



Corsini's Point of the Week™

August 3, 2009 — Part 2 of 5



No Slow, Low Pipelines — Another Mistake You Don't Want to Make

We just completed another successful Summer Sales Conference. Thank you to all who attended and participated!

During the conference, we addressed several timely topics including **The 10 Biggest Mistakes Salespeople Make (and how to avoid them)**. Last week, I committed to sharing five of these tips with you, and we discussed the importance of **listening**. To have an effective sales call you have to be a good listener. It's as simple as that. However, it is quite challenging to be an effective listener and to allow the conversation to go where the dialogue is taking you. It takes practice, confidence and even a bit of risk to allow the conversation to flow naturally and *still* get the info you need to be an effective advisor to your clients and new relationships.

This week, let's look at another common mistake—a **lack of opportunities in your pipeline**. We encourage our sales coaching participants to build (and maintain) what we call a Best Bets™ Pipeline. This is a *working* list of both current-client and new-relationship opportunities. A lot of salespeople take time to create a pipeline (in fact, they work very hard to do this), but then they don't bother to add new opportunities. That invariably leads to problems. (Remember, we talked about problems and opportunities in our July 20th Point.)

Typically, a salesperson will make enough sales calls and pinpoint enough opportunities to fill up what they perceive to be a full pipeline. Then they work this full pipeline until they successfully come to closure (one way or the other) on each opportunity. The salesperson might think: *"There's no need to call on more new people until I close the current opportunities I'm working with."* Or *"It's a waste of time to call on new people when I already have clients who want to buy."*

This is not a matter of laziness. The salesperson probably is working diligently the entire time. **The problems arise because he or she is not looking ahead. Big mistake.**

The time to call on people (and develop new opportunities) is when your pipeline is full. Seriously, and for several reasons including the fact that **you are full of optimism, confidence and "on your game."** Believe me, that's the absolute best time to call on people.

You might say you don't have time to call on new people when business is good; these current opportunities need your time and focus. Yes, that's true—to a degree. Remember this: **The most difficult time to call on new people is when you've got to**

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The secret to success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes."

— Benjamin Disraeli

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have the business. People can tell when you are pushing too hard (for one thing, your listening skills won't be as sharp). When this happens, the situation won't feel right to the client, and they are more likely to back off and back up. And where does that get you?

According to some PGA statistics, pro golfers earn 75 percent of their winnings each year during a short six-week span. (When you're hot, you're hot!) It takes the rest of the golfing year to earn the remaining 25 percent of their annual winnings.

There are two lessons to learn here: **Take full advantage of good times, and keep your pipeline full all the time.**

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CORSINI'S POINT

No more low, slow pipelines! **Make it a year-round practice to constantly develop new opportunities.** Don't wait until your pipeline is low (or even empty!) and you are desperate for business. That's not the way to achieve your goals. **Do take advantage of winning streaks.** And remember, boom times alone won't get you where you want to go. Business fluctuates. You must be prepared with additional opportunities at the ready. It's better to come to closure on 75 percent of 20 opportunities than it is to close 75 percent of 5 opportunities. **Make prospecting a year-round sport.**

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