



# Are You Reluctant to be Successful in Sales?

TOO OFTEN, editorials written about salespeople concentrate on the incorrectly accepted myth that 'they' should always be positive and motivated. Think about the number of team build events, motivational speeches and 'dynamic' training courses that you've already experienced during your own career!!

It seems that there's an unwritten law saying that we should never feel uncomfortable with our lot, and this makes it impossible for us to admit that parts of the job sometimes stink! But which parts?

The really interesting thing is if you ask salespeople "where in the sales process do you experience the most discomfort?", most will say that it stems from the "initiating" of contact with customers – getting in front of people.

We hear lots of different reasons or excuses for why people find contacting customers difficult or why they don't do it at all. Once a medical representative has actually got in front of someone, suddenly they don't need their sales manager; trainer; motivation techniques or a shiny new product to sell! "Just get me in front of a doctor I get on with, and I'm fine..!"

## Reluctance

Can you read the following without honestly agreeing that at least one of the phrases hasn't applied to you at some stage in your career?

- I don't like Mondays (feel free to substitute any other day of the week!)
- What's the point in trying harder – my targets are just too high to achieve
- I hate going to talk to doctors that I haven't seen before
- Most Senior Consultants are difficult people
- I get on too well with Dr X to ask him for any more business
- I never seem to have enough time
- My stress levels are through the roof
- I get on really well with the secretary, but still don't get to see Dr Z

These are examples of our reluctance to do certain things that we know we should be doing to be successful in sales.

The good news is that it's ok to feel that way – many people feel uncomfortable about aspects of their sales career, they may just be a little better in dealing with them. Now you have recognised it though, it's probably not OK to sit back and ignore this discovery!

Before we analyse this concept of 'reluctance' in more depth, let's look at what constitutes success and what being non-reluctant in making sales calls could actually achieve for each of us:

- Get my Sales Manager off my back
- More money
- Recognition and prestige
- Career prospects
- Less stress

- Hit my targets
- Get head hunted

So if we were more productive and actually enjoyed all of the sales process (from initiating contact right through to the close), would we then have a good chance of achieving these things? Of course we would! Well, that's simple then – go sell more and smile!!

But we all know that it's not that easy...because consciously or unconsciously there are tasks and situations contained within our sales careers that we will choose not to do...because they make us feel uncomfortable.

So why do we feel that way at times?

Well, have we been trained in the following?

- Company products
- Company sales process
- How to ask questions / listen
- How to overcome objections etc?

Yes, we've all received the same basic tool kit of 'training', and have probably been 'signed off' as competent several times along the way!! So if we've all got the skills and the knowledge, how is it that some people are more successful in achieving more sales than others? To try to answer this, let's start by looking somewhere that you perhaps haven't looked before ... internally.

If we play truant from our "should do's" and do something less stressful instead, there are some clear tell tale signs of the price that we pay.

As an example, if you decide to tidy your office; then your car, and then your briefcase rather than call on that 'difficult access doctor' you will have successfully avoided something that you don't really fancy doing. Well done!!

Deep down, however, you know you have cheated yourself, and this guilt will surface in different ways for different people. Some will be irritable with others (as it's obviously not their fault!); some will be haunted late at night whilst trying to sleep; for others it is the constant hassle of providing decent excuses to their sales manager week in week out. Sound familiar – do you know anyone that this description fits?!!

Unfortunately, the more you do this the heavier the burden of guilt can become, and we all know that the more we avoid something, the bigger the millstone seems to grow.

## Energy

We all have a certain amount of energy stored in our 'internal batteries' to take us through the day, and it is important that this is used wisely. All avoiding actions gobble up valuable energy; manifesting itself in many ways – from mild discomfort all the way up to downright fear!

If your system 'short circuits' and you are using the power from your internal battery incorrectly, it manifests itself in some very obvious ways:

- **Avoiding** the things that we should do. We procrastinate.
- **Blaming** others. We spend time transferring the guilt of potential failure onto others.

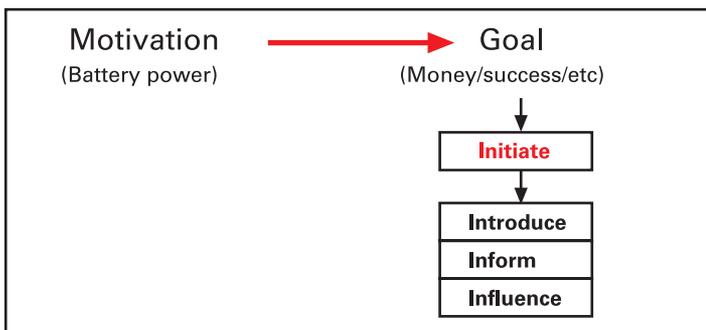


- Denying that we have an issue in the first place, and arguing that there are other better ways of doing things.
- Coping. By doing the things that we don't like doing, we drain our battery quickly and are therefore less successful overall.

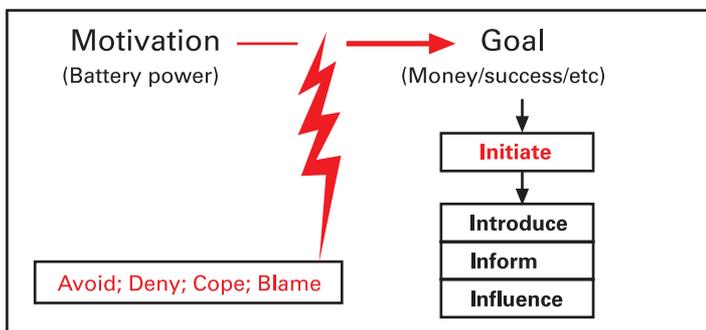
This is called Sales Call Reluctance.

### Sales Call Reluctance (SCR)

To help you understand the theory of SCR the following models explain the differences between someone who is and someone who isn't Call Reluctant.



Here, full battery power is flowing into behaviours that will help achieve their goals. This person has their foot hard down on the accelerator and they only invest their energy in successful behaviours.



These people also have full battery power, but something causes a short circuit in the flow of energy. This acts as a brake on their effectiveness by stopping them doing activities that will increase their visibility and productivity. SCR attacks highly successful salespeople as well as lower producers.

We call these interruptions 'Emotional Short Circuits' and, however much help is offered to people in terms of understanding and accepting SCR as a concept, some will still deny its validity rather than accept its help. Often the key is to prove to themselves that SCR exists. To do this it is recommended that they look for personal energy leaks - the tell tale signs that short circuits are occurring and may be contaminating their sales careers.

### Self Examination

You need to stop and look at yourself at the point where you know you ought to be initiating some sales activity or making contact with people, but when you feel less than comfortable:

- Meeting doctors / consultants / managers who you perceive to be more qualified or knowledgeable
- Seeing people who you perceive to have a higher social standing
- Speaking in front of groups
- Getting people to make decisions, or making sales related decisions yourself
- Using the telephone to make appointments and get business
- Talking openly about who you are and what you sell whenever there is someone from the medical world in the room, either socially or professionally
- Preparing for the sale to such a degree that it actually hinders making contact
- Worrying about whether people like you and how you look and sound

Tell tale signs of SCR may include sweaty palms, change in breathing patterns, butterflies in stomach, generally feeling tense, short temper etc.

Keep a log of what the situation was that produced the feelings of discomfort and what these feelings were. By building up a record of what makes you feel uncomfortable, and when, you will be able to match your own experiences more closely to the 12 different types of Sales Call Reluctance which will be explained in more detail in next month's editorial.

Experience has shown us that if we tell you what the 12 are, and how they work, people only look for and accept that they have issues with the ones that they feel comfortable accepting!

For those of you that would like, or need, scientific evidence to help you accept the existence of Sales Call Reluctance, we will also be sharing with you some key data gathered from throughout the 30 years of study that sits behind and supports the theory of SCR.

In the meantime, be reassured that in most cases Sales Call Reluctance is a 'learned' behaviour or reaction based on experiences from either childhood or people that you been in contact with throughout your career, and can be unlearned!



Martin Perry

Remap was established two years ago by Directors Martin Perry, Tim Tolman and Ian Saunders, and the business works across a variety of industries ranging from Financial Services, Retail, Manufacturing, NHS Trusts and Construction. They all have varied corporate backgrounds and are experienced in working within regulated sales environments.

