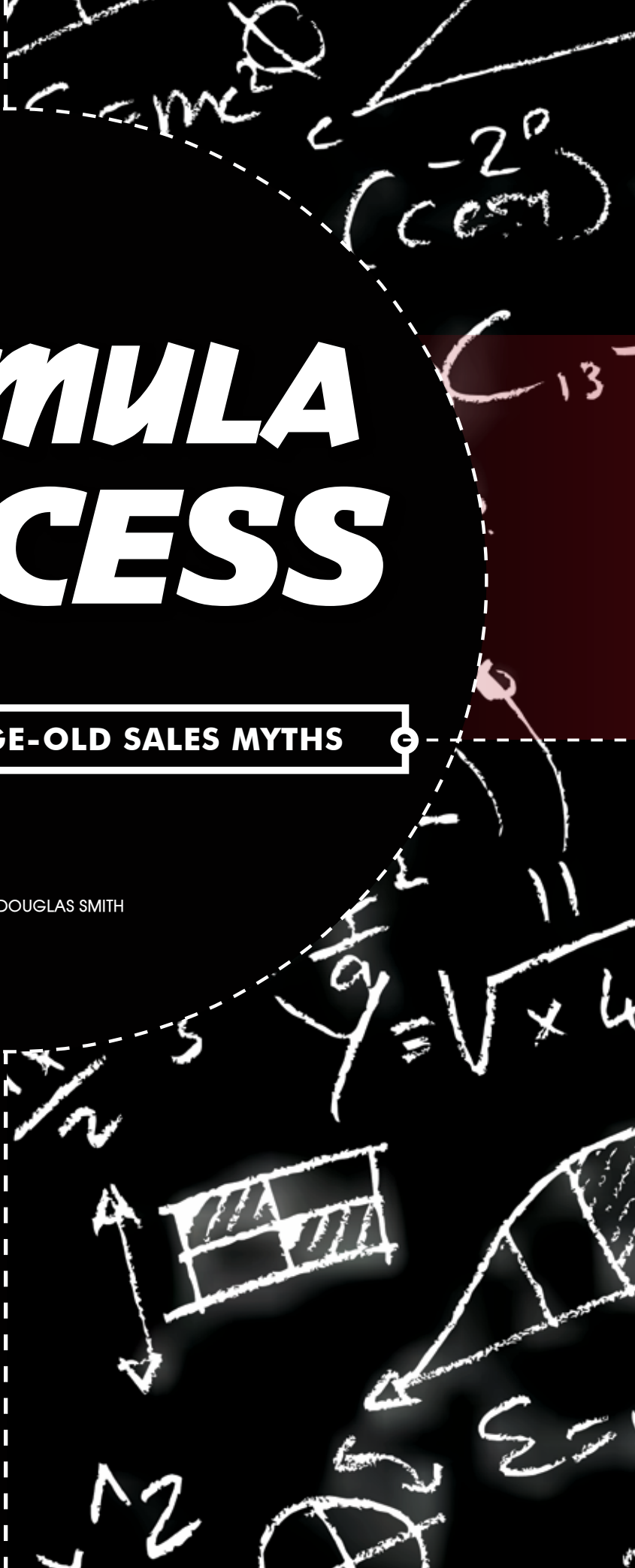


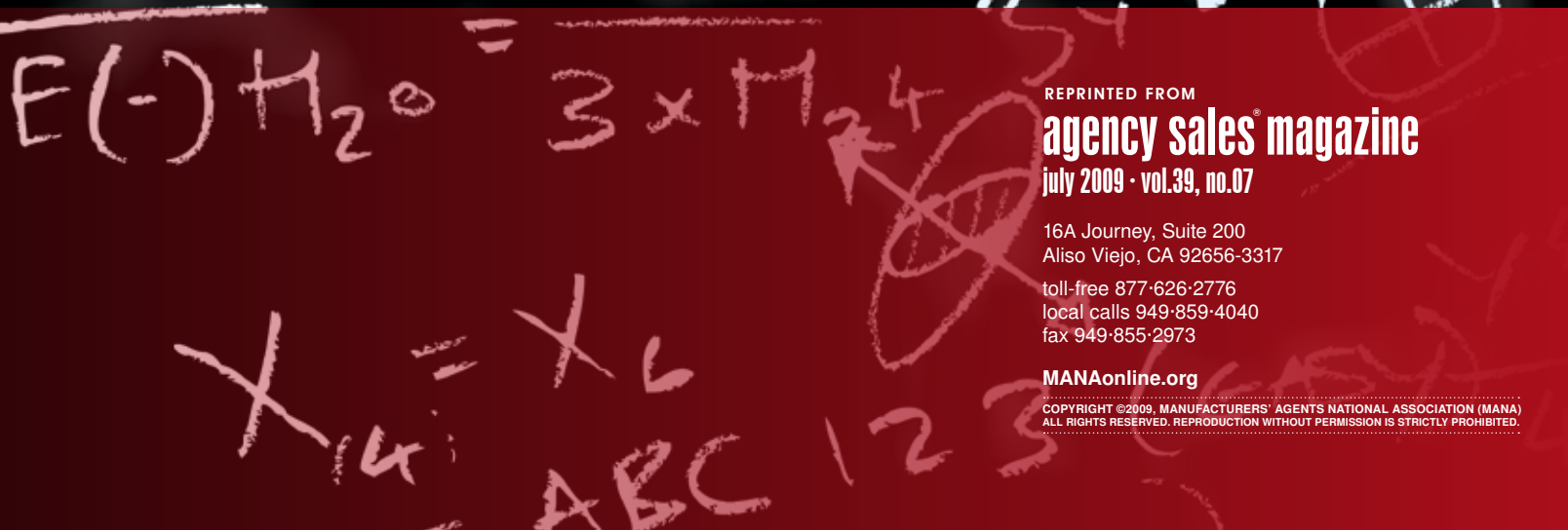
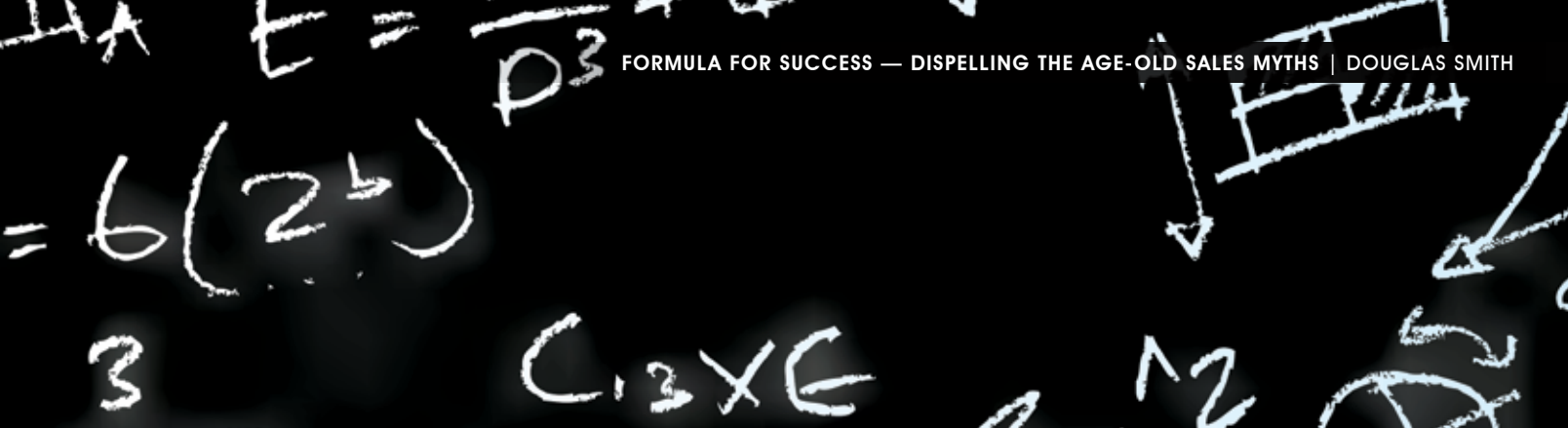
# FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

DISPELLING THE AGE-OLD SALES MYTHS

EDITORIAL | DOUGLAS SMITH

SUCCESS ISN'T SIMPLE. IT TAKES MANY THINGS TO BE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN THE PROFESSION OF SELLING. SUCCESS IS LIKE A FORMULA OR A RECIPE. IT'S A BIT COMPLEX.



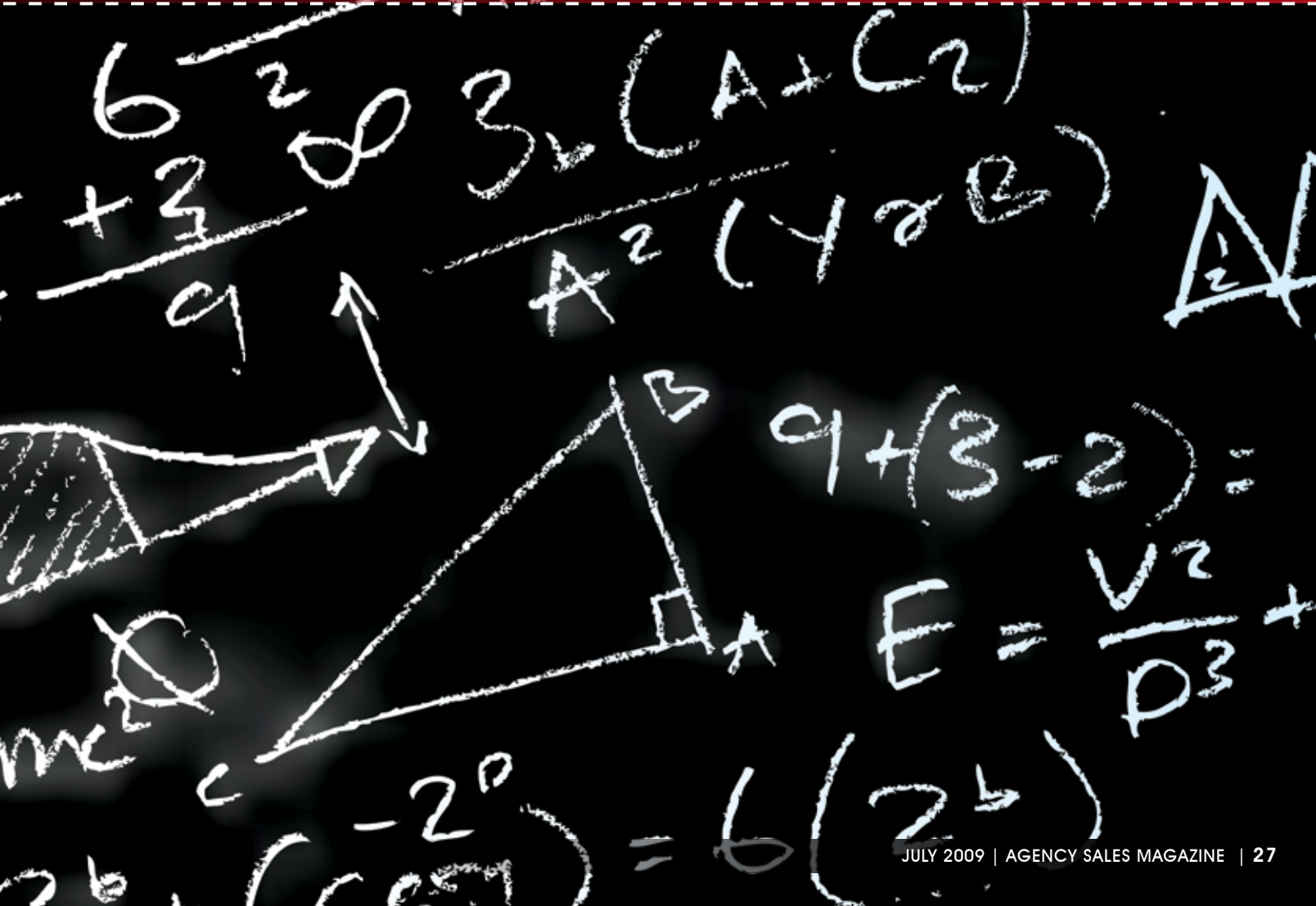


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## DOUGLAS SMITH

**Douglas Smith** is a nationally recognized speaker and sales trainer who helps organizations and sales professionals sell smarter and better. He has spent more than 25 years building a successful career in sales management, training and leadership development, and now delivers nearly 100 presentations and workshops every year on effective sales and sales leadership practices. To contact Smith about speaking to your organization, call Douglas Smith & Associates at 877-430-2329 or visit [DougSmithPresents.com](http://DougSmithPresents.com).

**Amazon.com** currently lists more than 13,000 books that teach people how to be successful in selling. Most of these books are very good, while others are misleading. Unfortunately, some authors and “sales experts” continue to perpetuate age-old myths about selling that need to be dispelled.

### THREE OF THE BIGGEST MYTHS

**Myth #1: Anyone can be successful in selling if they work hard enough.** Hard work helps, but it alone will not make you a successful salesperson. There are salespeople out there who work 60-hour weeks and stay busy as bees and they still struggle to find a prospect or make a sale. Selling is a talent. It is the right mix of ability, skills and approach that defines a successful salesperson. If you are struggling in sales, working harder or longer hours may not make any difference in your results.

**Myth #2: Successful salespeople are born that way.** No one is born knowing how to sell. Selling is an acquired skill that is discovered, developed and honed over time. It's a fact that some people come to sell easier than others, but it's not because they are fitted with some “sales gene” at birth. Those who are successful in sales have simply married their natural abilities of discipline and drive along with a comfort for interacting with other people to a profession that compensates them well for these talents.

**Myth #3: Success in selling is all about attitude.** There are thousands of starving salespeople who have positive outlooks and pumped-up attitudes. Success isn't just about attitude, it is about *aptitude*. Attitude will get you up and to work every day, but it won't get you customers to work *with*. Success comes from so much more than having a good attitude. You can only get by so long on a whistle and a smile.

### AND NOW, THE TRUTH

So if success in selling isn't about just working harder, having a great attitude or being born a winner, what is it about? Why do some salespeople rise to the top while others sink to the bottom or bob somewhere in-between? The truth is this: Success isn't simple. It takes many things to be highly successful in the profession of selling. Success is like a formula or a recipe. It's a bit complex. If success were easy, everyone would be successful.

Here are common characteristics of successful salespeople. Spend a day or a week with a top-performing salesperson and you'll see these traits and characteristics evident. If you're not as successful as you want to be, work on incorporating these traits:

- ✔ **Top performers are in this for the long run.** Unlike other salespeople who are trying the job on for size or using their sales position as a job gap until they find something else they like better, top performers are committed to their career in sales until retirement. This long-term focus and obligation means they will invest more in their jobs every day than others are willing to invest. That's why they succeed at the level that they do; they are in it for life.
- ✔ **Top performers take risks.** They are willing to try new things, experiment, change old habits, and go after big targets of business. Although top performers fail at these endeavors as much as anyone else, they succeed more because they are continually taking risks and trying new things. A risk-taking mindset means you will create opportunities others will never have.
- ✔ **Top performers invest in themselves.** Top performers are okay with spending some of their own money for things. They purchase gifts for their clients and business partners. They buy books and training CDs to learn new things. They pay to attend seminars and subscribe to industry magazines and Internet services. Some top performers invest as much as five to 10 percent of their incomes every year on tools and resources to help them grow as sales professionals. When you see this as *your* business, you look at investing in it differently.
- ✔ **Top performers align with top clients.** It is hard, if not impossible, to become a success if you don't work with successful people. That's why top performers are picky about the customers, clients and partners they choose. Many salespeople are content to work with just about anybody that will talk to them. They saddle themselves with lesser caliber, low quality prospects. In the busi-

TOP PERFORMERS ARE “CAN-DO” PEOPLE.


## SELLING IS A TALENT. IT'S THE RIGHT MIX OF ABILITY, SKILLS AND APPROACH THAT DEFINES A SUCCESSFUL SALESPERSON.

ness of selling, your clients and partners say a lot about who you are. Successful salespeople get that.

- ✔ **Top performers are stingy with their time.** Your time is worth money — a lot of money. Top-performing salespeople are particular about what they do with their time and invest the bulk of it in activities and clients that have the highest payoff. They delegate. They stay busy. They get stuff done. Many average performers will never reach the level of success they want because of their inability to manage their time properly. They spend too much time with marginal opportunities, too much time doing administrative tasks, and too much time hanging around the office waiting for the phone to ring.
- ✔ **Top performers know their stuff.** Because they take the time to learn new things, read industry periodicals, stay current on market changes and share news with others, top-performing salespeople build a knowledge base that allows them to sell from a level of expertise few others have. Clients recognize the value of knowledge, and gravitate to working with well-informed salespeople because they trust them to help them find the right solutions to their needs.
- ✔ **Top performers like to sell.** While many salespeople shy away from various sales activities, top performers actually *enjoy* selling. They enjoy the client conversa-

tions, delivering presentations and meeting new prospects. They don't like sitting in meetings or spending a lot of time on conference calls. They do not enjoy hanging around the office talking about sports, movies or somebody's problems. Frankly, they'd rather be out meeting people, making contacts and writing sales.

- ✔ **Top performers are “can-do” people.** Some salespeople are making excuses instead of making sales. They have all sorts of reasons why something can't be done. “I can't sell that product because the price is too high,” they say. “I can't get to work on time because of the traffic,” or “I can't make more sales calls because I have emails to read.” This is how *can't do* people work. Top performers, by contrast, are *can-do* people. It is reflected in their initiative, their approach to problem solving and their openness to new ideas. They look for ways to make things happen, not excuses why things aren't happening. This allows them to change, grow, adapt and out-perform the competition and their peers month after month and year after year.

Think back to when you first got into sales. Did you plan to be mediocre? Was it your goal to have “average” accomplishments or maybe just get by? No. You got into sales for one reason: to be successful. Follow in the path of those top performers who have shown you the way to success. 

 tips+tools

### prescribing without a diagnosis

One rep reports how a conversation he had with his family doctor paid dividends for him in dealing with customers. “We had a respiratory infection run through my household. It seems like I get the same thing every year and every year I go to the doctor and he prescribes the same medicine. I take the medicine and in about a week I feel better. So this time instead of going to the doctor, I found leftover medicine from my last bout of illness. I took the medicine, but nothing happened. Finally, after several suggestions from my wife, I went to the doctor. He listened to my complaints, asked a number of questions and let me know I didn't have the dreaded upper respiratory infection I thought I had. Instead it was the flu. He prescribed an

entirely different regimen. But he wouldn't let it go at that. Since he's a family friend, he knows what I do for a living. He asked me how I worked with my customers? Did I just fill the same old orders all the time? Or, did I ask questions and provide solutions to their problems? He made a good point and it caused me to redouble my efforts with my customers. I'll have to say it's made a difference. After listening to the customers speak, I've been able to increase business and strengthen the relationships I have with them. What I was doing was much like I expected the doctor to do for me — prescribing without a diagnosis. And, as if I needed to be reminded, that's malpractice. My behavior has now changed.” 