

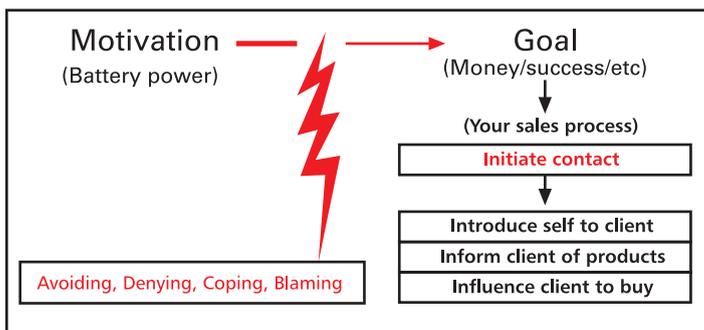
# THE 12 TYPES of Sales Call Reluctance

IN LAST MONTH'S EDITORIAL we looked at the origins of the concept 'Sales Call Reluctance' – a common condition that can affect even the most successful of sales people. The concept hinges directly on the fact that, to achieve success in sales, you must consistently initiate contact with clients. A simple sales theory, yet all too often ignored!

No matter how much training and support is put into helping salespeople **Introduce** themselves to clients, **Inform** clients of their products, and **Influence** the clients to buy from them, it matters little unless those salespeople are actually getting in front of more clients on a regular basis!

Ask yourself this question – “How many Companies do not manage by 'Activity' levels?” Not many, I would guess – yet how many Companies put in the support and training for such an important area of their business management?

The concept of Sales Call Reluctance (SCR) explains that we all have a certain amount of energy to use each day to achieve our goals. This internal energy can become *short-circuited* and drained by other distractions such as avoiding tasks that we feel uncomfortable with, denying and arguing about aspects of the job that we do not like, blaming others for our failures, and trying to cope with the things within our job that we do not enjoy doing. All of these steal valuable energy away from what we know we ought to be doing – selling our products into the marketplace.



If you read last month's article, you will remember that we provided some simple tell-tale signs that let you know if you (or your sales people) may be suffering from this potentially career-threatening problem, and we also challenged you to try and spot your own energy short circuits.

We suggested that you keep a log of what situations caused some of the feelings of discomfort, in order to allow you to match your own experiences to the 12 different types of Sales Call Reluctance. Once you recognise the existence of SCR, then you can start to find the solution that is right for you.

There ARE solutions for each of the 12 types of SCR, and these have provided

*substantial* improvements in sales achievement throughout many industries worldwide during the last 20 years.

We will cover four SCRs this month and the other eight in next month's issue. We will identify how they attach themselves to our careers and what this means to us but, before we start, it is important to point out a few vital things that you need to keep in mind whilst looking at these categories:

- SCR is a very focused tool and relates entirely to a sales person's ability to make sales visits/calls and find new prospects – *it is not a description of a person's personality type.*
- Most cases of SCR are caused by exposure to other peoples SCR. As it is a 'learned' condition, the good news is that it can be 'unlearned' if the sufferer chooses to do so.

Here are the first four types of SCR. Consider the Career clues and the Overviews, and see if any of these ring true for yourself, or perhaps for 'someone you know'!

SCR Type 1: Social Self Conscious	
Career clues	Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common in veteran sales people</li> <li>• Confines experienced salespeople to production ceilings</li> <li>• Will feel uncomfortable in approaching certain doctors/consultants that they feel have a 'high' status</li> <li>• When asked for an explanation they simply state "He/she will never see me"</li> <li>• Will often change employers to avoid having to visit 'up-market' clients</li> <li>• Is successful in all other markets apart from the ones they want to avoid</li> <li>• Many come from blue-collar backgrounds</li> <li>• Some are sensitive about not having a comparable education to certain target groups and will compensate by trying to improve skills and get qualifications</li> <li>• Embellishes and exaggerates the power, fame, prestige and money of the people who intimidate them when discussing them with friends and co-workers as a reason for them being wrong to approach</li> <li>• Often misdiagnosed as having low motivation or poor goal direction by those who don't have knowledge of Call Reluctance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly concentrated type of call reluctance</li> <li>• Sufferers are very precise in targeting a specific market – then avoiding it completely</li> <li>• They complicate the issue by displaying all the characteristics, but rigidly deny its existence</li> <li>• They will maintain that they could sell to anyone at any time, and that the reason they don't sell to certain types of people is based on sound business reasoning</li> <li>• They deny the real cause, which is that they are emotionally uncomfortable selling to certain social groups</li> <li>• They have a self imposed 'caste' system and they may feel comfortable selling to independent local pharmacists and GP practices for example</li> <li>• They would feel uncomfortable making a sales pitch to a senior consultant or professor</li> <li>• They will often show real signs of their intimidation from certain social groups by adopting subservient, child-like or ingratiating behaviours</li> <li>• Typically this is a learned behaviour and it will have been passed on by people in their lives who see all people as having a certain 'place' in society</li> <li>• Some sufferers will not only see people above them as unapproachable, they will also look down on those below them in their value system</li> </ul>



SCR Type 2: <b>Overpreparer</b>	
Career clues	Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tends to over-analyse and under-act</li> <li>• Will have To Do lists of To Do lists!</li> <li>• Reserved and emotionally self restrained</li> <li>• Preoccupied with being absolutely prepared for each sales call</li> <li>• Sales presentations tend to stress information while neglecting emotion or relationship</li> <li>• Incorrectly perceived as unmotivated</li> <li>• Likely to exaggerate the role of organisation and planning</li> <li>• May seem cold, distant and emotionally unresponsive to observers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who suffer from this are usually sensitive salespeople who are in danger of letting their personal feelings get the better of them</li> <li>• To avoid this they put all their efforts into being highly technical in their approach to sales</li> <li>• What starts out as a need to feel prepared turns into a preoccupation with having all the answers, having an answer for even the most unlikely questions, and building the perfect sales pitch</li> <li>• These people are never ready to go and sell as they always feel they have another 'i' to dot or 't' to cross</li> <li>• This over-preparing for sales activity actually stops them finding new clients and visiting the ones they already have as they are spending all their time worrying about being caught out by not having all the facts to hand</li> </ul>

SCR Type 4: <b>Stage fright</b>	
Career clues	Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just thinking about standing up in front of a group can be stressful</li> <li>• Happy to take Consultants out for a meal, but rarely talk about their product</li> <li>• Starts preparing and worrying about a presentation days or weeks before it is planned for</li> <li>• Dissatisfied with their voice, inflection, tone, pace and vocabulary when presenting</li> <li>• Avoids opportunities to give presentations and often has really good excuses for why they "don't find them effective"</li> <li>• Reads safe 'Self Help' books where not making presentations is part of the cure</li> <li>• Dreads ice-breaking activities when running or attending presentations or courses</li> <li>• Reads notes verbatim when forced to give presentations</li> <li>• May over-prepare notes, scripts and dialogues – even for short presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here the person fears speaking in front of more than one person – it could be groups of two or two hundred, and this fear looks and feels very different for every sufferer</li> <li>• These people are often excellent at selling in a one-to-one situation and only get anxious in group situations</li> <li>• The origin of Stage Fright is from a situation where the fear was learned</li> <li>• Most sufferers have an experience in the past where they have spoken to a group of people and it has gone wrong and they have been laughed at, scolded, embarrassed or labelled as 'useless'</li> <li>• Often this experience has been forgotten but the emotional scars are still there and the person's negative reaction to going into a stressful situation again is habitual and learned</li> </ul>

SCR Type 3: <b>Hyper Professional</b>	
Career clues	Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overly concerned with making strong, favourable first impression</li> <li>• May restrict their sales potential by only targeting 'high profile' doctors/consultants</li> <li>• May miss out on some 'bread and butter' prescribers</li> <li>• Tends to wear designer clothes – women have flash jewellery and men have monogrammed shirts etc</li> <li>• Never seen in public in anything but an immaculate state</li> <li>• Enjoys discussing fine wines, fast cars, clothes, cameras and cuisine rather than sales activity</li> <li>• Writes with a highly flourished and exaggerated signature</li> <li>• Overstates, over-positions and name-drops to impress</li> <li>• Threatened by psychological tests which they feel could expose their imperfections</li> <li>• Must be perceived as competent and respectable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are individuals who, deep down, have some real concerns with their own self-worth and acceptability to the people they sell to</li> <li>• To hide from this they become overly concerned with their appearance, as they need to look, and feel, that they are valuable and successful</li> <li>• They work on having the right brand of suits, watches, pens, cars, and phones rather than feeling better about themselves</li> <li>• Hyper-professionals are often so busy hunting for that really, really big break that they don't actually produce that much at all</li> </ul>

These are only a third of the identified SCR' and, of course, we will be looking in detail next month at the final eight. These include the sales people who:

- Tend to avoid the 'close'
- Worry a lot about their job
- Don't like to involve family and friends in their work
- Feel guilty about their 'sales' role
- See asking for referrals as 'bad form'
- Dislike using the telephone to make appointments
- Complain about everything around them

In the meantime, why not take the opportunity to take a look at yourself and analyse the situations when you know you ought to be initiating contact with people, but feel less than comfortable – it might just start to help you recognise your own types of SCR.

If you are able to identify some potential SCRs, and then do something about them – what will that mean for your career? ■



Remap specialises in Managing Business Performance, and is run by Directors Martin Perry, Tim Tolman and Ian Saunders. To discover more information about overcoming Sales Call Reluctance and to find out what else they have to offer your business, you can contact them using the information below:

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