



# Losing Your Sales Mojo

## *What to do when you lose that spark in a tough economy*

There's no doubt that we are experiencing some tough times right now. The economy is tanking. There's a war going on. The housing market is in the toilet. You need a co-signer every time you fill your car up with gas. Consumer spending confidence is way down. We're on the verge of a recession (if not already in one). And we're in an election year. Doesn't sound very promising, does it? All these conditions are causing businesses and individuals to delay, cut back or even stop spending altogether.

As a sales person, you're more than likely seeing the affect this is having on your sales results. Your income is being negatively affected and your pipeline looks as empty as the Grand Canyon. You're not only seeing how this is affecting everyone else around you, but also that the outlook is looking grim as well. You may be thinking it's you and that you lost that spark you once had. You're no longer effective as a sales professional. You lost your Mojo! Now what?

These are the times that test the strength of a true sales professional. Average and poor sales people will let these conditions cause them to fail. Winning sales professionals use techniques and skills to help them to survive and thrive when times are tough. Working harder is only a small piece of the equation. There are other things you must do in order to overcome these adversities. The following list of seven tips will help you to rise above the challenges that this tough economy is handing us. Use these tips to work smarter, and harder, and you'll not only overcome these challenges, but you'll get your Mojo back and exceed your goals.

**1. Things will change.** No matter how bad things seem to get, keep telling yourself that this is only temporary and it won't last forever. We've all been through tough times like this before and the pendulum always swings back the other way to better times. Force yourself to be patient and keep thinking that there will be light at the end of the tunnel and you need to hang in there until then. Also remember that there's no doubt that when things do improve, those times won't last forever either. Everything is cyclic and you need to learn to deal with all situations, both good and bad.

**2. Be creative.** Think of new ideas on how to find and penetrate new accounts. Also think of creative ways to go back into your existing customers to up-sell and cross-sell to them as well. While you should be doing this on a regular basis anyway, it's easy to forget when times are good and your phone rings with prospects looking to purchase

something from you. However, you need to re-energize these creative juices especially when the phone stops ringing and the leads are far and few between.

When calling on new prospects, hone your “cold calling” skills with creative ways to schedule appointments. At a minimum, don’t try to explain what you offer or what your products do when you first talk to a prospect. You’ll never get their interest and may end up sounding desperate. Instead, tell them briefly what you do and that you would like to meet with them so you can learn more about their operations to see if there might be a fit for your offerings. This way the prospect will see this as an opportunity to explain his situation to you instead of being sold to, hence making him more receptive to your visit.

**3. Prioritize.** It’s easy to say to yourself, “Well, as long as things are slow right now, I might as well clean up my office or reorganize my filing system.” That’s a dangerous trap to fall into. Instead, remember that every (or at least most) activities you do should be geared toward making sales and generating revenue, especially when things are slow. Every time you do something and every project you work on, ask yourself if it will help you make a sale. If not, re-prioritize and focus on sales generating activities. You can always clean up your office after hours during non-selling times.

**4. Generate more leads.** Now more than ever you need to ramp up your lead generating engine. It is truly a numbers game and the more leads you generate and contact, the more success you’ll have. In better times, you might close 10% of your leads. Out of 100 leads you could get 10 sales. In tougher times, you may only close 5% of your leads or less. Therefore, out of those 100 leads you could only get 5 sales. Hence, you have to increase the number of leads to compensate for a lower close ratio caused by economic conditions. In this example, to generate 10 sales, you’ll now need to generate and contact 200 leads.

Using your creativity (see Tip #2), you’ll need to think of new sources for leads. Network more at local organizations and mixers. Create alliances with other compatible businesses (not competitive ones) with whom you can share your accounts and offer each other’s products. This is another form of referrals, except that a business alliance of yours is saying that his client might be able to use your product, and vice versa. Also, do more research to find other prospects who are candidates for your offerings. And ramp up your cold calling efforts. As I just mentioned, get more leads and call them all when times are tough.

**5. Get organized.** Because you’ll need to acquire and manage more leads, and because you’ll be digging deeper into your existing accounts, and because you’ll be busier than before searching for new business, you’ll need to be very organized. If you don’t already use a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) product, or even a simple contact manager, then get one now and get yourself organized. These tools will help organize and manage your data (customer/prospect lists, scheduled activities, follow-ups, priorities, etc.), create accurate forecasts, develop marketing campaigns (to generate more leads), and mine your contact data for focused and prioritized selling activities. Use your non-selling time (i.e., nights and weekends) to setup this new system so your selling time is

optimized. Alternatively, you can hire an expert to set it up and customize it for you. It will definitely be worth the extra effort and potential cost.

**6. Use a Sales Process.** Another way to stay organized as well as stay focused is to develop and follow a sales process. Frequently a busy schedule means disorganization. And disorganization in selling often means doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. For instance, trying to close too soon, or qualifying a prospect when you are presenting your solution. Unless you perform specific selling activities in the right order, the prospect will get confused, there will be more objections to handle and there will be more things to negotiate, all leading to fewer sales. Therefore, use a process that will help you keep on target.

**7. Stay positive.** Tip #1 addressed the future hope that things will improve, which they will. This tip addresses your mental attitude during that period when things have not quite improved yet. It takes twice as much energy to think negatively than to think positively. This is not the time to lose energy, so you need to stay positive and motivate yourself. Keep the faith and believe in what you are doing and that it will make a positive difference. Nothing comes for free or easy. You have to work hard and smart to get what you deserve. Understand that and believe in it.

To help you look on the bright side (sorry for the cliché but it is appropriate) maintain a good work/life balance. Don't work 24/7. Remember to take care of yourself and your family. Take time to relax, have fun and spend quality time with friends and family. Otherwise, you can burn yourself out. Take occasional breaks to go for a walk and clear your ducts. Eat right and healthy. Exercise whenever you can. Take care of yourself.

All these ideas will help you physically and mentally so you can maintain a positive outlook on life. Soon, when your sales start to improve, you'll realize the benefits of all your hard work, which is the best motivation of all and a great way to get your Mojo back.

Good luck and good selling!

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