

# are you allergic to finding new clients?



## DEATH OF A SALESMAN PERCEPTION

By Martyn Lewis

If you are like many small businesspeople, the idea of prospecting for new clients and customers makes you sneeze. Why? Because it conjures up the “S” word—selling—and many entrepreneurial types view themselves as visionaries, not salespeople.

Adopting the traits of a successful salesperson may cure you of your allergy to sales. These traits can help clarify business objectives and enhance customer and client relationships.

### MARKETING A BUSINESS

Lindsey ran her own company. Business was quite good but she was having trouble finding new clients. She found it difficult to write flyers and advertising copy, a challenge for most people. She said, “I don’t want to be a salesman. The last thing I would ever want to do is have to sell something to someone.”

This led us to talk about her primary concern of developing her own business, offset by the fact that she did not want to be viewed as a salesperson.

Lindsey viewed sales as trying to push something on someone who had no need or desire to actually purchase what was being offered. Her notion of the salesperson was essentially a fast-talking, insincere person who manipulated people into paying for something they didn’t really need or want!

### ONE BAD APPLE

Lindsey is not alone in this viewpoint. Unfortunately, this perception of sales is far too prevalent and remains a firmly imprinted stereotype in many people’s minds. But keep in mind that there are poor examples of just about every profession. Just as there are occasion-

ally poor dentists, bad architects, or disastrous engineers, there are poor salespeople.

This situation is further exacerbated by the general lack of certification or professional qualifications to grade individual salespeople. In the world of sales, both inside and out, there is the perception (which often becomes the reality) that there is really only one way of keeping score—commission dollars—and along with that perception are the horror stories relating the lengths to which some will go to win the game.

If you’re allergic to salespeople, think back to a time when you have interfaced with a great one. Whether they are selling cars, stir sticks, computers, aircraft, consulting services, or audio/visual equipment, most successful salespeople share these ten traits:

1. Taking time to understand their customers.
2. Having extensive knowledge about their offerings.
3. Knowing the alternative and competitive options open to their customers.
4. Bringing insight to the interaction with their customers.
5. Listening to their customers, with a sincere interest, to truly understand their needs, anxieties, hopes, and dreams.
6. Being professional, courteous, and timely in their follow up in all business dealings.
7. Being candid and honest with their clients.
8. Having the ability to clearly explain themselves and their products to their customers, using words and meanings that their customers readily understand.
9. Always treating the customer’s needs as their highest priority.
10. Being a credit to themselves and their companies in all their actions and behavior.

Read that list again and ask yourself—exactly what is it about being a salesperson you’re uncomfortable with?


Regarding Lindsey, she had invested in her own abilities and was extremely proud of what she could offer her clients. She saw herself as being able to provide a better service than most of her competitors.

### BECOME AN EXEMPLARY SALESPERSON

If your business has reached a plateau, there’s one obvious solution: Find new clients. The best way to do this is to become an exemplary salesperson. If you’re not ready to sell, you may want to think twice about running your own business.

Most new businesses that fail don’t fail because of poor ideas, products, or people. They fail because they don’t find enough new customers—because not enough selling happens.

Learning to be a successful salesperson is rarely easy, often frustrating, and always challenging. But what makes it all worthwhile is the reward of seeing customers’ appreciation and earning their respect because what they got from you or your organization met—and hopefully exceeded—their expectations.

If you strive to make every one of your clients better off for having done business with you, you will learn to love selling too. 

MARTYN LEWIS IS FOUNDER, PRESIDENT, AND CEO OF THE CONSULTING FIRM MARKET-PARTNERS, WHICH SPECIALIZES IN HELPING LARGE AND SMALL COMPANIES MAXIMIZE SALES EFFECTIVENESS. HIS NEW BOOK IS SALES WISE: A JOURNEY THROUGH SALES AND SELLING (FENESTRA BOOKS.). HE CAN BE REACHED ON LINE AT WWW.MARKET-PARTNERS.COM.