

www.techslog.com

The definitive source of intelligence for the technology salesperson

Seal the Deal more Effectively!

Techslog speaks to Suzi Pomerantz, Executive Coach and author of [Seal the Deal](#), about how sales people can short-circuit the sales process and be more efficient in closing sales. Special 4-week series.

Seal the Deal- Week 1

How do you coach sales reps to be more effective in closing sales?

If by effective we mean fast-track results, or an expedited business development strategy, the key is in taking integrated action. Business development, or rainmaking, is comprised of three distinct domains: Networking, Marketing and Sales. If we are only focused on the sales piece of that picture, we will have results that are fairly predictable and depend on how we are working the numbers game of the sales process. Likewise, if we are only focused on the networking piece or the marketing piece, we will eventually have results, but not in a timeframe that anyone would consider reasonable. The secret lies in the intersection point of all three. I find many people have a clouded definition that combines some elements of all three, but incorporates mindsets and beliefs about each one where we get in our own way.

Lets distinguish these first, then look at how you can get out of your own way to get all three to work in strategic concert to get business.

Networking is the relational aspect of your business. It is connecting with others for the purpose of sharing resources, information, leads, referrals, ideas, etc. Cultivating a working network of relationships is crucial to your business development system, but in and of itself will not be the way you build or expand your client base.

Marketing is about preparation...how you will prepare yourself to take your company's products, services, unique identity package, irresistible offer, and message to market. This involves a lot of strategy, design work, writing, and outreach, but those things alone will not get you the clients you want.

Branding is part of marketing, and so is PR to some extent.

Sales activities are about implementing your business development strategies. Simply put, Sales involves making appointments, seeking to be of service, making fabulous and bold offers, and asking for the business. It is possible to transcend dysfunctional sales practices and simply help people in ways that they will appreciate. Sales feels uncomfortable when it is not aligned with core values. When it is integrity-based, it gives you energy because it is linked to your core values.

Identify your current mindsets and assess if they are supporting your growth sufficiently to achieve your goals. Ask yourself these questions: What am I already doing in each area? What else could I be doing? What percentage of my time is spent in each? Where have I collapsed these distinctions? Where and how might I integrate my activities across all three domains? What would the impact and value be if I were to generate a quantum leap in my rainmaking results? What mindsets or beliefs do I notice that are limiting my ability to easily and effortlessly seal the deal? What shift is required to align my beliefs with my core values and my organization's mission?

Closing a sale becomes as easy as saying, "yes, we can do that" when you've lined everything up in all three domains simultaneously. The close means that your prospect got clarity about the value your organization, service or product provides, it is not about you getting the sale. There's only one thing that has people buy...the moment of the sale is when they become crystal clear about the value of what you are selling.

*Suzi will be answering questions all week, so please feel free to send your questions via a comment and we will get you the answers fast!

Seal the Deal- Week 2

If the way to expedite business development or rainmaking results is by integrating networking, marketing, and sales, how can professionals who are trained salespeople reconcile that? Suzi Pomerantz author of "[Seal the Deal](#)" [answers.....](#)

The good news is that if you are trained in sales, you have a distinct

advantage in this integration process. You already know that sales is a numbers game. You already know how to articulate the value proposition. You already know the importance of tracking your hit rates and you already know that sales is a systematic, repeatable, predictable process. You know how to handle gatekeepers and objections. You know how to close. What if you could do it all faster? What if you could expedite the entire process? What if you could save time and produce increased results? What would that be worth to you?

Well, here's how you can intentionally cause a quantum leap in how quickly you generate results. Integrate, integrate, integrate. Sales alone is good, sales with networking is better, sales with networking and marketing is best! You must find a way that is aligned with your (and your organization's) core values to have consistent actions in all three domains.

In responding to the first question from Techslog last week, I spent a little bit of time distinguishing between the "critical trinity" of Networking, Marketing and Sales. [Techslog archive](#) If you are active in all three domains, you will find the sweet spot where networking, marketing and sales intersect. When you are hitting your stride in terms of your networking, when your marketing materials and message are clear, and when you understand how to leverage your strengths in sales, you will reach that tipping point where it all comes together to yield results in terms of clients, dollars, contracts, business. That sweet spot is the place where you most effortlessly Seal the Deal.

So, what does that mean for you, as a salesperson? It means that you already have the one domain handled...sales. So, by focusing a bit more on generating activity in the other domains of networking and marketing, and finding ways to incorporate those actions into the sales activities you are already masterfully engaged in, you will find that your sales numbers start to pop more quickly, and that you create an action-circuit that hums along in strategic concert.

If sales is the musical staff, networking and marketing add the notes and the chords. Now, with you as the maestro, let the music begin!

Learn more about Suzi and her book "Seal the Deal" here

Seal the Deal- Week 3

Q: Any advice on productive networking with the C-level?

A: Depending on what you mean by productive networking, I'd answer that several ways. Generally, I define networking as making human connections with no agenda other than mutual exploration of what's possible. So in that context, productive networking with the C-level means be nice, be genuine, and be curious about them, their commitments, and what's possible in getting to know them without any agenda for sales.

If the advice you are asking about is "where should we be focusing our networking time and how do we meet folks at the C-level?", that's a different question. You could get involved in the same activities that they are involved in (board positions, golf, executive roundtables, etc.) or you could use the six-degrees of separation method.

The six degrees of separation method utilizes the concept that we are all within six other people of anyone we might want to meet. Once you find out who you know and who they know, you can request introductions. Not unlike Linked In or some of the other technology-based networking sites. Here's how it works. Let's say one of the companies on your target list is Monster.com and you want to get to know Sal Iannuzzi, their new CEO and Chairman. You might start with people you know and ask either who they know at Monster, or who they know who might know Sal. If you are systematic and methodological in your pursuit of leads within the six degrees concept, you will find that you can probably get to Sal in six or fewer steps. Meaning, someone you know likely knows someone who knows someone who knows someone who knows Sal. So go take inventory of your someones!

In the absence of a specific target individual, you can simply start taking stock of who you know and where they are connected. You can explore in conversation with those in your network to discover whom they know and where they are actively involved. You can also be very specific about the ideal profile of the referrals you seek. That way, people in your network can provide you with better leads.

Another networking vehicle I strongly recommend is the Informational Interview. You can reach out to any C-level executive you have access to and ask them informational questions to learn about where they meet people, what they do to network, what might be their philosophy of networking, and who do they know that you might also talk to? Informational interviews are great

because they allow you to ask anyone for small doses of mentorship without a huge time commitment or other obligation, and you are not trying to sell them anything or get a job from them, you are simply asking them to talk about their favorite subject...themselves and their career path!

Additionally, there are nine basic mindsets of networking that I discuss in the book, *Seal the Deal*, so if you want more on networking you can find it there in chapter 8!

Seal the Deal- Week 4

Q: As sales people we are trained in everything from targeting to prospecting to closing, yet in *Seal the Deal* you talk about closing for the small edge of the wedge and then falling off a log to seal the deal...can you say more about that?

Sure! Glad you asked. The basic point here is that we need not be intimidated or overwhelmed by the need to sell a huge contract on our first meeting with a prospective client. Even if the potential sale is enormous in terms of scope and dollars, there is always the option of closing for a smaller piece of the pie, and then, once we have proven ourselves (our service, our products, our people, etc.) in that client's experience, we can then expand the sale from within. The terminology I used in the book about the "small edge of the wedge" referred specifically to a model I use called the Bowtie Model. It is a sales and service model that is shaped like a bowtie. The small edge of the wedge literally is the small edge of the wedge of the service triangle on the bowtie model, but figuratively means to close for a smaller deal than the whole enchilada. So, let's say you are exploring the options with a prospect and you become aware that your company could provide \$80,000 worth of services to meet the needs you hear the prospect describing. But, they don't know you, haven't had any experience with your firm, and are not clear about the return on value for them with that sort of a price tag. The small edge of the wedge concept is a win-win. They get to "try you guys out" for a smaller investment, and if you are performing, say, a \$5000 service instead, they get to see you in action, you can have a quick win, and then you can leverage that success as well as the relationships you've built internally at the client site to expand the sale.

The "falling off a log" idea is that closing, or sealing the deal, needn't be a huge ordeal or annoying task involving great effort and struggle. It can be as easy as falling off of a log if you've cued it up that way. If you've made the value proposition clear, if you've handled all the moments of truth with exceptional service, if you've cued up the sales conversations and achieved depth and breadth in the client organization, and if you have performed exceptionally in whatever small deal you closed, then to seal the major deal, it becomes simply a matter of asking when they'd like to start and then getting the paperwork signed.

Here's a question to ask yourself. What beliefs or mindsets do I have about these prospects (or about closing in general) that keep me stuck?

If you find you struggle with closing, or can't seal the big deals, or have a hard time asking for the buy, try the small edge of the wedge approach. It reduces some of that pressure, and gives you and the client an experience of success. Then, onward and upward!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Suzi Pomerantz, MT., MCC. is an award-winning master executive coach, facilitator, and author with over 15 years of experience working with leaders and teams in over 125 organizations internationally, including seven companies on the Fortune 100 list. Suzi authored 20 publications about coaching, ethics, and business development, including her book *Seal the Deal: The Essential Mindsets for Growing Your Professional Services Business* (HRD Press, 2006). (www.sealthedealbook.com).

Suzi is the CEO of Innovative Leadership International LLC (www.innovativeleader.com), Vice President of the Board of Directors of the International Consortium for Coaching in Organizations and a founding member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Coaching in Organizations. Suzi's strength lies in helping leaders and organizations find clarity within chaos.