



5 SALES TRUTHS

You Must Follow to Succeed

By Mike Brooks

You know what the nice thing about the truth is? It doesn't change. What's true today was true yesterday, and it will be true tomorrow and next year as well. It's like math: $2 + 2 = 4$. You will always get 4 no matter what you're adding and no matter where you add it—in this country or in outer space.

And it's the same in sales. There are certain sales truths that are true no matter what you're selling, no matter where you're selling it, or to whom you're selling it. It doesn't matter what the economy is doing or how your company is doing. Just like $2 + 2$ will always equal 4, these sales truths will always work for you or against you.

That's the good thing about the following these five truths: if you

follow them, and stick to them, abide by them, you will close more sales with less frustration. On the other hand, if you ignore them or try to deceive yourself into thinking that maybe, just maybe, it won't be true for this particular prospect, then you do so at your own expense. The expense of lost sales, much frustration, and pressure are the penalties for not following these five sales truths.

You can't close an unqualified lead. This seems straight forward enough, doesn't it? Yet 80 percent of sales reps across all industries are trying to do just that: close prospects that should never have made it into their pipeline to begin with. To test this, ask yourself, "Out of 10 leads or prospects that I send information to

and follow up with, how many turn into deals?" If you're like the average sales rep, your answer is about two.

What this means is that 80 percent of the leads in your pipeline weren't qualified to begin with and were never going to close. This is where the "sales is a numbers game" philosophy came from. The solution to this is to learn the most important skill in all of sales: learn to *disqualify* rather than to qualify your leads.

Leads never get better when you call them back. How many times have you called back a prospect for a demo or close and found they were actually more interested and receptive than they were when you first called them? Rarely, right? This sales truth

is similar to the first one in that the most important thing you can do is properly qualify your leads.

People ask me all the time what the secret to closing sales is. They are surprised by my answer, but it's always the same. The secret to closing is that you find someone who not only needs your product or service but is also ready, willing, and able to buy it. In other words, see sales truth #1.

The objection, "I want to think about it," usually means no. Ask yourself how many times you have actually closed a prospect who tells you this and then gets you off the phone. Almost never, right? The reason is that this objection is one of the most used smokescreens ever created to mask the real problem, which is usually that they've made a decision to not use you, and they don't want to have to argue with you or explain why not.

The only way to deal with this—and it's not, "Oh, then when should I call you back?"—is to use a close that gets them to tell you the truth. Then learn why they weren't qualified to begin with and do a better job (dis)qualifying your next prospect. Otherwise you're going to repeat this hundreds of times in your career.

Your success is always 100 percent up to you. Until you take 100 percent responsibility for yourself not 90 percent or 99 percent, you will

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always look for and find an excuse for not achieving what you want. For years, I would point to bad leads, a bad economy, a bad territory, etc. as reasons why I wasn't a top producer. When my manager pointed to the top reps driving Porsches and living in the homes I could only dream about, I found even more excuses.

It wasn't until I took 100 percent responsibility for my life and my results that I finally shed the excuses and found a way to succeed no matter what. Once I adopted that attitude, I accomplished more than I ever

dreamed possible and still do. There's a saying that if you don't recognize that you're part of the problem, then there's no solution. If you take 100 percent responsibility for your results and your life, then you'll find a way to succeed. All winners do.

Some sales people should be selling something else or not selling at all. I've been managing and training sales people for over 28 years, and this is one of the consistent truths in all of sales. It's a hard truth to swallow at first, but once you follow it, everyone's life gets easier.

First, some people should be selling something else. Some people are better at outside sales than inside sales. Some people are better at a longer sales cycle than a short one. Some people are better at selling a service rather than a product, and some are better at business to business and others better at business to consumer. If you're not as successful in sales as you want to be, then ask yourself what you are best at and what makes you the happiest. Then go sell that kind of product.

Second, not everyone is cut out to be in sales. That doesn't make you a bad person; it's just the truth. Some people are better in a customer service role. Some people are better in marketing. Some people are better off going back to school and learning a different profession. Again, be honest with yourself and ask yourself what you are best at and what makes you interested and happy. Then go out and pursue what will make you happiest and more successful.

So there you have it. Twenty eight years of experience boiled down into five sales truths. Follow these, and you're on the fast track to success. **N**

Mike Brooks is founder and principle of Mr. Inside Sales, a North Carolina-based inside sales consulting and training firm, and author of the award-winning books on inside sales: The Real Secrets of the Top 20 Percent and The Complete Book of Phone Scripts. Mike was voted one of the most Influential Inside Sales Professionals by The American Association of Inside Sales Professionals, and is THE recognized authority in the industry. For more information, you can visit www.MrInsideSales.com.