

7 Deadly Sins of Selling

by Mark E. Gabriel

According to custom, there are Seven Deadly Sins. Below are the seven re-written for the sales professional. Are you committing any of these selling sins? If so, the New Year is a great time to work on new, more profitable habits.

Pride is excessive belief in one's own abilities. Do you think too highly of yourself? Do you find yourself thinking that you did not close a sale because the prospect just was not sophisticated enough to understand your presentation? Do you excuse lack of sales to the fact that the prospects cannot appreciate how superior your product is? Do you find yourself selling all those superlative features-but not a single benefit? Look inside yourself and be more humble: while the customer may not always be king, satisfying their need is still the royal road to sales success.

Envy is the desire for others' traits, status, abilities, or situation. Do you say to yourself "Sure, Joe makes lots of sales because he is (good looking, a fast talker, better educated...)"? Do you pester your manager for "better" leads-the kind the more successful sales people in your office get? Do you feel you cannot make sales because you lack experience? Be confident in the New Year: your success depends more on your attitude-who you are-than what you have.

Gluttony is the desire to consume more than you require. Do you push people into sales? Do you sell people more than they really need-just because you can? Are you more concerned with commissions and quotas than you are with developing great clients and referrals? Remember that good sales are those the customer is so happy with that they refer new business to you. In the New Year work on developing such good clients that you get referral business.

Lust is a craving for the pleasures of the flesh. Does manipulating people turn you on? Do you get a rush from controlling the conversation in such a way that people just cannot say "no" to you? We can develop an almost physical addiction to rush we feel when sales go right. But if we develop a taste for this rush that overcomes our sense of right and wrong, we are doing more harm than good. In the New Year make sure that you are making sales that make sense for both you and your prospect.

Anger is a common reaction to frustration and denial. When we are not making sales we can often feel anger-at the prospects, our product or service, our pricing, ourselves. Take time this New Year to step back and examine your anger. Most anger issues can be cured by simply addressing what angers you; if product pricing angers you (you think sales fail because you cannot offer a lower price), try selling more benefits and fewer features.

Greed is the desire for material wealth or gain. Is it wrong to be greedy? It is, if it is the only reason you want to make a sale. If you find yourself selling to people who do not need or want what you sell, just to make a commission, ask yourself this question: What long term benefit is anyone deriving from this sale? Remember, sales are the route to gaining customers. Satisfied customers will make more purchases-often for years to come. One-time, pressured sales do not make satisfied customers. Work on making customers satisfied this year.

Sloth is the avoidance of work. While saving time by being more efficient is a good way to avoid work, the work you are avoiding should only be the work that wasted time in the first place. Sales unfortunately is one profession that seems to have a lot of "wasted time work". It has been said many times before: sales is a numbers game. You will still need to talk to more people to make sales since not all of them will buy. In this New Year do not forsake prospecting because it seems like "wasted time work", or you will see your results suffer.

Mark E. Gabriel has worked in sales since 1989, obtaining accounting clients. He has given a number of presentations at Comprehensive Accounting's National Sales Seminars and for local business groups. His articles have seen both web and print publication. For more information please go to www.comprehensiveacctg.com *This article may be freely distributed as long as it is unchanged and contains this biography box.*