

HOW TO UNLEASH THE

**POWER**

WITHIN YOU



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EDITORIAL | MICHAEL DUKE



## MICHAEL DUKE

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Think about how successful you could be if you tapped into the limitless resources that you possess to become innovative, responsive and results-oriented. After 25 years in sales and sales management, **I have discovered the forces that work against us originate from within.** These restraining forces keep us from excellence. They leave us with excuses and weak justification for subpar performance.

You know what excellence is. You have seen glimpses of it in yourself. How to sustain excellence is the key question. Everything you need is within you. Learn and apply these steps of the “unleashing process” and you will become all that you ever dreamed you could be!

**Step one** of the unleashing process is to remove the restraining forces that are directed at yourself. We all have insecurities, doubts and fears, but when they become too firmly entrenched in our thought processes we will not perform as we are capable. You may say to yourself, “That is good enough” or “that’s just the best I can do.” Where within these words does excellence exist? Perhaps fear of failure hinders us in our pursuit of excellence. Maybe concerns that others might begin expecting more from us or hold us to a higher standard keeps us hunkered down and comfortable in the mediocre middle.

There is no glory in mediocrity. A pursuit of any goal driven by indifference is not a worthwhile journey. You are a salesperson. You have chosen a path where performance is king and excellence is the only acceptable standard. You can begin to change the course of your life by giving yourself permission to be great!

**The second critical step** in the unleashing process is to remove the constraints in how you see the world around you. When you lift your head and open your eyes, do you see obstacles or opportunities? This is much more than simply overcoming negative thinking. This is learning to take responsibility for the challenges you have accepted. No excuses. No blaming the factory, the competition or the product!

Great leaders own their actions. Their plans for success take into consideration the competitive landscape and product limitations. Yet, where is the focus? Achievers realize that they must often meet their goals by the sheer force of their own determination, hard work and creativity. They know it is their job to “find a way” to make it happen.

When you focus on the other guy, the other product or your firm’s limitations, you become weary and drained. This is a battle you cannot win. Be clear on how you can impact your market; build your success plan on that and get to work. Now you are invigorated and empowered and heading in the direction of excellence.

**The third step** of the unleashing process involves changing the way you see your job. Thinking like an employee is not the answer. An employee punches in and out. But what if you approached each day like an owner? What if you approached your role as sales rep with the passion and commitment of an owner? Like the owner you may one day hope to be? How different would it look?

An owner “owns” their responsibilities from start to finish. They look the customer in the eye and make promises that they intend to keep, no matter the cost. When a deal goes bad they step up and take it on the chin. An employee mindset too often points fingers and casts blame.

I view the professional sales representative as the consummate businessman. We don’t sell; we bring buyers and sellers together. We win when we create long-term win-win situations. When the deal does not suit the buyer or the seller, we walk away. We do not exaggerate or obfuscate. Why? Because nothing of any lasting value can be built on a lie. Good business is both solid and profitable. A successful career is always built on bringing value and integrity.

**The fourth and final step** to the unleashing process is determining how to differentiate yourself from others. How can you separate yourself from the pack and become the preferred supplier to your customer base? How do you make the decision-makers want to buy from you? The answer is more simple than you may think.

I believe that you have only one choice as you attempt to make yourself distinct. That choice is to become the best person you can be. Investing in you brings incredible divi-

## I view the manufacturers' rep as the consummate businessman. We don't sell; we bring buyers and sellers together.

dends, not to mention renewed energy and confidence. It also serves as a source of appropriate pride as you actually live your life based on principles that others just talk about.

Your customers have simple needs. Here are just a few of them. I promise that if you deliver on these to your customers, you will have all the business you ever wanted.

Your customers want you to tell the truth. They want the bad news quickly. They want to know when you open your mouth they can take it to the bank.

Your customers want you to be kind and courteous. These virtues cost nothing but are priceless. Pay attention to people. Listen to their needs. Learn their names.

Your customers want you to care about their business. They want you to be a partner with them, to be a source of information, wisdom and solutions.

I believe you have one of the greatest jobs in the world! Zig Ziglar said "He climbs highest who helps another up." Your commitment to your customer and your profession can make a positive difference in the people you serve. And while doing so, earn an abundant living in the process. Focus on changing the way you think, then you can change the way you live. Stand back and see what happens when the full power of all your talents and virtues are unleashed upon the world around you. You will be unstoppable! You will be someone to contend with! You will be the standard bearer for excellence in your market! <sup>as</sup> <sub>iii</sub>



### + using what you've learned

Based on the reaction a rep had to losing two profitable lines, he and other reps are to be commended for preparing for the worst in advance, and putting to use what they've learned in the past.

The rep in question was called out of the room to take a phone call while in the midst of a two-day meeting in his capacity of board member for his industry's rep association. When he returned to the room about 30 minutes later, the look on his face suggested that the call was important. What was more important than the content of the call, however, was his reaction to it.

According to the rep, "My partner called to let me know we had just lost two lines we had worked on for more than five years. While I can't say I was totally prepared for the bad news, when I received it I immediately thought back on what I had learned during MRERF's CPMR course a couple of years ago. I remembered that we had an entire section of the curriculum focused on this very scenario. The reason I was out of the room for that length of time was that my partner and I were implementing plans to follow what we had already learned."

Contacted after the meeting, the rep continued, "Sure, at first things looked bad, and we were planning for a worst-case scenario. But we never really got depressed, and there was no sense of panic. Not only did we follow what we learned at CPMR, we networked with other reps in the industry and received plenty of leads. It was just a matter of weeks before we had lined up replacements for the lost lines and, as a whole, our agency didn't skip a beat."

As he looked back at his agency's predicament and the steps that were taken to alleviate any major problems, the rep said, "One thing I learned was that it's not only important to remember what you learned, it's more important to put what you learned to use. It makes absolutely no sense to complete CPMR or any other educational/training program for that matter, and actually get nothing out of the experience. Too many times when we return from a training venue, we'll put the three-ring binder on the bookcase so it can gather dust. What I've done with my CPMR information is to keep it on the desk in front of me — the weeks when I don't consult the textbooks are few and far between." +