

# Selling and Doing What You Love: A Professional's Guide to Success in Sales

*An attorney says to his colleague “when I was in law school, nobody told me I’d have to sell”. A financial planner laments “What I really want to do is advise people on how to get the most out of their money . . . what I have to do is sell my services before I can do that.” An accountant’s client needs her to review their financials; she’s on her way to a networking group to drum up business.*

**Sound familiar? The day of the “corporate rainmaker” is over. In almost every type of professional services firm, highly skilled professionals must sell in order to perform the services they love to deliver.** Often these professionals have a belief that selling is a necessary evil to doing what they love and making a good living. All too often, the greatest challenge is helping these professionals to not only see themselves as salespeople but to be proud about selling as one aspect of their profession. Failure to recognize and help these professionals overcome this dilemma will significantly impact a Firm’s growth and an individual’s success.

We believe that being passionate about what you do and making money are not mutually exclusive. Professionals can indeed be hugely successful in sales—all the while maintaining the respect of loyal clients, avoiding 80-hour weeks, and continuing to do the job they love.

How can you create that reality for yourself and other professionals in your Firm? Here are five steps that can move you and your Firm closer to this reality.

**Step One: Evaluate the support systems your Firm has in place to help**

**professionals learn, practice and improve their selling skills.** Typically professionals are required to take continuing education in profession-specific topics. While business development or ‘rainmaking’ programs are offered, rarely are those programs sufficient in providing the specific skills and practice needed to develop and finetune sales skills. If training is available it is often outdated and doesn’t fit for today’s professionals or today’s marketplace. A Firm must send the message that selling skills are critical to a professional’s success and back it up with the right training programs and rewards to develop those skills.

**Step Two: Professionals need to evaluate their beliefs about selling.**

There are several categories of beliefs that sabotage selling success. A few include beliefs about having to sell; quoting fees; asking for money; how and ‘why’ people buy; and what prospects and clients expect from them. Each of these areas and others need to be explored before new empowering beliefs can be developed and encouraged.

**Step Three: Professionals need to have a defined sales process they can follow.**

Most professionals thrive when given a clearly defined set of steps to follow when selling. They feel most comfortable with order, structure, and a process in place. Having a defined sales process provides that. Likewise, having a clearly defined sales process makes the job of training, managing and coaching newly hired professionals easier, faster and more effective.

**Step Four: Identify and provide training on specific selling skills that professionals need to be successful.** Our

experience suggests that the following skills are typically lacking in professionals: Rapport or relationship building, networking, qualifying,

influencing and questioning skills. Too often, experts willingly share their knowledge by giving advice, thus creating a situation where the prospect doesn’t need to buy the services being offered. Likewise, professionals are use to ‘giving’ solutions rather than helping buyers discover the potential benefits of buying from them rather than another professional.

**Step Five: Practice is the key to developing selling habits and beliefs that support sales success.** Supportive beliefs, coupled with a strong sales process and cutting-edge selling skills, allow professionals to develop effective habits that result in selling success. Habits are built over time through repetition and reinforcement, as well as through honest, open, and consistent feedback from a coach or mentor. A well developed and clearly defined behavior plan—one that outlines those behaviors that, through experience, support selling success—needs to be embraced by professionals and new selling behaviors and skills must be reinforced through on-going training, role plays and debriefing of ‘real’ selling situations.

Professionals who have the edge in today’s competitive market are those that learn to embrace that selling and doing what you love are the first two ingredients of professional success.

---

**Theresa Gale and Mary Anne Wampler** are co-owners of Transform, Inc. Gale and Wampler specialize in helping organizations and their professionals develop sales, client relationship and leadership mastery. They can be reached at [www.transforminc.com](http://www.transforminc.com) or (301)419-2835.

**TRANSFORM**