisors shied away from calling clients during the crisis for fear of being the bearers of bad news. Our own research with high net worth individuals confirms the point that, if there is bad news, clients want to hear it in a conversation with their *trusted advisor*, not from a monthly account statement that few people read. The *JSR* study found that education and other types of communication from the advisor actually helped to build trust at both the individual and institutional levels, thus reducing the chances of clients moving assets to another firm.

So, back to Woody Allen. The message seems to be clear: financial advisors need to "show up" regardless of what's happening in markets. To quote from the *McKinsey* study, "[the] disconnect between the crisis and the response to it means that financial advisors have a significant opportunity to step up their game and help consumers get back on track... Reaching out to clients may be the best move advisors can make right now; those who did so are nearly twice as likely to be recommended by their clients."

But the *JSR* survey reminds us that just showing up isn't enough; you've got to have something worthwhile to say. Providing candid, timely, relevant communication to clients is vital in the trust-building and trust-restoration process. Look at the opportunity in the crisis to build more trusting relationships.

*"When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."*

-- John F. Kennedy

<sup>1</sup> Sixty percent reported they were anxious compared to roughly thirty percent when previously surveyed.

## **Captain Underpants v. Rainmakers**

### **March 2010**

It was a snowy, cold Sunday morning when my grandson Nicholas and I went to our local bookstore. We were both in need of reading material. Nicholas had already read the seven part *Captain Underpants* series I got him, and I had

burned through both leisure and business reading, having just completed considerable business travel. We started with a couple of blueberry scones complemented with a hot chocolate for my favorite second grader and cup of Starbucks brew for me. Then it was off to the kids section for Nicholas and business books for me.

Perhaps it was the newness of, not only the year, but the start of a decade that had put me in a reflective mood. But visiting the business section of the bookstore reminded me of a similar exercise some seventeen years ago. At the time, I was toying with the notion of launching a consulting practice with a focus on selling and thought I would start, like any good academic, with a literature review.

Earlier searches of college, university and public libraries turned up nothing on the practice of selling. The internet was in its infancy and the word *google*, as in *to google* something or somebody, had not yet evolved. Thus, way back in 1993, my next step was visiting a bookstore and searching for titles on selling. Indeed, this experience proved catalytic because my conclusion was that, with very few exceptions, there was a lot of garbage and little substance offered on the practice of selling. The experience convinced me that there was a niche for a sophisticated contribution to selling like the personality-based model that was then brewing in my head.

Seventeen years later, not much has changed in book titles on selling. The very first indicator that *selling* still does not get much respect is that, unlike *advertising* or *marketing*, it does not merit its own section at a bookstore. Indeed, all books that deal with *selling* are classified under *motivation*.

This is more than a subtle insult. Indeed, to those of us who take our craft seriously, this is a royal kick in the pants. It implies that selling does not require talents, skills, or tools, but just some Mary Kay convention chest thumping to get us motivated enough to get out the door and coerce some closes.

Despite the research evidence showing that closing techniques are inversely related to selling success<sup>1</sup>, that word still dominates titles: *Sales Scripts That Close Every Deal*, *One on One: The Secret of Professional Sales Closing*, *Sales Questions That Close* and *The Art of Closing the Sale*.

Then, of course, on the short list of worthwhile books on selling you will find *Rainmakers, Closers and Other Sales Myths* by some guy named Tilden. As good timing would have it, I happened to have a copy of *Rainmakers* in my hand when Nicholas returned with his wish list of kids books. Proudly, I handed him *Rainmakers*. He read the jacket information out loud, turned to me and asked: "Who is going to want to read this?" Even grandfathers can't compete with *Captain Underpants*.

1. Rackham, 1988

## **No Drama Obama & SST Balance Fall 2010**

We Tildens have been loyal Democrats since 1876. That was the year Samuel J. Tilden, Democratic Governor of New York, won the popular vote but lost the Electoral College to Rutherford B. Hayes due to shenanigans in Florida ([click here for a related Wikipedia entry](#)). Sound familiar?

Needless to say, I voted for Barack Obama and consider his performance in the White House nothing short of remarkable. He drove healthcare reform; saved the economy from the brink of disaster; led Wall Street reform; extended Bush's TARP and as a result, GM is alive and well and hiring workers; kept his promise on getting us out of Iraq; negotiated a nuclear arms agreement with Russia; and restored our respect around the globe. I know not all readers of this newsletter will agree with my assessment that Obama is brilliant. But the *SST® Newsletter* is not about political spin. God knows there is enough of that. Rather, it is about applying Jung's theory of personality type to be more effective communicators.

And here, I am a sharp critic of our President. Recently, we have been doing Balanced Communication exercises in SST classes by considering how Obama communicated with Americans on the BP oil spill crisis. *No Drama Obama* has been widely criticized for being aloof and failing to connect with us on an emotional level. Consider *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd:

*"Once more, he has willfully and inexplicably resisted fulfilling a signal part of his job: being a prism in moments of pride and fear, reflecting what Americans feel so they know he gets it."*

And, later in the same column:

*"Just as President Clinton once protested to reporters that he was still 'relevant', President Obama had to protest to reporters that he has 'feelings'."*

To those of us interested in personality type, the operative word here is *Feeling*. It is one of the four mental functions (Sensing, Intuition and Thinking being the others) represented in Balanced Communication. It is the one that President Obama, like most of us with a Thinking preference, tend to neglect because it is not as natural to us as being logical and analytical in our thinking and communication.

If Obama had practiced SST Balance, he would have known that it is not enough to communicate: Sensing messages (facts and details); Intuition (big picture, future and possibilities); and Thinking (pros & cons, logical decision criteria). He also needs to

prepare and deliver Feeling messages relating to the impact on people and showing that he cares.

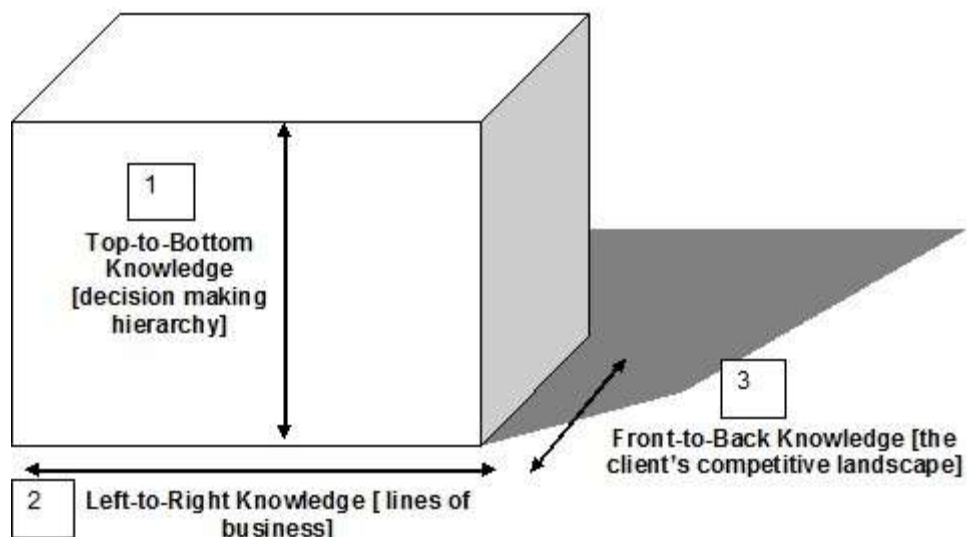
This was natural to President Clinton because he was a Feeling-preferred communicator (ENFP to Obama's INTP). Remember, "I feel your pain"? Indeed, and probably without knowing type theory, Maureen Dowd concludes her article by proposing that Obama offer Clinton a position as "*Feeler in Chief. The post is open.*" The personality type learning here is that, even Harvard-educated, constitutional law scholars, need to be intentional in planning and delivering messages that are balanced and cover all four mental functions. Lacking that discipline, our communication will be incomplete and limited in its effectiveness. After all, when we communicate, we should invoke the SST motto: *It is not about us. It is about them.*

### **3D Knowledge™**

#### **Understanding the Three Dimensions of the Client's Business**

#### **February 2011**

In seeking to understand your client at the deepest level, thereby improving your competitive position, it is essential to know all three dimensions of your client's business. Typical salespeople routinely restrict their investigation to dimensions one and two. Understanding the third dimension of a client offers a strategic advantage and is the critical first step to customizing a truly unique value proposition. The 3D Knowledge™ Model is illustrated below:



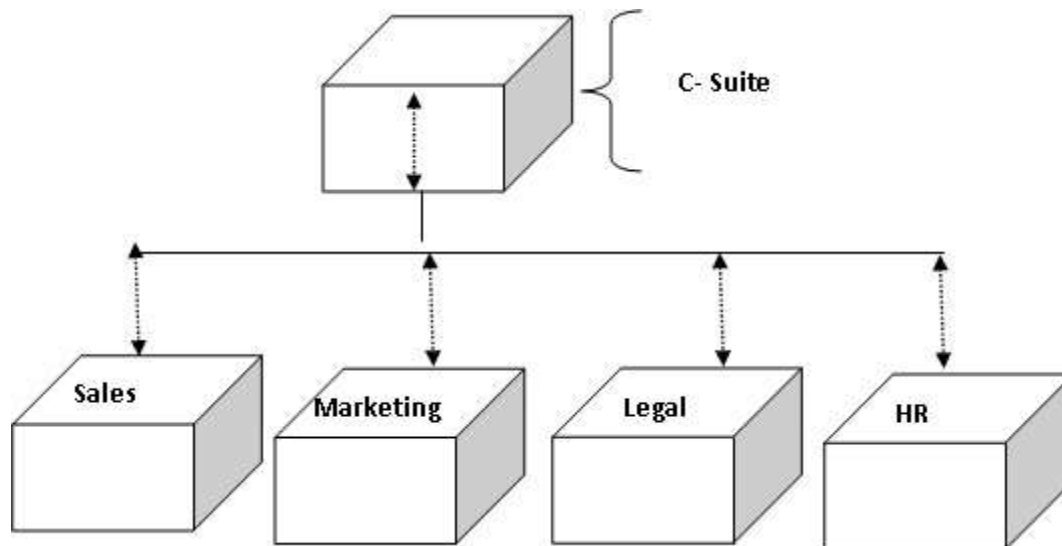
Developing a 3D perspective on a client requires you to broaden and deepen your ongoing investigation of the account, including:

- Pursuing new lines of questioning
- Listening more carefully

- Developing new, non-traditional points of contact in the client organization
- Understanding your *client's clients*
- Providing unique solutions to their business challenges and performance goals
- Winning a competitive advantage

## Dimension One

### Top to Bottom - Decision Making Hierarchy



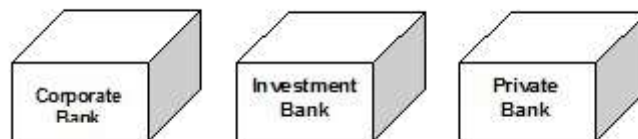
Dimension One has to do with the chain of command and who reports to whom. A few representative departments are illustrated above for the kind of selling we do at Tilden & Associates and PfP Consulting. Your selling process likely involves different departments.

In acquiring Dimension One knowledge, we want to know how decisions get made, the key players and their scorecards. As I write in *Rainmakers, Closers & Other Sales Myths* (chapter seven), organizations are characterized by both *formal* and *informal* structures. The former are public and can be studied in organizational charts. The latter, however, are invisible. Yet, they sometimes hold even more influence than the formal structure. Often the term *office politics* captures what is going on in the informal, or shadow, structure.

Tapping into and understanding the dynamics of the informal structure may require employing your *Advocate*. This is the buyer influence (Financial, Technical and User being the others) that has inside knowledge and wants to see you win. (See chapter nine in SST® for more information on buyer influences, from Miller Heiman.)

## Dimension Two

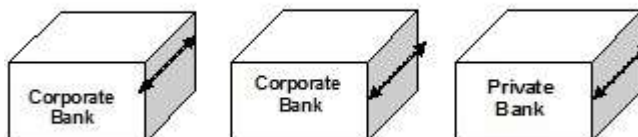
### Left-to-Right -- Lines of Business



Left-to-Right knowledge relates to the various lines of business, or strategic business units, a company offers. Three lines of business for a typical bank are illustrated above. Although separately managed, there is a lot of commonality in the three value propositions they offer. The lines of business do not function in a vacuum. Rather, they face similar external opportunities and threats and operate in the same corporate culture. Dimension Two Knowledge requires that we learn about all of the lines of business that impact our prospective clients and how that knowledge can enhance the shaping of our value proposition.

## Dimension Three

### Front-to-Back



Dimension Three knowledge is what separates typical performers from exemplary ones. It is where salespeople see all the way *through to the other side* and understand the prospective *client's clients*. They know the client's strategy and competitive landscape. From this vantage point, they are able to customize value propositions in a fashion that demonstrates understanding of strategy and business performance goals. They are also less dependent on price.

In summary, the more you know about a client, the stronger your competitive position. The 3D Knowledge™ model is a template to acquire an understanding, especially the third dimension, that will differentiate you from your competitors regardless of their size or price.



## **Sex & Selling 2.0**

### **February 2011**

Way back in 2000, I wrote a Valentine's piece for this newsletter on "*The Top Ten Reasons Why Sex and Selling are Alike*." I was reminded of that offering when I read a recent *New York Times* article on *Why Remarry?* by marriage expert and author of *Marriage, A History*, Stephanie Coontz.

Based on many oral histories she has conducted on successful second marriages, she observes that second time around, "women change what they are looking for in a potential mate. They said they were drawn to men who listened to them rather than trying to impress them."

Again, I thought about the similarities between romantic and business relationships and how many of us are guilty of trying to impress rather than listen. Judging from the presentation materials I see, the answer is plenty.

Routinely, the slides and pitch books I review are all about trying to impress a prospective client of how big, old, famous, or award winning they are without showing they have first listened carefully.

Here's a simple audit to conduct to determine if you are listening rather than trying to impress:

- Check your slide deck. How many slides are about you compared to how many are about them?
- In what order are they placed? Do the slides about your prospect come first, as they should?
- When you debrief a recent sales call, how much time did you talk compared to the prospect or client? If you did most of the talking, it was a bad call.

Remember that selling and business in general is all about relationships. To build lasting ones, check to make sure you are doing more listening rather than trying to impress.

## Don't Ask Joe about Marilyn Spring 2011

I have been listening to Don Imus, on and off, since I was a kid growing up on Long Island and he was a shock jock pushing vinyls. His broadcasts for the Right Reverend Billy Sol Hargus came from America's only Discount Church of Worship. Once, Imus called a restaurant and ordered 1200 hamburgers to go. His first question to any poor woman who called in was, "Are you naked?"



Over the years, both of us have grown up, a bit anyway. Controversial as he is, Imus has always been a brilliant interviewer and, as I teach and do selling, I listen and learn from his techniques that get his guests to open up and reveal things they typically keep guarded. After all, isn't that what we are seeking to accomplish in the sales interview?

Recently, he has asked guests to list their top five favorite songs. Those who have participated include John Kerry, John McCain, Bob Schieffer and Donald Trump. Think about the question for a minute. Don't you find yourself going back and considering the music and the artists that were playing at critical moments in your life? It is a great question. But, it is not one I would recommend for sales interviews.

It was a recent discussion Imus had with his sportscaster, however, that I do find instructive for those who do selling. Instead of asking Warner Wolf to list his top five songs, he instead asked him to comment on his top all time interviews. Wolf said two interviews stand out: Joe DiMaggio and Muhammad Ali. At that moment, I bet every listener, like me, leaned forward and turned the volume up to hear what came next as Warner described his interviews with the two iconic sports figures.

Here is the gist of what Warner had to say. When he interviewed DiMaggio, Wolf was a young broadcaster and new to the New York market. Meeting the great DiMaggio held the potential of being a transformational moment in his career, not unlike that huge sales call for us. Just before the interview started, DiMaggio's handler whispered into Wolf's ear. "There are two magic words that end Mr. DiMaggio's interviews: Marilyn Monroe."

Forewarned, the young reporter knew to steer clear of any questions about the Yankee Clipper's beautiful former wife. Instead, he asked about the slugger's calm and composed demeanor. It only came unwrapped in the 1947 World Series when Joltin Joe famously kicked dirt after being robbed of an extra base hit<sup>1</sup>. Wolf asked what prompted that very uncharacteristic emotional display.

It turned out to be a great question, because the usually *introverted* DiMaggio opened up. He said that, while he churned with emotion internally, he thought that if he

displayed it his opponents would have an advantage. This was an insight into the Yankee great we had never seen before.

Wolf then compared the DiMaggio interview to his first one with Ali. While both giants in their respective fields, it is hard to imagine two more different individuals in terms of, if you will, personality. Compare the private and dignified DiMaggio protecting his emotions from public scrutiny to the effervescent Ali. The heavy weight champ would mock his opponents (Joe Frazier is too ugly to be champ!), predict the round when he would deliver his knock-out blow, and play with Howard Cosell's toupee. True to what we would predict as Ali's *extraverted* nature, Wolf said he only had to ask Ali *one* good question and the rest of the interview would take care of itself. Lucky for Warner, he still had a relatively full head of hair.

In our research interviews comparing *exemplary* sales performers to more *typical* ones, we have found that average salespeople prepare what they are going to say, while the top ones prepare questions, too. The more you demonstrate that you have done your homework, as Warner Wolf did for Joe DiMaggio, the more likely it is that you will engage your prospect and get them to open up.

In summary:

- Great questions make the difference
- Do your homework
- Can you add to this list:

What are the top three:

- Trends in your industry?
- Reasons customers choose you?
- Reasons customers stay with you?
- Reasons you lose them?
- Strategic initiatives for your business?
- Challenges you face?
- Others?

- Extraverts may only need one great question
- We need to plan more to get introverts to open up
- Don't ask Joe about Marilyn.

1. *Personal footnote.* My parents were in the left field bleachers when the Dodgers' left fielder Al Gionfrido made the famous catch. As a life-long Yankee fan, I need to observe that, despite Gionfrido's heroics, the Bombers went on to win the series.

# **White Paper**

## **Solving the Mystery**

### **A Two Step Solution to Improving Sales Performance**

Over the last twenty years and across many borders and sectors, a common lament we hear from sales leaders goes:

*“It is a mystery to us why some of our salespeople perform at a much higher level than others. They look similar on paper, go through the same training, report to the same managers, have the same incentives, yet some excel and others don’t. We just don’t know why.”*

Then, they will complete their thought by observing that if they could solve the mystery and raise the performance of more typical salespeople, they would easily meet, and likely surpass, their business goals.

If this sounds like you, then you will benefit from reading on about Tilden & Associates two-step solution:



1. Identifying key competencies for sales success through an Exemplary Performer analysis. Put another way, these are the disciplines and skills practiced by top performers that distinguish them from more typical ones.
2. Putting a Portfolio system in place to determine the level of proficiency in each salesperson. Based on the portfolio assessment an individualized coaching and training agenda is established.

The outcome is a higher performing sales force. This two-step process is different from the more common approach of placing all salespeople in the same training and hoping some of the skills they are taught stick.

### **Step One: Exemplary Performer Analysis**

One size may fit all when it comes to ball caps. But, it is a flawed approach when it comes to teaching and learning, including sales education.

We are all familiar with the curricula we experienced in schools and then at the university level. Let’s consider the latter. New students start out with introductory courses usually labeled “101”. With that foundation in place, they proceed through more advanced courses at the 201 and 301 levels before they complete their concentration with some form of capstone experience, usually identified in the course catalog as “401”.

Yet, when it comes to selling skills sales leaders typically pile everyone, seasoned veterans and rookie salespeople alike, into a one size fits all 101 level class. The result for those of us who teach selling skills is a lot of kicking and screaming from experienced salespeople.

Of course, one of the benefits university registrars have over sales leaders and HR staff is an understanding of what courses comprise their curricula. They know the sequence of instruction for each concentration, including which basic courses serve as prerequisites to more advanced ones. Indeed, course descriptions include their prerequisites in the catalog. As a rule, sales leaders and HR staff have no sense of what comprises a comprehensive selling curriculum.



The interview based Exemplary Performer Analysis (EPA) is the vehicle for accomplishing step one in our two step solution: identifying both the processes and skills your top performers exhibit which set them apart from others on the sales force.

Once, we learned that an exemplary performer for an engineering firm took time to win the collaboration of senior engineers. When the milestone in the sales process came for a high level technical conversation between those senior engineers and technical advisers on the buying side, the engineers were willing participants. The more typical sales performers, on the other hand, did not cultivate internal relationships and senior engineers were less willing to participate in client facing conversations. The sales process then stalled.

Another time we learned that an Exemplary Performer moved beyond in-bound RFPs and probed to learn more about the strategy and performance issues that were *driving* the RFP. During our EPA interview he observed, *“It’s not like these guys got to work one morning and said, ‘Hey we don’t have much going on today. What do you say we send out an RFP.’”* More typical performers mechanically went through the exercise of completing the RFP and their win rates were much lower.

Routinely, we find that what distinguishes Exemplary Performers is a practice or a discipline everyone on the sales force can model. Top performers don’t possess super natural qualities. With customized training and coaching mere mortals on the sales force can learn to perform at a higher level too.

## Step Two: Portfolio Assessment

With the key competencies for high performance selling identified in step one, the next step is to determine who on the sales force possesses them and at what level. But, we do not suggest traditional tests for this evaluation. Rather, we propose a Portfolio Assessment. Derived from visual and performing arts, portfolios have been used increasingly in a wide variety of settings to evaluate abilities. The essence of a portfolio assessment is that each salesperson needs to provide *authentic evidence* that they have mastered key selling proficiencies.



Traditional testing with right and wrong answers and percentile ranks would provide only proxy evidence that the salesperson has what is needed to succeed at a high level. Alternatively, the portfolio approach requires tangible proof. Traditional paper and pencil tests go no further than *knowing* what to do. Portfolios require both *knowing and doing*.

Many test takers perceive traditional tests as something being done to them. Conversely, portfolio assessments are recognized as a fair means of demonstrating mastery of essential skills. There is no arguing the relevancy or content validity of a well- conceived portfolio assessment.

Possible portfolio content could include:

- A pipeline for the previous quarter describing each of the milestones.
- A minimum of three cases where clients successfully advanced through each of the milestones.
- Their 3 (new) + 3 (profiling) + 3 (win expected) plan for the upcoming week.
- Analysis of different buyer modes (commodity, consultative and partnership) for an existing account including evidence of how they crafted their value message accordingly
- Analysis of different decision influences in an existing account including evidence and documentation of how they built and leveraged those relationships
- Personality profiles of each decision influence
- An account profile for an existing account they have developed in the last quarter.
- A list of questions they asked in their last three sales calls and the responses they received to those questions
- Analysis of a live account including:
  - Decision making hierarchies
  - Functions and lines of business
  - The client's production chain
- Three Account Plans
- Three recent presentations they have delivered

When portfolios are deficient, a clear and customized developmental agenda emerges. Both salespeople and their managers know what needs to be done to bring the content of the portfolio up to high performing standards. Rather than being sent off to prepare for a test, salespeople receive individualized coaching.

In summary, this two-step solution to improving sales performance will:

- Identify the key skills and disciplines that distinguish top performers from typical ones.
- Provide authentic evidence of mastery of critical selling abilities in the firm's unique sales process.
- Determine a coaching training and teaching agenda for the salesperson and his or her coach.
- Be accepted by the sales team as a fair and appropriate way to help them succeed.

Please let us know if you would like to learn more about this novel way of assessing sales competencies.