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# The Maturity Factor In Sales

by BILL BROOKS

Winners in any venture are willing to be held accountable for their own actions and results. Also-rans have no desire to be part of any equation for failure. The success stories in sales are certainly no different.

**A**s I look around the Triad, where my business is located, it is easy to see how successful ventures grow, proliferate and expand. These organizations are led by people who possess the emotional maturity to assume responsibility, rise to the level of authority given to them and then hold themselves accountable for whatever level of success or failure they experience.

But how does this relate to your sales career? It should be clear that emotional maturity and account-

ability are essential to success in any career. This is especially true for sales. How emotionally mature are you? Take a look at this short survey:

- When a sale is lost do you blame the customer, your own organization or other external forces?
- When a prospect fails to appear for an appointment, whom do you blame?
- Do you blame your lack of success on unreasonable pricing of your product?

- How often do you blame market conditions, seasonability or the economy for your lack of success?
- How often do you find yourself doing “busy work” instead of proactive, positive activity?
- How often do you avoid looking at hard, objective sales numbers to gauge your sales success (or lack of it)?
- How well do you work with other members of your sales and support team?

It should be obvious that Pogo, the classic cartoon character, was absolutely right when he muttered the infamous line, “We has met the enemy and they is us!”

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## The Search for Scapegoats

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In sales, it is easy to find scapegoats for our lack of success. They abound around us everywhere. Here are just a few:

- Delivery people and systems
- Customer service staff
- Poor quality
- Estimators and pricing specialists
- Unreasonable customers
- The economy

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- Interest rates
- Unreasonable quotas
- Poor pay plans

The list goes on and on, but here is the proverbial bottom-line: Capable, professional salespeople assume full accountability for their own successes and failures. They don't blame others, circumstances or conditions. It is ironic that we often take full responsibility for our successes — yet blame every conceivable external source for the failures.

Here are six specific, powerful affirmations that could help you as you work toward the full accountability necessary for accelerating your sales career. I will:

- Assume full responsibility for all of my own actions with every prospect or customer.
- Assume full accountability for my own sales results — both good and bad.
- Not blame others, conditions or circumstances for any lack of success I may have.
- Learn to compartmentalize my failures, move past them and concentrate on positive, productive activities.
- Never allow any failure to become a part of my permanent record of feelings, actions or sense of self-worth.
- Work with other team members to deliver positive results and totally enthusiastic customers.

It should be obvious that any salesperson will experience some degree of failure at some time in his or her sales career. A baseball player is considered a superstar if he maintains a batting average of .300. The problem? There is no purchase order issued 70 percent of the time when a salesperson fails seven out of 10 times. It's a different game with a different set of rules.

It also means being able to do what is right, 100 percent of the time — not only when superiors, customers or co-workers will notice it. It is treating priorities, company property, rules and expectations professionally. It means following whatever sales system is expected, complying with expectations and performance standards. What it really means is living up to the things you agreed upon when you "signed on" to your job. Expense reports, marketing requests, paperwork and the rest are all part of the sales function. Simply refusing to comply with requirements or expectations, saying "I'll do it when I get around to

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it" or doing what you want to do when you want to do it are merely symptoms of this syndrome of emotional immaturity. And sales is one profession where there is no room for it.

Emotional maturity is also the ability to objectively analyze situations, clearly determine the cause of the failure, correct your course if necessary, move on and learn from the error so it doesn't happen again and you can face the next prospect or customer with a sense of positive expectation. That's what the winners do, and how they do it. How about you? Are you ready to join the winners?



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