Take Control of What You Can….and Become Stronger and Better Than Ever

Well, fellow sales professionals and leaders, here we are. Except, like most people, I’m not quite sure where “here” is yet. In the space of thirty days we spiraled from a strong economy, record stock market, and low unemployment to here. For those of us that make our living in sales, these are uneasy times. It has progressed quickly from “this can’t be that bad” to “this could get challenging” to “holy crap, this is really happening!” This kind of uncertainty makes us all feel out of control, and it can be paralyzing.

Many people think of Sandler as a sales training firm, and we are. The key ingredient to our training however, our “magic sauce” (as people call it), is teaching core concepts that drive our methodology. Ten years ago when I was diagnosed with cancer, my world, like now, felt close to falling apart. I wondered how I could keep my business going and support my family. After all, who wanted a trainer with a chemo bag hanging off their arm, radiation burns and no hair! I was scared. But I made it through, stronger and better than ever. So, I believe in this Sandler “magic sauce”. You and your team can use it too.

The best way to share these core concepts with you, my Sandler clients and others, is through the Sandler Success Triangle. It is comprised of three components: Behaviors, Attitudes and Techniques. I followed this diligently through my cancer crisis, and I am going to follow this diligently through the COVID19 crisis too – because I need to come out stronger and better. You can too! Let’s review the Success Triangle and see how this can help you.

**Behaviors** are your measurable day to day activities that drive results. More importantly, behaviors drive your **attitude**. As an example, most people don’t like to wake up and go to the gym. But after their workout, they always feel better. Sales is the same. What are some of the daily behaviors you can implement to make sure you are in the right mind-set to make the most of every day and get the best results? Your **attitude** and mind set relate to our belief system and whether we have an outlook of abundance or limitation. Here’s what you can be doing to do to focus on daily behaviors that make a difference:

Fill your day with interactions: You can only control what you can control. Make a list of clients to call daily and commit to those calls. I categorize my clients under the K.A.R.E. designation. Keep, Attain, Recapture and Expand. It doesn’t matter what you call them, as long as you keep reaching out to new prospects, old prospects, and those who represent opportunities in progress. The same rules apply when contacting people for conversations or to schedule meetings. Be sure you’re prepared to talk about something of value that you can offer them. Remember that what you do helps them solve problems. Don’t forget to embrace productivity tools and resources such as LinkedIn. You probably have over 500 connections that you can reach out to.
If you work from home, work from home: Regardless of what your routine is, if you’re not treating it like a regular work day during work hours, it’s a recipe for failure. We all need to embrace this “new normal” – however long it lasts—so get up and get moving early. Everyone’s situation may be different. Figure out your routine and be disciplined around it. Resist distraction. You should be as busy working from home as you are in your office. Setting micro goals can help you adjust. Blocking out 90 minutes of time, executing relevant behaviors, then taking a walk, or a break.

Techniques are the specific strategies to help you maximize your effectiveness with every interaction you have. Don’t waste your own time or your client’s or prospect’s time with ineffective conversations. Instead, share useful information, or provide a helpful perspective in looking at things.

In any email, voice mail or other media outreach, give lots of thought to your subject line or reason for the call. Be sensitive, but be forward-leaning. Of course, we can and should ask people how their companies are coping, but we need to pivot the conversation to coming out strong in post-crisis environment. Try subject lines like: “Post-Crisis Opportunities for [prospect name]” or “Preparing for Recovery,” “Getting Back on Track.” Some might counsel not referring to the crisis, but I believe it’s more reassuring to face the reality of this unprecedented time by sharing strength as a business community – not pretending that nothing is happening. Use third party phrases such as, “like everyone, I’m trying to stay productive and have healthy business conversations for when conditions improve.” “We’re doing the best we can to be sensitive, but looking ahead at the same time.” You must triple down on your ability to add value to them or their business.

Don’t Sell. If you’re a Sandler client, I don’t have to tell you this. People like to buy but don’t like to be sold. Your meetings are strictly conversations to determine if you can help your clients and prospects. You are helping them solve issues and challenges, achieve goals. Many times through your expertise you have to help them discover this. Just because YOU THINK this is a horrible time and prospects don’t want to talk to you, doesn’t mean it’s true. The only way to find out is to do the behaviors. If you believe you can you will. If you believe you can’t, you won’t. Your failure will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Assess Your Team: If you are a Sales Leader, this might be a good time to re-evaluate. Business came a bit easier before. The phones were ringing and leads were being generated. Who on your team was taking orders and who was actually selling? Do you have the right people that can help you get through this crisis? Are your people performing their behaviors to the best of their ability? Do they have the right mind set to help themselves and your organization get through this crisis? Is this a time to help develop their skills? Remember however, if they don’t have the will, you can never teach the skill.

Keep Your Sales Skills Sharp. For Sandler clients we have a robust Sandler e-learning and virtual training center on sales, sales management, prospecting, mind-set, and more. As a part of your daily behaviors, pick a topic to master and spend an hour each day raising your game. You can bet your competition is not doing this! Or for non-Sandler clients check out the Sandler “How to Succeed” podcasts. There are more than 300 podcast topics related to Sales, Sales Leadership, and other broad business themes. You can access those podcasts for free on your iPhone. For those of you that have Sandler Online subscriptions, you’ll find them there as well. Now’s a good time to sharpen your saws and increase your effectiveness. Be the one who’s ready to hit the ground running.

Key Account Planning: For many of us, this will represent a long overdue chance to assess who our ideal target prospects are and identify the smartest strategies to pursue them with a 30-60-90-day plan. Perhaps current conditions will have you re-thinking where the more near-term opportunities are for
you and your company. Or this may help you prepare what to say and do in order to bring value to your next interaction. Much of the time we find ourselves neck-deep in working day to day, and we never step back to look more broadly about how to build our personal sales business. Use your time for this.

**Read more business articles.** Over the years I have encouraged my clients to read articles on sales tactics and skills. It is a great idea. Be well-read on technology advances, supply chain dynamics, marketing trends, international business, and more. Two of my favorite web sites to read articles from are [https://fortune.com/](https://fortune.com/) and [https://www.inc.com/](https://www.inc.com/). Buyers always make time for people who have solid, interesting information and insight to share.

**Stay positive:** Easier said than done. The experts keep telling us it will get worse before it gets better. But it will get better. People and companies needed your solutions before this business interruption and they will need them after as well. On top of that, really smart people and companies are already meeting to discuss new products and services that take into account what will likely be a “new normal.” And talented sales professionals will always be leading the charge in bringing those products and services to market.

These types of daily doses of behavior, attitudes and techniques got me through cancer. It will also get me and hopefully you through this as well. Remember, focus on what you are going to do, not what you are going through! I’m always a phone call away if anyone wants to chat about these tips or just to have a catch-up. Good health and smart selling to all!

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