



1. HOW TO GEAR UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

THE WORLD OF MEDIA SALES

In the movie *City Slickers*, Billy Crystal played a burned-out radio salesman going through a mid-life crisis. As a guest speaker for his son's class on career day, he was asked to describe his job. With a lack of passion, he somberly explained, "I sell air." While the on-screen humor was entertaining, the reality is that few sales positions are as difficult as the intangible nature of media sales. All we sell is air...from the air of our sales pitch to the air of our advertiser's message; all we are selling is the "power of persuasion."

On the flip side, few industries evoke as much "passion" as media sales. When asked why they continue to stay in the business after all the challenges and frustrations, many radio and television reps explain, "It's in my blood." Few fields are as interesting and different on a day-to-day basis or as challenging to every skill set we have to offer. Where else can you learn about literally hundreds of different businesses each year? And nothing beats the thrill of exceeding individual sales goals except helping clients exceed *their* sales goals.

Unfortunately, a focused course of study in media sales has not historically been taught or promoted in broadcast journalism schools as much as classes that will help you be a tele-

vision copywriter or production department manager. Only now are universities beginning to offer limited courses in this area, which I believe presents the greatest opportunity for income and professional growth in broadcasting.

**We are selling air...They are buying results...
If you focus on the results, the air will sell itself.**

SOAR WITH YOUR STRENGTHS

In the book *Soar With Your Strengths*, authors Donald Clifton and Paula Nelson suggest that individuals would be much happier, more professionally fulfilled and ultimately more successful if they are lucky enough (and strategic enough) to choose a profession that they have both a talent for and an interest in. Michael Jordan's talents helped make him a phenomenal basketball player, but he may not have been a world-class physics professor. Likewise, few physics professors have a natural ability to leap from the free throw line to make a slam dunk.

Do your natural talents and interests give you an edge for success in the media sales field? Do you enjoy learning about new businesses? Do you enjoy the sales process? Are you fascinated by the psychology of what makes people do the things they do (and shop where they shop)? Do you have a natural affinity for marketing or a creative edge in advertising? Do you find yourself reading and following media? If so, you have a great chance of being a success in this industry.

The other half of this self analysis is to identify what you do not enjoy doing or what you believe you are not particularly good at. Do you have trouble with organization? Is time

management a challenge for you? Have you had difficulty with copywriting? With weaknesses, you can either overcome them (with training, coaching and practice), overcompensate for them (be really good at the other things you do) or delegate to others (i.e., assign tasks to an outside copywriter, personal assistant, etc.)

**Enjoying what you do + Being good at what you do
= SUCCESS**

CHASE A DREAM

Now that you have decided that this field is for you, you should establish some goals. Where do you want to be in one year? In five years? In ten years? What is it that you ultimately aspire to do? When I got back into the radio business as an account executive, I had a 10-year goal to go through all the channels that it took to be a General Manager and ultimately be an owner/partner of a radio station. Eight years (and two moves) later I was a General Manager/Partner of two FM stations in Richmond, Virginia. While the road there took many unexpected turns, the destination was always in sight.

Success is a mindset. You have to be able to visualize it before you can accomplish it. However, conceiving the dream is the easy part. The hard part is devoting yourself to a strategy and executing that strategy to reach your goal. Imagine it...live it...achieve it!

**If you dream it, you can achieve it.
-Walt Disney**

YOU ARE NOT SELLING INDUSTRIAL SCREWS

Few careers have the perceived glamour and glitz of the media business. While on the inside it is easy to get bogged down with the daily pressures and responsibilities, “the biz” always evokes interesting conversations at parties. People like to share their opinions about their favorite program, and they like to hear the inside scoop about their favorite morning show. Since few people ever have the opportunity to meet national celebrities like David Letterman or Ryan Seacrest, local television anchors and morning show DJ’s may be the only celebrities that they have a chance to meet in person. Since these local celebrities keep listeners and viewers company in their homes and in their cars day after day, an emotional bond is formed.

It is important to remember that “there is no such thing as a bad day in media sales.” No one is dying on the operating table, and few problems cannot be fixed with proper communication. While some days may be better than others, there are rarely boring days. Few careers allow you the opportunity to learn so much about so many different businesses. The more you learn, the more successful you can be!

**Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm.
-Henry David Thoreau**

SEE OPPORTUNITIES INSTEAD OF OBSTACLES

Your daily perspective as a media rep will affect your daily success (and ultimately your career success). Do you wake up each day and look at work as a “daily chore” or as a “daily

challenge?” Do you almost wreck your car trying to write down all the new prospects you see riding down the street or do you only see all the “big” accounts that everyone else has on their account list? Does the thought of walking into a retail business cold to obtain the owner’s name for an appointment make you nervous or get you excited? Do you believe that all the good accounts are taken or that there is not enough time in each day to call on all the new accounts that you want to call? While our perceptions may be influenced by others, we mainly see the world through our own eyes.

**Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.
-President Thomas Jefferson**

SALES TRAINING DOESN'T WORK

I have been fortunate to have been trained by what I believe are some of the best trainers in the business. While each had his or her own theories and techniques, they all had successful formulas that would yield great results if utilized. However, what I found more often than not with many account executives is that despite the days, or even weeks of training, old habits would reappear once the training book was closed. The new techniques, principles and practical applications preached by the trainers would soon be forgotten after the enthusiasm of the presentation subsided—and soon, the account executive was no better off than before the training.

As with any sport or any discipline, it is not hearing the

expert tell you the right moves or reading about the strategies in a book that will make a difference in your game. It is all about trying them for yourself and practicing them over and over again until you learn the techniques and they become second nature to you. The same holds true for media sales training: It is how you use information that will make the difference in your performance. If successful, sales training will influence the following...

ATTITUDE – An internal true belief that you can do what it takes to be a success.

KNOWLEDGE – The greater your level of expertise, the greater your confidence.

BEHAVIOR – Establishing good habits with what you know (strategy and execution).

RESULTS – The end result of establishing best practices on the above three.

One of the biggest reasons that salespeople do not succeed is because of inconsistency in behavior and a lack of focus. Always stay focused on your goals and do what it takes to reach them.

**Sales training does not work.
Application and practice of learning does!**