

Come on salespeople ... 11% just isn't good enough!

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"Salespeople spend 79 percent of their time doing things other than selling or prospecting. The actual time spent selling averages 11 per cent." Source: Sales and Marketing Management

I was blown away when I read this statistic. I love that saying and get to use it so infrequently.

How many people today, regardless of profession, can use 11 per cent of their capacity and survive? Perhaps this explains the high mortality rate in the sale arena where we do battle every day. This number screams complacency to me. Actually, I might give complacency higher credit, maybe 20 percent.

Anyone who has worked in a sales environment knows the challenges one faces in keeping the shoulder to the grindstone. Sales is a very tough profession, especially a commissioned environment. You don't produce you don't get paid. It is a black and white scorecard. You cannot bank talk or laziness, and you certainly can't buy groceries with either.

So how is it salespeople are spending only 11 per cent of their time on the tasks critical to their success? Some will be quick to say the remaining 79 per cent is taken up with administrative tasks, paper work, chasing down orders, providing customer service, and the list goes on and on. If you can hear yourself saying this, my suggestion is for you to get in front of a mirror and look in it. Ask yourself, "Is my workday appropriately filled with tasks that will provide the income and recognition I seek?" My guess is if you look yourself in the eye, the true answer is no. Time mysteriously is filled doing other "stuff".

So, what does this other stuff look like? Is it having a coffee with other 11 per centers? Is it sneaking in that "last" game of free cell? Is it worrying about what the sales quota is looking like for the month? Is it comparing excuses for why the business is not there? If so, then snap out of it.

Only you can control your actions. The first thing you need to do is to get in the game mentally. Are you telling yourself you can be more successful or are you wallowing in self-doubt? Do you believe in yourself? Do you believe in your product? Do you believe in your customers?

Have you created a plan, one that sets a goal with supporting objectives that are measurable and realistic? Have you the discipline to ensure you are doing the necessary activities that will ensure your success? The prospecting, networking, relationship building that top performing salespeople do consistently.

Have you identified where your time is going? If not, create a time log for a week or two and keep track of what you are doing by the half hour throughout the day. You might

surprise yourself when you find the time spent on selling and prospecting is only 11 per cent.

Once you have analyzed the problem you are well on your way to finding a solution. Imagine if you could increase your productivity two-fold. What impact would that have on your income? What if you could increase four-fold, and don't think you can't! When you begin to think success, your actions will support you on the path to success.

Before discounting this article or the 11 per cent number, take a good look at the top sales professionals in your company. What percentage of their time is spent selling and prospecting? What are they doing different from you? What can you learn from them? Where is their mindset? Are they positive, optimistic and disciplined in how they approach their day?

Make the effort to get a fix on where you are spending your time. Ask yourself, "Is what I am doing right now, the best use of my time?" Then you need to be honest with yourself when you answer. Good luck and good selling!