

Beating Fear of Selling Syndrome

The writer and social thinker Eric Hoffer once wrote “the fear of becoming a ‘has-been’ keeps some people from becoming anything”. In the field of selling this insightful quote can at times paralyze people who have all it takes to be highly successful salespeople. Tudog, indulging a bit in psycho-babble, refers to this odd phenomenon as Fear of Selling Syndrome (FSS). This article will share some pointers on how to overcome FSS and get back to the profitable art of selling.

The consequences that can stem from a deep discomfort of sales can destroy not only the respective lives of the fearful, but also the companies they work for, as the would-be revenues gets replaced by inaction – or worse – lost market share. Clearly there is a need not only to learn to recognize FSS, but also to develop the skills needed to beat it.

Recognizing FSS is not as difficult as one might expect as there are sure-tell signs when a salesperson is suffering from paralyzing FSS. They are:

- A demonstrated lack of enthusiasm for selling
- A negative attitude regarding the possibility of selling to certain prospective customers
- A reduction in the number of sales calls
- A failure to follow-up on sales calls
- Misrepresentation of sales related activity

So what can be done to overcome FSS? Tudog has a few pointers:

1. Know Your Fear – first and foremost, you cannot overcome what you will not confront. You need to recognize that you have a fear and what the cause of the fear is. FSS can be driven by a fear of rejection, a fear of failure, a fear of disappointing superiors and other factors. Once you admit you are difficulty and identify your source, you will be able to begin the process of healing.

2. Confront Your Fear – after you have acknowledged your fear you are in a position to confront it. Having identified the cause, you are in a position to take positive actions that will serve to alleviate your apprehensions.

3. Take Your Time – while it’s true that the company clock is ticking and the competitors aren’t waiting around for you to feel better before they try to swipe your customer away from you, it is essential that you take your time and progress at your own pace. There is no need to jump right into the sales pool and see if you can swim. Take small steps and allow each step to support the next. This will allow you to find your comfort zone.

4. Celebrate Your Successes – nothing feels better than success. Once you have eased your way back into the sales game, make sure you stop and smell the sweet scent of success. Make sure you celebrate all your successes so that you allow yourself to regain a sense of how good it feels to close the deal.

5. Have a Good Time – it’s not as silly as it sounds to advise you to have a good time with something you are proclaiming to fear. Nothing beats fear better than the relaxed state we fall into when we’re having fun. Whether you first entered sales because you

liked it or simply needed a job, allow yourself to recognize that the potential for having fun while making sales is genuine.

6. Like What You Sell – it is easy to understand how selling something you don't like (or don't believe in) can produce anxiety. You need to sell products you like – products you believe fulfill their stated purpose and deliver their intended benefit. By selling things you like, you will be in a position to start having fun again – which in turn allows you to loosen up.

7. Redefine Selling – there are a lot of ways to look at selling and the beauty of it is that you get to choose the way you view your activities. Rather than being a salesman you can consider yourself someone who offers people the opportunity to buy something they need or want. That's a very noble, necessary role to play. If you don't want to consider yourself someone who “pushes” product, view yourself as someone who enables happiness.

8. Work Hard – the idea of working hard does not imply work hard at selling, although that might not be a bad idea either. This notion focuses more on the need to work hard at overcoming your FSS. The harder you work the more determined you will be, and the more likely it is that you will conquer and prosper.

James LaFond-Lewis once said “the fearless are merely fearless. People who act in spite of their fear are truly brave”. There is no shame in fear. There is, however, the opportunity for greatness.